

# ***THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE***

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates  
September 2013

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*Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) RE 753  
at MBTA yard on August 22, 2013.*

*—Mark Strickert Photo*

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## Bulletin Board / Members in Action

### Production Update:

Due to my travel plans please note the following deadlines for the October issue of the newsletter. All material for consideration must be to me by the posted deadlines. October Issue: Deadline is September 29<sup>th</sup>. Thank You.

### Bulletin Board:

The September meeting will be on the 21<sup>st</sup> due to the Yom Kippur holiday. A guest speaker has not been secured and suggestions are welcome.

We have lined up Linda Culp of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency for our October meeting and Patrick Tomcheck of Los Angeles World Airports on the status of FlyAway at our November meeting.

The Executive Director has come to the conclusion the Banning Centennial TrainFest being held the weekend of October 19-20 is too remote and likely not overly productive for us to have a booth at. He plans to instead place whatever support we can offer to the Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada's presence at the event since they for some time have advocated daily rail service between Los Angeles to Palm Springs and Indio California via the efforts of its Executive Vice President Robert Manning. That seems likely to resonate more with the folks in that area than whatever effort we could muster.

We are a cooperating organization for the 2013 Los Angeles Business Council Mayoral Sustainable Housing, Transportation & Jobs Summit: Sustaining Quality Jobs for LA's Future being held October 18<sup>th</sup> at UCLA's Korn Convocation Hall.



President Zablen will be attending on our behalf. Registration information at <http://labusinesscouncil.org/> or by calling 310.226.7460

### Members in Action:

Mark Strickert attended the Morongo Basin Transit Authority board meeting on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Ken Ruben and Dana Gabbard attended the Metro Citizen's Advisory Council Meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

Andrew Novak and Ken Ruben participated in the Pacific Railroad Society Metrolink Excursion from Los Angeles to Oceanside via Orange and back again via San Bernardino on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Ruben also attended the Metro Westside/Central Service Council Meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup>. He also attended the August 21<sup>st</sup> Santa Monica Big Blue Bus 2014 proposed service change meeting.

Alex Friedman's commentary entitled Welcome to "The Avenue Hollywood," Another Anti-Pedestrian Project appeared on LA Streetsblog.  



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*We now offer the SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF format to our members. The PDF newsletters are available a week before the meeting and are in full color. If you would like to get the PDF newsletter instead of the printed version email us at:*

*[rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com)*

## Transit Updates

### **Airport Bus of Bakersfield (ABOB)**

Effective August 31<sup>st</sup>, Horizon Coach Lines cancelled the Airport Bus of Bakersfield service which operated from Bakersfield to Los Angeles International Airport. For questions or comments contact Horizon Coach Lines at: [ABBinfo@horizoncoachlines.com](mailto:ABBinfo@horizoncoachlines.com)



### **Big Blue Bus**

Effective August 25<sup>th</sup> Santa Monica Big Blue Bus (BBB) made the following service changes.

-Routes 1, 2, 3, 8, 12 and Rapid 12 will serve the new transit hub located on Charles E. Young Drive and Manning Avenue while the Ackerman Terminal is closed. The buses will service this new hub on weekdays from 8:00 PM to 7:00 AM and on weekends. BBB will no longer be able to serve the stop on southbound Westwood Boulevard at the Medical Center. All weekday trips from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM will continue regular service to Hilgard Terminal.

-Routes 1, 2, 3 and 5 have had various weekday morning trips cancelled due to low ridership.

-Rapid 3: New mid-day trips have been added.

-Route 6: The 6:25 PM trip from Palms to SMC and the 1:20 PM trip from SMC to Palms have both been cancelled due to low ridership. Route 6 will continue to operate during the fall and spring semesters with no service during SMC breaks.

-Route 8: Service now begins and ends at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway outside of the fire

house. From 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM service has been decreased and now operates every 20 minutes. Weekday service continues to operate from 6:00 AM to 11:30 PM.

-Route 9: Once construction of the new turnaround is completed, buses will resume end of line service on Marquez Avenue at Sunset Boulevard and will no longer travel westbound on Marquez Avenue.

-Rapid 10: Santa Monica College Express: The 6:31 AM trip from Union Station to SMC now operates as a regular Rapid 10 trip when SMC is in session. SMC-bound riders should disembark on Bundy Drive at Pico Boulevard, and then transfer to a westbound Route 7 or Rapid 7 bus. Riders not headed to SMC are advised to take the 6:36 AM trip when SMC is not in session. The first weekday trip at 5:35 AM departing from 4th Street at Santa Monica Boulevard now leaves five minutes earlier at 5:30 AM to facilitate connections in downtown Los Angeles.

-Rapid 12: Due to low ridership three afternoon trips from UCLA to the Expo Line and one trip from the Expo Line to UCLA have been cancelled.

-Sunset Ride: Due to the closure of SMC's Academy of Entertainment and Technology Campus, the route will be on detour for the next two years. Buses now travel regular route from SMC Bundy Campus to eastbound Pico Boulevard, then turn right on 20<sup>th</sup> Street and head back to Bundy Campus. Buses no longer operate north of 20<sup>th</sup> Street at Pico Boulevard, eastbound Colorado Avenue, southbound Stewart Street and westbound Pico Boulevard.

For more information contact BBB at 310.451.5444

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## *Transit Updates Continued*

### **Gold Coast Transit**

Effective August 18<sup>th</sup> Gold Coast Transit made the following service changes:

- Route 11 will have additional trips.
- Routes 19 and 20 now operates two-ways.
- Routes 19, 20 and 21 now operate on weekends.

### **LADOT**

Commuter Express Line 423 is now directly serving the park-and-ride lot at Kanan and Roadside. Passengers no longer need to park at Kanan and Canwood behind the Pizza Hut they can now use the Kanan and Roadside park-and-ride lot.

### **MegaBus**

Effective August 15<sup>th</sup> the low-cost intercity bus service Megabus.com began stopping at the Burbank Metrolink Station. The Burbank Metrolink Station is a stop on both north and south trips from Los Angeles to the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information visit [megabus.com](http://megabus.com)



*Megabus double-decker DD599 arrives at the Burbank Metrolink Station on August 15, 2013.*

*-Paul Dyson Photo*

### **OCTA**

OCTA recently reported record ridership numbers on this years O.C. Fair bus service. During the five weeks of the service the agency reported nearly 59,000 boardings.

### **Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)**

Effective September 8<sup>th</sup> the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) made several service changes, below is a summary of them.

- Route 1: The schedule has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns, and connections with trains at the Riverside-Downtown Metrolink Station and the West Corona Metrolink Station. The route now has expanded hours of operation on weekdays, running until 11:18 PM.
- Route 7: The first northbound weekday trip departing from Inland Valley Hospital now leaves 15 minutes earlier, at 5:24 AM to improve connections with CommuterLink Route 206 at the Lake Elsinore Outlet Center.
- Route 8: The first northbound weekday trip now departs the Malaga & Mission Trail timepoint 20 minutes earlier, at 5:36 AM to improve connections with CommuterLink Route 206 at the Lake Elsinore Outlet Center.
- Route 10: The 2:25 PM eastbound trip departing the Galleria at Tyler now departs at 2:17 PM to enhance connections to Riverside's Poly High School on weekdays.
- Route 11: The 5:25 PM clockwise trip departing the Moreno Valley Mall now departs at 5:28 PM for better connections with Route 16 on weekdays.

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## *Transit Topics* By Andrew Novak

This month in Transit Topics we have a few things you might have missed from the world of transit.

**Metrolink Leased F59PHs:** Recently Metrolink has begun leasing three former GO Transit (Toronto, Ontario Canada) F59PHs for service while their existing fleet of locomotives are worked on including the installation of Positive Train Control Systems. 18520 and 18522 are still in GO Transit colors while 18533 is wearing the paint scheme of a failed commuter operation from Michigan State. The units are expected to be leased for 6-8 months and it is unknown if Metrolink will repaint the units.



Metrolink Photo

**Niles Coach Lines:** June 21, 2013 marked the last day of the Niles Coach Lines service that operated between the historic Niles District in Fremont and the trains of the Niles Canyon Railway. The popular service began in February 2006 used two historic buses provided by the Pacific Bus Museum and operated by American Stage Tours. The service was cancelled due to elimination of community redevelopment funds. It is unknown at this time if the popular service will ever be restored.

**Roaring Camp at 50:** On April 6, 1963 the first narrow gauge train operated on the newly completed Roaring Camp and Big Trees Railroad in Felton, California. The Roaring Camp and Big Trees was the dream of F. Norman Clark who arrived in Santa Cruz in 1958 with the plan to build a historic railroad through the forest around Felton. Along with the railroad Clark also created a replica of an 1880s lumber mill town for visitors to enjoy. In 1985 Clark's second dream was realized when he reached an agreement with the Southern Pacific Railroad to purchase the Felton Branch and operate standard gauge passenger trains from Felton to Santa Cruz.

Congratulations to the Roaring Camp and Big Trees on 50 years of operation!



**Mount Lowe Railway:** I will conclude this month with a book review, "Then & Now, Mount Lowe Railway" by Michael Patris, Steve Crise, and the Mount Lowe Preservation Society. The book was published by Arcadia Press and takes a look then and now at Pacific Electric's famed Alpine Division which operated to the Alpine Tavern on Mount Lowe. This is a great book on what was once an interesting operation.



OCTA has been selected to be the managing agency for the Pacific Surfliner. As my Streetsblog post "LOSSAN Steering Committee Recommends OCTA Take Over Operations of Pacific Surfliner" noted, that was the recommendation of a Steering Committee set up by the Board of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency to evaluate the three agencies that were candidates to be managing agency: OCTA, Metro and San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS). Interestingly OCTA scored much better than the other two aspirants with 95.1 while Metro with its 85.1 barely beat MTS's 85.0. Yeow!

One question Director Ken Ruben has posed while this entire process unfolded was would it benefit the users. It may but that is by no means assured. The stated goal put forward by LOSSAN is that it result in improved service but how this would occur is generally rather vague versus what would have happened if Caltrans Division of Rail had continued managing it. Much is made of how the Capitols have thrived under the Joint Powers set up over a decade ago and that (by implication) this effort will mirror and/or emulate it. But that was a very different situation than what OCTA will face in undertaking its efforts to fulfill the hopes for better service along the coast corridor. Let us hope this ends up producing something more than rearranging the deck chairs.

Did you notice Metrolink significantly was absent from being among the candidate agencies to manage the Surfliner? As noted in the comments to my Streetsblog piece the commuter rail agency likely demurred from taking on a new challenge in reaction to several factors that constitutes a transi-

tion period for it. These include bringing on a new CEO, coping with financial structural problems revealed in adverse audits plus since December persistent declines in ridership it has suffered in the wake of the latest fare increase. Metrolink has one of the highest farebox recovery ratios (fares as a percentage of operating cost) among transit agencies in the U.S. This is partly a by-product of their governing structure with all the counties who compose its Board often putting their needs first. Remember that next time you hear someone preach it should provide regional service on a level comparable to Long Island Railroad. That isn't remotely in the cards any time soon. 🚊 🚊

### **Thanksgiving is coming soon and so is the day after!**

It is time to once again think about where to go on our Day-After Thanksgiving Trip.

Last year we visited Omnitrans, where should we go this year?

At our September meeting we will be having a discussion on where to go this year, so come prepared with your trip plans!



## ***A trip north on the Coast Starlight (Part 1) By Dana Gabbard***

In early June I travelled on Amtrak's Coast Starlight between Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon to visit my family and witness my autistic nephew's graduation. It was a chance for me to experience for the first time sleeper car service on one of Amtrak's long distance train routes (for my previous two round trips on the Starlight I rode coach). By the way, I have described my preparations for the trip in a post for L.A. Streetsblog ("Dana's Adventures on the Coast Starlight Start Today") so I'll proceed to detailing the start of my journey and what followed.

Wednesday June 5<sup>th</sup> dawned with the classic gloom that afflicts our climate in early summer. Via taxi I arrived at Union Station with my luggage rather early and spent the time people watching as crowds streamed in and out of the station. At the Traxx bar around 8:30 AM Amtrak personnel began setting up the pre-boarding reception for sleeping car passengers which includes complimentary coffee and fruit juice. My larger luggage was tagged and checked in leaving me with my smaller carry bag with a change of clothes plus a bag containing some light snacks to bring aboard. While relaxing I had pleasant conversations with three ladies one of whom even shared with me some dried Okra (a supply of which she obtains whenever visiting Los Angeles because it isn't available where she lives in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho). It is surprisingly sweet and pleasant tasting. She also shared a rather lurid tale about her deceased husband (straight out of Dateline/48 Hours Mystery).

We were not even on the train yet and already we passengers were sharing camaraderie.

SO.CA.TA Director Ken Ruben arrived to see me off and enjoyed some of the beverages. By then we were starting to hear that there were "equipment problems" delaying the start. As the 10:10 AM departure time approached and passed the assemblage began to be antsy. Some even went to the food court to get something more substantial to tide them over. I used the restroom located next to Famima (and bought a gift box of See's candy for relatives).

Finally they started transporting us in waves via an electric cart to the platform for boarding. Ken Ruben kindly helped me navigate the narrow stairs to the roomette that would be my home for the next two days. In the process I somehow managed to cut my finger (but thankfully had a bandage in my travel bag). Glad to finally be underway I settled in, listening to the CDs I had brought. The attendant for our car was Gabriella, who introduced herself and a while later came by to take my lunch order (I elected to take all my meals at my seat). I ate, reviewed the on-board Starlight booklet, and while listening to George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue conducted by Leonard Bernstein enjoyed the beautiful sunshine and passing scene. After a bit I cracked open the first of 4 volumes containing classic Donald Duck comic book reprints (the latter to be gifts to my 3 year old niece who I would be meeting for the first time) as a pleasant diversion while idly sightseeing.

*To Be Continued...*

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***RTA Continued***

-Route 12: The weekday schedule has been adjusted for better connections at the Riverside Downtown Terminal and the Jurupa & Magnolia timepoint. The weekday 3:23 PM eastbound trip from the Merced & Magnolia timepoint has been adjusted to 3:25 PM and extended to Main & Garner.

-Route 13: The 4:58 AM westbound trip departing the Chicago & Marlborough timepoint has been adjusted to depart at 5:03 AM for better connections at the Riverside Downtown Terminal on weekdays.

-Route 15: The weekday schedule has been adjusted for better train connections at the La Sierra Metrolink Station and service also operates until 10:37 PM.

-Route 16: The weekday schedule has been adjusted for expanded hours of operation to 11:15 PM and better connections with routes from the Riverside Downtown Terminal and UCR.

-Route 18: Weekday service now operates until 10:04 PM.

-Route 19: Weekday and Saturday service has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns and provide connections to area middle and high schools and Moreno Valley College. Weekend service to the Perris Fairgrounds will be operated from October 5-13 during the Southern California Fair.

-Route 20: Weekday service now operates until 10:16 PM.

-Routes 21 and 23: Service has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns.

-Route 22: Weekday and Saturday service has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns and provide connections at Lake Elsinore Outlet Center and with Citrus Hill High School bell times.

-Route 24: The route has been modified to serve the Temecula Valley Hospital. The weekend schedule has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns.

-Route 27: Weekday service has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns and provide better connections to other routes and schools including Miller Middle School, Martin Luther King High School and Perris High School.

-Routes 29 and 49: Saturday service has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns.

-Route 31: Weekday service now operates until 10:33 PM.

-Route 32: Weekday service now operates until 10:53 PM and a timepoint has been added at State and Menlo for the alternate weekday routing.

-Route 35: The weekday schedule has been adjusted to improved connections with Pass Transit Route 120.

-Route 51: Service on this route resumes on September 23, 2013.

-Route 74: The weekday schedule has been adjusted for improved connections at the Hemet Valley Mall and MSJC campuses.

-Routes 79, 202 and 216: Weekday service has been adjusted to meet changing traffic and travel patterns.

-Route 206: The schedule has been adjusted for better connections with trains at the Corona Transit Center.

-Route 208: New alternate routing serves Sycamore Canyon Road on select trips.

-Route 210: For improved travel time, bus stops have been discontinued at Beaumont City Hall and Ramsey and Morongo timepoints. A new stop has been added at the Beaumont Walmart.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***RTA Continued***

Both Routes 208 and 210 have had schedule adjustments for better connections with trains at the Riverside-Downtown Metrolink Station.

-Route 212: The schedule has been updated for revised Metrolink train schedules.

-Route 217: Schedule adjustments have been made for better connections from the Hemet Valley Mall to San Diego MTS and NCTD Sprinter Service at the Escondido Transit Center.

For more information contact RTA at 951.565.5002 or online at:

<http://www.riversidetransit.com>



### ***Sun Line***

Effective September 1st, Sun Line in Palm Springs made a couple service changes. Below is a summary of those changes.

Line 15: There was a minor route change and buses now travel via West Street to 4th Street to Cactus Street, due to road layout changes on West & 2nd Streets.

Line 91: This line has been rerouted to serve Mountain View Estates in Oasis on Harrison Street. The route has also been realigned in Indio, traveling on Requa Avenue between Indio Boulevard and Jackson Street. The Du-rovilla bus stop was discontinued and other

schedule changes were made.

Line 95: This new weekday only route has been started to link the Community of North Shore with Mecca, Thermal, Coachella and Indio.

Line 111: The frequency on Saturday and Sundays has been improved to every 20 minutes between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM. The weekday frequencies have been changed to every 30 minutes during the early morning hours and after 6:30 PM.

For more information contact Sun Line at 800.347.8628 or online at:

<http://www.sunline.org>



### ***Thousand Oaks Transit***

Starting August 17<sup>th</sup>, Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT) began Saturday service on all four of their routes with buses operating from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. In conjunction with the Saturday service the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center (265 South Rancho Road) will be open on Saturdays, 8:00 AM to 8:15 PM. Ticket sales will be available from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. For more information contact TOT at 805.375.5473 or online at:

[www.totransit.org](http://www.totransit.org)

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## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### **VVTA**

Effective October 7<sup>th</sup> the Victor Valley Transit Authority will no longer sell Greyhound bus tickets due to expanded BV Link Service. For more information contact VVTA at 760.948.4021 or online at: [www.vvta.org](http://www.vvta.org)

### ***West Hollywood Pick Up Line***

The city of West Hollywood recently launched a new late night bus service on Fridays and Saturdays to help reduce traffic congestion and drunk driving. The new service operates two second hand trolley type vehicles in a four-mile loop from 8:00 PM to 3:00 AM. The buses operate approximately every 15 minutes on Santa Monica Boulevard between Fairfax and Robertson. There are 10 stops in each direction of the loop. 🚌 🚌

## ***New at Metro!***



*Recently Metro debuted a new paint scheme on Light Rail Vehicle 148 (above) operating on both the Blue and Expo Lines. It is expected that most of the fleet will eventually be painted in this new scheme. (Metro Photo) Metro has also taken delivery of their first New Flyer Xcelsior buses numbered 5600 (right). With the arrival of the Xcelsior buses the NABI era has ended at Metro.*



## *Photos of the Month*

*OCTA New Flyer 5594 departs the Anaheim Metrolink on August 5, 2013 as the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey circus trains leaves Anaheim bound for San Diego.*

*—Andrew Novak  
Photo*



*VFTA NABI 805 in Victorville in August 2013. This is one of several NABIs purchased by VFTA from Gwinnett County Transit in Georgia.*

*—Mark Strickert  
Photo*

**How to join SO.CA.TA:** Yearly dues are \$30.00 (\$12.00 low income). Dues are prorated on a quarterly basis.

**Submission of materials:** ALL materials for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter go to Andrew Novak at P.O. Box 2383, Downey California 90242 or to [rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com). Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns.

**Newsletter deadlines** are the Fridays a week before SO.CA.TA meetings, at 6:00 PM Pacific time, unless otherwise announced.

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Webmaster:	Charles Hobbs

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Sep 21<sup>th</sup>** and **Oct 12<sup>th</sup>** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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