

TRANSIT UPDATES

Federal funding for the East L.A. extension of the Metro Gold Line is in jeopardy, because of the State of California's financial position. The Federal Government has provided \$490 million, which must be matched by the state's \$190 million this year. The California Transportation Commission is to vote on this project, as well as others throughout the state, in April.

Due to a bus driver shortage (e.g. drivers staying with Coach USA when the contract went to TCT-Connex), several LADOT Commuter Express lines have reduced service as of February 7. Until further notice, the following trips will not run:

- #413 - the 6:20 a.m. from Van Nuys and the 4:45 p.m. from LA
- #422 - the 9 a.m. trip from LA and the 3:50 and 5:34 p.m. trips from Ventura/Topanga.
- #423- the 6:15 a.m. from Magnolia and Havenhurst, the 6:32 a.m. from Calabasas and the 3:55 p.m. from LA
- #431 - the 7:15 a.m. from Westwood and the 5 p.m. from LA
- #549 - the 7:45 a.m. from Encino and the 7:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. from Pasadena
- #574 - the 6:14 a.m. from Sylmar and the 4 p.m. from El Segundo.

LADOT #430, which was to be cancelled due to low ridership (11 daily passengers!), has been given a reprieve until June. A marketing campaign is being developed.

And finally, LADOT's "Community Connection" routes are now DASH routes:

- #147 is now "DASH San Pedro"
 - #203 is "DASH Los Feliz"
 - #208 is "DASH Beachwood Canyon".
- DASH fares (25-cents) apply to these routes.

New Foothill Transit Fares effective March 1:

- Local fare is \$1.10 (regular) or \$.55 (senior/disabled)
- Local passes are \$45 (regular), \$10 (senior/disabled), \$18 (K-12) or \$21 (College). These are all "rolling passes", good for a period of 31 days, and can be bought anytime during the month.
- There are only two express zones: 3 and 5. Most express routes run express only between LA and El Monte Station, so they are in Zone 3. (#690, between Claremont and Pasadena is also Zone 3). Zone 5 routes are the longer distance express routes #493, 495, 498, 499 and 699.

Fares are as follows:

Zone 3: \$2.75 or \$95 for a pass

Zone 5: \$3.35 or \$115 for a pass.

Senior/disabled and K-12 passes are valid on express routes, but college students pay \$30 for an express pass.

The Eastland Park/Ride is finally closed, and #498 no longer stops there. Instead it makes an additional stop at the West Covina Civic Center; commuters may park on the top of the parking structure there.

All Santa Monica bus routes have been modified near UCLA. Every day, before 7 a.m. and after 10 p.m. buses will no longer use the Hilgard bus turnaround but will board/deboard passengers on campus (Charles E. Young Drive between Manning and Westholme).

The County of Los Angeles is operating two new demonstration routes in the Santa Clarita area:

- Acton-Agua Dulce: Runs two round trips on Monday and Wednesday only. Connects with Santa Clarita Transit at Soledad/Sierra.
 - Gorman Route: Runs one round trip on Fridays only. Connects with both Santa Clarita Transit (at McBean Transfer Center) and Kern Regional Transit (Flying J)
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BULLETIN BOARD

Scott Holmes, OCTA's new Manager of Planning, Scheduling and Customer Advocacy, is the guest speaker at our March 8 meeting. Also Ms. Yvonne Wilson, a resident of Angelus Plaza, may attend to discuss her \$1.36 million verdict against MTA and their appeal. We'll pass the hat (and auction some transit goodies) to help reimburse expenses of Bart Reed and Kymberleigh Richards for attending the California Transit Association Spring Legislative Conference. And we should set the date and subject of our Spring study tour.

Director Kris Sharp has volunteered to oversee a grant writing effort but needs help to identify likely funders. This will entail spending a few hours researching in a library reference collection (or possibly at the Center for Nonprofit Management in downtown Los Angeles). Let us know if you are able to help this effort. Other upcoming volunteer opportunities include data entry for the updated Transit Guide and helping staff booths at events.

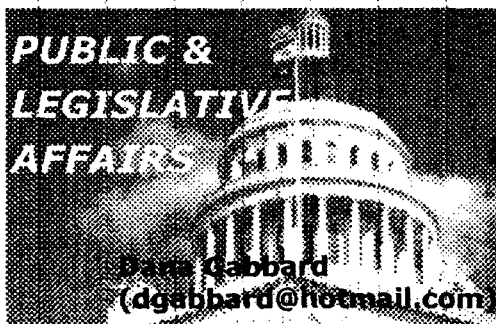
Kudos to Channel 4 KNBC for broadcasting live Feb. 20 during its 11 p.m. newscast a demonstration of what a collision between a car and a train looks like (a camera in the car showed a dummy in the driver seat being thrown about despite the train "only" going 20 miles per hour). Hopefully a lesson to all drivers to obey crossing guards at grade crossings.

The March Wheel Clicks (newsletter of the Pacific Railroad Society) reports the next Open House for the San Pedro red car project will be March 22.

How many times have you been stranded or late for work, etc., when your regular bus stop was suddenly out-of-service for construction or a special event? A small committee has been formed to develop guidelines to suggest to southern California transit agencies, particularly MTA and OCTA. Suggestions will include avoiding the detour in the first place, better signage, making detour info more readily available to passengers, and requiring cities, film crews, and contractors to alert transit agencies earlier in the process. Please call 866-4-SOCATA, x. 4 if you have input for this committee. The committee will meet after the general meeting on March 8.

A new project, Southern California Compass, has started to plan for the region's future. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has formed a Citizens Advisory Committee to address the impacts of future growth in Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial counties. Workshops will be held over the next year to get the public's opinion on the major areas affecting our region: homes, jobs, transportation, the environment, etc. This way Southern California can start planning for the future based on a vision derived from public input. We have a representative from SOCATA on the Citizens Advisory Committee, so that transit will get its "fair share".

Environmental Justice and Transportation by Martin Wachs, Shannon Cairns and Jessica Greig of the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California at Berkeley is a handbook on how to raise EJ issues to influence transportation decisions:
(*con'td on page 13*)



"It was the best of times, it was the worse of times" seems the appropriate sentiment to sum up our current situation. We are all well aware the current fiscal situation with the state and feds is dire. Yet amidst this gloom are actions that long-term are hopeful. Beside the nascent Mobility 21 coalition we had in early February a coordinated lobbying effort in Washington, D.C. involving all six county transportation agencies within the jurisdiction of the Southern California Association of Governments plus Metrolink and several prominent local politicians advocating for 29 priority transportation projects totaling \$11 billion. Plus infrastructure report cards for Orange and Los Angeles county focused attention on funding needs.

And amidst the wailing about infrastructure investment here comes ACA 11 to the March 2004 ballot. It would earmark a portion of the general fund for roads, facilities, etc. with half the funds going to the state and half to local cities. This is a complicated measure - the Legislative Analyst's Office has just issued a primer that is available on their website (<http://www.lao.ca.gov>) or for a printed copy call (916) 445-4656. Since this was initially promoted by Republicans and

passed as part of the budget compromise last year I am curious who will be campaigning for this measure and whether the governor will help advocate for it.

There is also evidently in the darkened back corridors of power talk of a "superbond" for transportation funding (per comments by Senator Tom Torlakson in the February Metro Investment Report). I wonder whether this may be touted as much for economic stimulation as for addressing infrastructure investment needs.

Meanwhile the proposal I mentioned last month to place the high speed rail project under the control of Caltrans is starting to get attention. The Train Riders Association of California (TRAC) has stated its support for the proposal while the Rail Passengers Association of California (RailPAC) opposes it. As a bargaining chip Senator Florez introduced SB 91 to strip from Caltrans all intercity rail oversight - Florez is quoted in the Feb. 26 Sacramento Bee ("High-speed rail sparks turf battle") as being willing to drop his proposal if the governor abandoned his plans for Caltrans to absorb the rail authority. And amidst all this acrimony preparations are being made to mount a campaign for a bond on the November 2004 ballot that would fund half the cost of the first segment of the high speed rail network (L.A. to San Francisco) plus upgrading feeder rail lines.

mind-boggling quote of the month: "It is often said that "We can't build our way out of congestion." However, it IS physically possible. "Build it, and they will come"--the it being extra road space and the they

being cars--is true in conditions of congestion-caused latent demand. But latent demand could be satisfied if the supply of road space were increased enough, since demand for road space is not infinite. If demand were infinite there would be no free-flowing roads at all." ("How to "Build Our Way Out of Congestion--Innovative Approaches to Expanding Urban Highway Capacity", Peter Samuel and Robert W. Poole, RPPI, January 1999).

I am delighted OCTA CEO Art Leahy isn't knuckling under to Costa Mesa's desire to place in a tunnel a portion of the CenterLine in their city at agency expense. Leahy is following the Berkeley precedent where that city issued bonds to fund the extra cost of placing BART in a tunnel (versus being elevated) when it passed through their city. It is smart Leahy made this clear early indicating the city and not OCTA would have "to foot the \$3 million tab to include an underground option as part of a preliminary engineering study" as stated in the Feb. 25 Orange Country Register ("OCTA says subway plan by city down the tubes"). Three cheers for Leahy!

runner-up mind-boggling quote of the month: "I think there's a brain deficit in Sacramento, from what I can see." (Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, at the February 12 Los Angeles County Infrastructure Summit).

I have no problem with the Bus Riders Union being critical of the various MTA

sector service change proposals. Our own position on the San Fernando Valley proposals included its share of concerns. But it floors me that their latest flyer attacks Rapid Bus as "dressing a wolf in sheep's clothing!" Explicitly they decry MTA implementing more limiteds and rapid service instead of relieving overcrowding by increasing the number of buses in service. But the plain fact is rapid service increases capacity and shortens trip time. Local buses benefit as regional demand shifts to the faster buses. Plus often transferring from locals to rapids is fast due to the frequency of rapid service (although bunching IS a problem). How can the BRU state these strategies don't result in more buses on the street? Wilshire now has more service (local and rapid) than ever. Are they so steeped in their dogma that distorting the truth is acceptable?

To conclude I'll summarize the three key strategies a panel of transportation experts made to the General Accounting Office regarding mobility challenges ("Developing Strategies for Enhancing Mobility", GAO-02-775; <http://www.gao.gov> or (202) 512-6000):

- focus on the entire surface and maritime transportation system as a whole
- use a full range of tools to achieve the desired outcome
- provide more financial options. ■

SUNLINE TRIP REPORT

by Dana Gabbard

Our annual day after Thanksgiving trip provides an opportunity during a weekday to explore the far reaches of Southern California's transportation network. Over the years our members have met the call of adventure by undertaking trips in such far flung places as Santa Barbara, Cabazon, San Diego and Bakersfield. For the past few years a perennial runner-up choice had been Sunline Transit in the Coachella Valley. When Sunline began its bi-directional SunLink service to Riverside's Metrolink station (using ex-OCTA Superbuses, no less) the idea began to seem a bit more practical. But the last SunLink departure to Riverside would allow a bare few hours of bus riding. When it was decided to utilize Greyhound for the return trip the last obstacle to a Palm Springs trip had been surmounted and it was our choice for the 2002 day-after-Thanksgiving transit adventure.

Lionel Jones handled the trip planning while I investigated fare options. It soon became clear this was not a trip for the frugal, as it entailed paying pricey fares for Metrolink, SunLink and Greyhound. One money saver I discovered was the existence of a \$3 Sunline day pass. Except while the Rider's Guide noted "Driver will punch pass to validate" it wasn't clear where you bought one. I hoped drivers sold them the way operators at Omnitrans can. But what if they didn't? Our tight schedule wouldn't allow time wasted on tracking down a pass sales outlet (and would they be open on the day after Thanksgiving?) Faced with the chilling specter of a fruitless search for a day pass I contacted the

agency and confirmed day passes were not sold by drivers. But thankfully besides pass outlets you could also purchase them direct from the agency. And even use a credit card and have them mailed to you. So at our November meeting I collected \$3 each from members who anticipated going on the trip and bought the day passes in advance.

Friday Nov. 29 via Red Line car #607 I made my way to Union Station to rendezvous with members departing from there. Besides myself present were Charles Powell, Frank Schroder, Woody Rosner, Robert Meinert, John Ulloth, Kymberleigh Richards and Armando Avalos. After purchasing tickets we made our way to the platform to catch Metrolink's 91 line train #702, departing at 6:25 a.m. The departure time was the subject of some confusion as the main display board in the station had the train leaving at 6:35 a.m. while the train conductor announced 6:23 a.m. Turned out the earlier time was correct (much to the chagrin of a bay area member who ran up the ramp in time to witness our train clearing the platform). As usual we rode the top floor of the last car and enjoyed the vista as Los Angeles receded behind.

At Norwalk Lionel Jones and Andy Novak joined us. Kym Richards brought forth her Chex Morning Mix, which is becoming a trip staple, and soon there was much contended munching. One advantage of using the 91 line is it serves several stations in Orange County, making it convenient for members behind the Orange Curtain. In Fullerton Mark Strickert and Dan Dalke joined us. This was my first ride on this new Metrolink

route and I found it just a bit different than any other - at one point we spotted a horse trail paralleling the train tracks. Later we passed a cemetery with adjacent trailer house.

We arrived at Riverside-Downtown station a few minutes early. A quick reconnoiter revealed the SunLink bus was there already laying over at the bus stop adjacent to the platform. Somebody indicated the driver had walked off for a few minutes, maybe to use the facilities or take a quick cigarette break? We milled about - a few of the bus fan used the opportunity to take snapshots of the Superbus. It was impressive, with a full wrap festooned with the SunLink and Metrolink logos.

Eventually the driver showed up and began collecting the \$8 fare directly from passengers (back when OCTA ran them these buses had fareboxes and a remote camera for the driver to observe you paying the fare without having to leave the tractor/trailer rig the driver rides in). Here the driver has to personally handle fare collection. The driver, named Richard, also answered some questions and overall was quite courteous. There were only two other passengers and finally we all settled in before pulling out at 8:20 a.m. (5 minutes behind schedule). The equipment numbers were 901/901T (T for trailer). About this time I distributed the day passes so we would all be prepared upon arriving in Sunline territory.

For those unfamiliar with it, I should explain the superbus is a a 18 wheeler/ freight truck turned into a transit bus.

The driver sits in the cab while passengers are in the trailer compartment. The middle section is low floor while you step up stairs to reach the fore and aft areas. Sunline added a bathroom and some amenities - coffee and hot tea service (you stick a nominal fee in a slot for your hot drink). I understand when Sunline began SunLink there was also a selection of snack foods for sale (and maybe apples?). Evidently that didn't work out or was too much hassle and was discontinued. Seats were cushioned, and the obvious upscale market it was meant to attract was reflected in the cup holders and power outlets for laptops at the table in the front section. Via the 215, 60 and I-10 we reached Loma Linda in about 30 minutes and had two passengers get off and one get on. Interestingly at this point we were in Omnitrans territory and could have caught routes 2,8,9,19 or 200 at a nearby stop!

We arrived at the Carl's Jr. in Beaumont/Banning early and the driver told us we had time to get a bite or use the restroom. I was weak and indulged: a chili cheese omelet breakfast burrito, which I ate after we departed (I was embarrassed it was slow still being made while everyone else got their order). Next we passed the Cabazon outlet complex and Casino Morongo. The area was mobbed - maybe with both shoppers and gamblers. Nobody boarded at these stops. As we pulled back on the freeway we saw the dinosaur statue (made famous in the movie "Pee Wee's Big Adventure). Now the surroundings became more arid. (to pg. 8)

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We arrived at the Palm Springs Mall at 10:20 a.m. (10 minutes late). There was no crosswalk to the mall across the street and our stop lacked a shelter (although the stop opposite did have a shelter). And it was raining lightly. We noticed there was no cut out for the bus. We were very glad when rt.14, an Orion hi floor #503, showed up about 10:35 a.m. Our bus operator was Nancy and there were 5 passengers (all ride counts exclude trip participants). As we passed a DMV I noticed sand bags sitting amidst a strengthening rain storm. As we traveled toward Desert Hot Springs (mostly on Gene Autry Trail) I noted the sand and rain outside and how desolate it all appeared. But at least the seats were fabric covered! Closer to Desert Hot Springs we saw development, even a Korean bbq. I also noticed like Orange County the bus stop signs have id numbers. We did a lengthy diversion on Hacienda to a park and returned (this is only done in one direction). I saw no indication that this enhanced ridership. We arrived at the layover (Palm/8th) next to a 7-11 after passing thru a commercial district.

About 11:35 a.m. we began the return trip, passing a Thai place. Soon the load built up to 15 riders (1/3 kids). The rain really was coming down. A lot of the load deboarded at Palm Springs Mall. We continued on to downtown Palm Springs (Palm Canyon and Baristo) just after Noon. While the ground was soaked thankfully the rain had stopped (and never returned the rest of the day). Dalke decided to do a mini-tour of his own because he planned to catch the last SunLink back so we bid him goodbye. After

a time at the stop we encountered a Sunline supervisor named Ray. We asked about the rt.111 bus we hoped to catch. We soon learned it was running late - in fact bus service overall was disrupted by the weather and heavy traffic (Christmas shoppers). I contemplated the glitz star in the sidewalk when a quick conference was held on what to do. Instead of having lunch mid-trip we decided to seek a suitable eatery nearby and catch the bus we intended to catch after lunch.

After walking a few blocks we discovered a McDonald's mere feet from a stop and settled on that. At 1:34 p.m. we caught rt.111, an Orion #507. Our bus operator was Debbie. Along Palm Canyon we had 13 passengers. We continued on to Highway 111, very upscale and commercial (although you'd have sudden areas of pristine land, which I have heard is usually Indian tribal land).

This is the trunk line of the Sunline system, running along the main commercial arterial and providing connections to service up and down the valley from Palm Spring to Indio. Weekdays it has 25 minute service and actually runs until just past 10 p.m.

At Westfield Shoppingtown over 30 passengers boarded for a seated load. By the time we reached Indio there were still 26 passengers. We arrived at Flower and Highway 111 in Indio (aka Sunline Clean Air Center). There were CNG fuelling pumps and we witnessed a Postal Service truck pull up to fill its tanks. While there was supposed to be a "Sunmart" selling snacks we were disappointed to find it

closed.

At 3:30 p.m. we caught rt.91, #506, with 7 passengers. This is mostly a large one-way loop with two hour headways. I soon understood why as we passed through the sleepy small town of Coachella. As we went along the scenery was rustic countryside. There were fields of dates and lemons. At times the country roads were bumpy as we made our way into the hinterlands. In the remote enclave of Mecca, 6 deboarded while two got on. But don't think everything was strictly Hooterville - once after going down a deserted stretch of road we turned and suddenly before us was an apartment complex (and I'm not talking 8-10 units). In Thermal I noticed a neon sign on the side of a building advertising Nextel cell services.

At 4:55 p.m. we had returned to the Flower and Highway 111 location. This actually was a decent transit center of the streetside variety with large shelters, seating and even a coke machine (we were disappointed to find it was out of sodas). I gave a buck to Charles Powell who joined some of the group that sought refreshment across the street in some sort of grocery outlet location. He came back with a diet vanilla coke, the only soda they had. One swig told me why this heavily promoted new flavor had quickly ended up at a surplus place. But it was drinkable.

Our last Sunline bus was a return trip to Palm Spring on rt.111, #517. We departed at 5:15 p.m. with 14 passengers. It was getting dark - one

fun game to pass the time was to look for illuminated street signs with celebrity names. There was even one for Elvis. Back in Palm Springs we were dropped off across from the Greyhound station, which was dark and closed. Most of us had bought tickets in advance. One bit of excitement was spotting a Morongo Basin bus just about to leave for a return trip. We had some time to kill - most of the group wandered off the gawk at the commercial district one street up. Woody Rosner and I split a appetizer tray at a small Chinese place down the street. We all made our way back to the station before the 7:45 p.m. scheduled departure. This bus actually started down in Calexico and ran about 15 minutes late. After going thru the pull around behind the building it stopped. Besides our group there were a few others boarding. Those without tickets bought them at the Moreno Valley station (which strangely was still open, all alone in an otherwise dark strip mall). Riverside's station was dark and nobody boarded. San Bernardino had a lively station and people hopping from one bus to another - this included Mr. Strickert - whose bus connection would take him to Santa Ana train station. The rest of us went on to El Monte and from there caught buses to take us home or to cars that would help finish the journey.

What an epic journey; A true adventure!
So, where should we go this year? ■



TRANSIT ADVOCATES OF ORANGE COUNTY - Mark Strickert and Jane Reifer - 866-476-2282 ext.4, or zineland@yahoo.com

Passing Up People in Wheelchairs

A recent meeting of the Adult Transition Task Force in Irvine highlighted their concerns of the continual problem of passengers in wheelchairs being passed by. They were also concerned that some coach operators on routes that don't typically pick up people in wheelchairs sometimes forget how to use the equipment between times. These concerns will be relayed to OCTA for a response.

New March 9 Service Change Bus Books Available

The new OCTA Bus Books are the first in a planned series to highlight the people behind the scenes who make OCTA work. 2002 Coach Operator of the Year, Sharron Salinas, appears on the March cover. Copies will be available at the March 8 SOCATA meeting.

Please let us know if you see any errors in this book. The size of the route 173 map will be corrected next time.

The June book will undergo a complete redesign, with cleaner map graphics and more distinctive AM and PM times.

OCTA Citizens Advisory Committee - Transit Subcommittee

Frustrated with OCTA policy? Want to know more about decisions that affect your transit service? If you would like to learn more about how the OCTA bus system operates or would like to provide input, you can attend the meetings of the OCTA Citizens Advisory Committee/Transit Subcommittee (CAC-TS). Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee is appointed by the OCTA Board of Directors. Members of the CAC then volunteer to be on the Transit Subcommittee. The subcommittee receives informative bus related updates and advises OCTA on transit related projects and services. Recent meetings have covered everything from new express bus service, Bus Rapid Transit, Bus Book redesign, CenterLine, Coach Operator training, new bus procurement, and bus security. The public is welcome to attend.

The Transit Subcommittee meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the OCTA Administrative Offices, located at 550 South Main Street in Orange.

June Service Change Previews

(Subject to change, so check June Bus Book for final status)

No public hearing, but Board will vote on March 24. Register your comments with Customer Relations at 636-RIDE, ext. 2 or customers@octa.net

- 1 - All days - Add more running time to schedule to accommodate heavy summer traffic just until September service change
- 29 - Weekdays - Improve frequency from 20 minutes to 15 minutes on short turns, and from 40 minutes to 30 minutes on long runs between 9-10 am, 2-3 pm

and 6-7pm. Extend 2 evening southbound short turn trips into full-length runs.

- 54 - Weekdays - Add WB run at 9:30 pm to fill 1 hour 48 minute gap
- 64 - Weekdays - Add EB am peak trips and WB pm peak trips
- 89 - All days - Add more running time to schedule to accommodate heavy summer traffic just until September service change
- 147 - Weekdays - No change; Originally, the only northbound afternoon run had been scheduled for cancellation
- 191 - All days - No change: Originally they were going to add short turns between San Juan Capistrano Train Station and San Clemente Metrolink, but that has been cancelled.

New Route 53 SB Layover

Due to complaints from a resident adjacent to route 53's Irvine layover area, the layover will be moved from Culver and Main to West Yale Loop and Alton. The route itself will not be changed; just the layover. This will actually make connections easier from the southbound 79 to the northbound 53, and easier bathroom breaks for the drivers. If this change affects your trip, or to find out when this starts, please contact the Customer Information Center.

No New Service to Replace Loss of Route 1 to Kmart Plaza

Since Route 1 service was deleted to K-Mart Plaza in San Clemente, OCTA has been monitoring customer complaints. They have decided that there isn't enough interest to expand service on the 191 to make up for loss of Route 1 service. If you feel otherwise, please let us know.

Future Call Center Improvements:

In a few months, the Customer Information Center will be able to give out Metrolink, Amtrak, Laguna Transit, and Orange County MTA lines. They will also be open an hour earlier and stay open two hours later. We will announce when this goes into effect.

Transit Tips and Tricks - News You Can Use

This is a monthly section where you can give us your best "insiders information" on tips that make transit riding easier.

Ever have a really tight bus connection? Did you know you can have the driver of your bus call in to have the next bus wait for up to three minutes? This is not possible in every case, but it can be a lifesaver. Let your driver know as soon as you can, because it takes a while to relay the message.

OC Rail News

Irvine CenterLine Special Election

It is now looking like a June 3rd special election in Irvine will include two opposing initiative measures concerning CenterLine. The anti-rail one is from John Kleinpeter of FAIR Transit (nocenterline.com). The pro-rail one is from Sarah Catz, former public member of the OCTA Board.

ANAHEIM: OCTA has voted to contribute \$125,000 to planning studies for an Anaheim-Ontario-Las Vegas high speed rail line. Other funds are coming from Anaheim, Ontario, San Bernardino and \$1.1 million from the Federal Railroad Administration.
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(from pg 11)FULLERTON: The state is proposing to cut \$70 million from the \$250 million funding to add a third main track to the BNSF line towards Union Station in LA. The "Orangethorpe Corridor" grade separations towards the east stand to lose \$12 million. Rep. Gary Miller is asking for \$200 million from the federal government for that project.

GARDEN GROVE: Rep. Loretta Sanchez' office has succeeded in helping OCTA receive a Federal Transit Administration grant of \$1.5 million to help finish the current \$36 million CenterLine preliminary engineering study, due to be completed by this fall.

IRVINE: The environmental impact report has been released for the Great Park Plan and is being challenged by some environmentalists. Included is transit oriented development near the Irvine train station, including 1500 homes, retail, transit and office space on 210 acres.

ORANGE: The state funding for the Orange-Santa Ana Metrolink double tracking construction project may also be delayed.

PLACENTIA: Several of the lawsuits from

the BNSF/ Metrolink crash in 2002 have been combined and sent to Orange County Superior Court. They allege BNSF knew about the risks beforehand but didn't install an automatic braking system for financial reasons. The collision has created the largest number of lawsuits in OC history. The Discovery Channel aired a recreation of the wreck in an episode of their "Critical Rescue" documentary show called "Fateful Journey."

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO: The city and its south county partners of Dana Point and San Clemente have sealed their commitment to prevent double tracking of the rail line through their cities, another project whose state funding is now in question.

SANTA ANA: Sanchez' staffers are also seeking \$107 million for the planned widening of Bristol Street, which could be accomplished in conjunction with CenterLine construction on that alignment.

YORBA LINDA: The city approved its agreement with Anaheim to build a sound wall along the BNSF tracks paralleling Esperanza Road, with construction set to begin during the summer. ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

We wish to belatedly acknowledge Jon Dunn's attendance of the recent Crenshaw Corridor meeting held on Wilshire and Plymouth. Dunn reports due to rain only a handful attended.

The December 5 Daily Breeze article "LAX remote terminal plan takes a step forward" quotes Cecil Carpio.

Cecil Carpio also made public comments at the Jan. 30 SCAG Maglev Task Force meeting.

The Feb. 20 Los Angeles Daily News article "Valley panel seeks delay in bus vote; Advisory council nominees want to add input on routes" quotes Bart Reed and Kymberleigh Richards.

Among those attending the Feb. 22 Gold Line Mission Street station dedication in South Pasadena were Ken Ruben, Anthony Loui and Kris Sharp. Pictures of the event are posted on the Authority website: <http://www.la-pasblueline.org/missionded.htm>

Ken Ruben also attended the March 3 Culver City City Council meeting and made remarks on the 75th anniversary of Culver CityBus. ■

MTA FARE INCREASE

In order to keep up with rising costs, the LACMTA plans to increase fares in January 2004.

There are two options; one would raise the current "special" fares (Senior/Disabled, K-12, and College), the other would not. In any case, this is what the fare increase will mean for regular fare riders:

- The base fare will actually decrease from \$1.35 to \$1.25
- Transfers (and tokens) will no longer be available. Instead, MTA will issue day passes for \$3.
- Weekly, semi-monthly, and monthly passes, currently at \$11, \$21 and \$42, respectively, will rise to \$14, \$27 and \$52.

- There will only be two express zones. (No word yet on how they are configured). Each zone will cost \$.50; express stamps will cost \$15 each. (It is worth noting that MTA no longer operates any express routes longer than the current three zone steps).

A public hearing will be held at 10 a.m. on April 12, in the MTA Headquarters building (One Gateway Plaza, near Union Station).

Unanswered questions at this time include:

- Price of day pass for seniors and other special fare categories
- Policies for interagency trips (e.g. trips currently using an MTA transfer to connect with a Santa Monica Blue Bus)? What about transfers sold to pass users?
- The cost of the new interagency "EZ-pass": will it also change? ■

(Bulletin Board, from page 3)

<http://www.its.berkeley.edu/publications/ejhandbook/ejhandbook.pdf>

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the California Institute for Federal Policy Research are jointly issuing an ongoing series entitled "Federal Formula Grants and California." Reports as they are issued are posted at <http://www.calinst.org/formulas.htm>

Western Transit is the venerable monthly newsletter dedicated to news concerning city, suburban and charter

operations - bus and rail - in the Western United States. One year subscription is \$25 (check or money order made payable to Edmund Buckley) sent to: Western Transit, 11112 Ivanhoe Street, Garden Grove, CA 92840-1133.

As always, The Transit Advocate needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, photographs and research from all members and interested non-members. All materials should be sent to 3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010. (or e-mailed to transit@lerami.lerctr.org). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting. ■

(Transit Update, from page 2)

General public passengers can board at selected fixed stops, while seniors and disabled can get limited curb-to-curb service. During this one year demonstration period, these services are free. For more information: 661-259-9444.

Omnitrans plans the following route changes, to go into effect January 2004:

- #1 - The #1A branch (Gilbert and Pacific) would be handled by a rerouted #5.
- #3 would be combined with #14
- #6 would be combined with #11, making a new Route 11 (no longer serving Muscoy)
- #8 would be rerouted from Rialto, to 3rd/4th, covering the former route of #5.
- #10 would be combined with #12, making a new route #10 between Fontana and Redlands.
- #22 would operate in both directions along the loop in North Rialto.
- A new #28 would replace the current #71 in South Fontana. #29 would operate in South Fontana only (no more service on Cedar).
- #30 and #31 would be replaced by a new "Redlands Trolley" in September.
- #60 would be rerouted to serve Ontario Airport and the new Rancho Cucamonga Town Center.
- #61 will serve Ontario Mills via the bus stop at Milliken and/or 4th (no longer entering the Ontario Mills bus stop area)
- #62 would run between Ontario and Montclair via the route of current #70,

then go to Chino via Mountain.

- #63 would serve Central instead of Mountain south of Walnut.
- #64 (New Route) would operate between Chaffey College and Montclair, principally via 19th St and north Mountain.
- #65 would run every 30 minutes along Central and break up into two loops (60-minute service) serving different parts of Chino Hills.
- #67 would be routed out of Chaffey College to run straight along Baseline. It would also serve Euclid north of Holt.
- #68 would run south of Holt via Ramona to Chino.
- #70 would be cancelled, and replaced by portions of rerouted #62 and #71. Also a new "Flex Route" running on various routings south of the Airport between Ontario Transcenter and Ontario Mills.
- #72 (school tripper service in Chino Hills) would be cancelled.
- #90, 100 would be combined into new route 90. This service will run every 40 minutes and charge a regular Omnitrans fare. This change would also occur this September.

The transfer centers in downtown Ontario and Chino will be improved.

Omnitrans also plans to increase basic fares from \$1 to \$1.15 in September, \$1.30 in July 2005, and \$1.40 in July 2007. The current 10-trip pass would also be replaced with a weekly pass.

SCAT (Ventura/Oxnard local bus) fares could rise to \$1.35, or as high as \$1.50 this July. ■