

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
November 2013

Vol. 21, No. 11



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Metrolink F59PH 18533 on the point of Train 688 at Orange on October 21, 2013. This is one of three F59PHs being leased by Metrolink.

—Josh Thurman Photo

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Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Patrick Tomcheck of Los Angeles World Airports is the speaker at the November 9th meeting on the status of FlyAway. Our December 14th speaker is Linda Culp of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency. On the 14th we will also hold our annual Holiday banquet at Taix, starting at 5:00 PM.

The day after Thanksgiving transit study tour will be Friday November 29th. Mark Strickert has planned a trip via Metrolink and the B-V Link to ride Victor Valley Transit service.

Members in Action:

Andrew Novak attended the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society Convention in Fresno from October 2-5, 2013.

Congratulations to newsletter editor Andrew Novak who recently became a Certified Tourism Ambassador through the Anaheim/Orange County Visitor and Convention Bureau.

Ken Ruben attended the Metro Westside/Central Regional Service Council meeting on October 9th and the Metro Purple Line extension Section I Advisory Group meeting at the Petersen Automotive Museum on October 29th. Ruben along with Dana Gabbard attended the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting on October 23rd.

Hank Fung attended the I-10 Corridor Advisory Group meeting on the Express Lanes on October 7th. According to the meeting, there will be expanded service on the Silver Line on weekends starting with the December shakeup, funded by Express Lanes toll revenue. 🚆 🚆

Various Historical Societies

Below are a couple of historical societies that might be of interest.

PERYHS: The Pacific Electric Railway Historical Society (PERYHS) operates a website that has hundreds of photos of the Pacific Electric Railway which was considered "The World's Greatest Interurban." To see this amazing collection visit them online at: peryhs.org



SPH&TS: The Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society (SPH&TS) is dedicated to preserving and disseminating the history of the Southern Pacific Railroad including its passenger operations. The society has a quarterly magazine and publishes various books. For more information visit the society on-line at sphts.org



Are you interested in getting your SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF? 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

Transit Updates

Amtrak

Effective October 21st Amtrak San Joaquin Trains 711 and 718 now have single level refurbished Comet Cars on them. The San Joaquin trains operate from Bakersfield to Oakland with bus connections to various places in southern and northern California.

For more information contact Amtrak at 800.872.7245 or online at:

www.amtrak.com

AVTA

Effective October 28th the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) made changes to their bus service, below is a summary of those changes.

Route 96: This supplemental service has been incorporated into the Route 6 service. The new Route 6 service has been enhanced to accommodate schedules for Littlerock High School and additional trips have been added to meet connections at 47th Street and Avenue S.

Route 97: This supplemental service has been incorporated into the Route 7 service. Specific trips have been routed through Highland High School.

Route 10: Schedules have been adjusted to improve running times.

Routes 11/12: These two routes are no longer connected to improve running times. Route 11 now runs along 10th Street West and Avenue K.

Route 99: This supplemental service has been incorporated into the Lake Los Angeles Express.

Lake Los Angeles Express: The running times have been adjusted to improve con-

nections at the Lancaster City Park and the Palmdale Transportation Center (PTC). The route also operates all day and now includes service along Avenue K and Challenger Way and Avenue R between 100th Street East and 110th Street east. The line also travels through Littlerock High School. The route no longer travels along Rancho Vista Boulevard and 10th Street East, which allows for a direct connection to PTC.

Route 785/787: The running times have been adjusted to meet increased ridership levels.

For more information contact AVTA online at: www.avta.com



Bakersfield Bus

Recently a company known as "Interstate Bus" announced plans to operate a bus service from the Amtrak Station in Bakersfield to Los Angeles International Airport similar to the recently cancelled Airport Bus of Bakersfield service. Proposed fares for this service is \$32 one-way and they hope to offer 6 trips per day.

The company hopes to begin service on November 24th pending approval from all regulatory agencies involved. More details as they become available.

(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

Big Blue Bus

From October 30, 2013 to January 22, 2014 Routes 3, 5 and Rapid 3 will have temporary stop relocations near Arizona Avenue and 5th Street due to the opening of the ice skating rink in Santa Monica. For Routes 3 and Rapid 3 the final stop located at Arizona at 5th has been moved approximately 150 feet east, after the intersection (in front of the Mesrian Law Group. The final stop on Route 5 has been moved 200 feet west in front of Bank of America.

Bolt Bus

On October 31st Bolt Bus began operation from Los Angeles to Oakland with a stop in San Jose. The buses pick up on the west side of Union Station in Los Angeles and stop at Diridon Street Station in San Jose and the West Oakland BART station. There are four trips each way with no overnight service. There are no terminals and passengers purchase tickets on-line. For more information visit www.boltbus.com



Foothill Transit

On October 30th Foothill Transit unveiled its new paint scheme after the agency's board meeting. The new paint scheme incorporates the original agency blue and white scheme with a new green strip to mimic the hills of the foothill communities and to show that Foothill is committed to providing envi-

ronmentally friendly transportation. The new scheme comes as Foothill purchases new Compressed Natural Gas NABIs which will allow Foothill to retire the last of the diesel buses in the fleet. The agency will also be taking delivery of 12 new electric buses that will be used on Line 291 making the first all-electric bus line in southern California. Finally the agency is celebrating 25 years of bus service in the San Gabriel and Pomona valleys.



Foothill Transit Photo

MARTA

Effective November 10th, the Mountain Area Regional Transit (MARTA) will be expanding their Off-the-Mountain service from Big Bear to San Bernardino with two new round trips on Sundays. Buses will depart the Interlaken Shopping Center in Big Bear at 6:30 AM and 3:30 PM and returning from San Bernardino at 8:30 am and 5:30 PM.

For more information contact MARTA at 909.878.5200 or online at: <http://www.marta.cc/>

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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.

Buster's make over: Recently OCTA's Buster the Bus display at the La Habra's Children's Museum had a makeover. Buster is the front of former OCTA Flexible 1147 which was donated to the museum 20 years ago. The makeover, sponsored by OCTA and MV Transportation, included fresh paint, new upholstery and updated signage. The new display opened on October 7th and now includes a bus bench and bus stop sign. The La Habra Children's Museum is located at 301 South Euclid Street in the former Union Pacific Station.



Amtrak's new cars: The first of 130 new single-level passenger cars are nearing completion at the CAF USA plant in Elmira New York for Amtrak. These new cars will be for the railroad's east coast long distance trains such as the Lake Shore Limited, Cardinal, Crescent and the Silver Service trains. The new CAF cars will replace the last of the cars Amtrak inherited from the freight railroads when Amtrak was created in 1971. Included

in the 130 car order are 25 sleepers, 25 diners, 25 baggage/dormitory cars and 55 baggage cars. The first cars are expected to begin testing this winter and all 130 cars are the first cars are expected to enter service during the summer of 2014. The full order is expected to be in service by 2015. These cars will have a similar body style to the Viewliner sleepers already in service on Amtrak and will be painted in the classic Amtrak red, white and blue stripes. Below is a photo of one of the new baggage cars.



PRS Museum: The Pacific Railroad Society (PRS) museum in San Dimas recently re-opened after being closed for a month for renovations. Located in the former Santa Fe Station in San Dimas the museum was repainted and had new windows installed. The museum features displays on local railroads including Pacific Electric. The museum is open Monday and Wednesday from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM and on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The museum is located at 210 West Bonita Avenue in San Dimas. Admission is free, donations appreciated.

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"Are L.A.'s Transit Plans Too Big for Eric Garcetti?" is the title of Nate Berg's piece for Next City (<http://nextcity.org>) due to appear about the time this issue of the newsletter sees press. I even have a quote in the piece expressing the view that the high profile way Mayor Garcetti and Council member Mike Bonin took transit to get to city hall on their first day in office is important even if undertaken mostly for the symbolism for the very fact they felt it was worth doing. I passed along to Berg contact information on key stakeholders (Darrell Clarke, Jerard Jones, Jessica Meaney and Deborah Murphy) which I hope he found useful. I am quite curious to see if he can illuminate how much of his political capital Garcetti plans to expend on transportation. Although his recent taped remarks to the Mobility 21 summit plus including transit among the top priorities of his concurrent lobbying trip to Washington DC certainly seem to portend that much like his predecessor expanding the regional mass transit network will be a priority for Garcetti.

With the recent announcement that Jaime de la Vega will not continue as General Manager of the Department of Transportation (for those keeping score regarding transportation related General Managers for the city of L.A. coming or going in the wake of the start of the Garcetti era Gina Marie Lindsey at L.A. World Airports stays, de la Vega exits while Geraldine Knatz at L.A. Port is "retiring" in January) there will be I imagine intense interest as to who is selected to head LADOT likely with a mandate to continue the process of bringing it into the 21st century and out of its 1950s traffic engineer mentality. Glad I am not a candidate for that thankless task!

Garcetti's remarks at the summit were especially significant for signaling what I have long suspected was in the offing, that the re-try at Measure J (dubbed Measure R++ by Damien Newton of L.A. Streetsblog) will include re-opening the project list and probably entail horse trading between regions. I used to sardonically say with enough billions on the table everyone can leave happy, but maybe that isn't true. My latest rule of advocacy I've coined is it is hard to divide a pie when there is a pie and a half of appetite that it has to satisfy. Thank goodness I'm just a spectator of this process!

Stakeholders also need to consider how to make sure the new campaign effort doesn't fall short the way the one for Measure J did. Of course one key obstacle that hobbled the J effort won't be repeated. The Governor delaying putting his name to the bill putting J on the ballot until nail-bitingly near the actual election date due to his concerns regarding J possibly complicating his effort to pass Prop 130 and stabilize the state budget. The wild gallop pace this forced the campaign to adopt because so little time remained leaves me amazed with all that how close J came to meeting the 2/3's requirement. But still folks like the Bus Riders Union and Damien Goodman (among others) will take advantage of any J re-try to again grab the media spotlight they gloried in during the previous effort and cloud the debate with phony soundbites of various varieties. Advocates need to prepare and be ready to cut this nonsense off at the knees.

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Public and Legislative Affairs Continued

I have discovered that Ed Imai, longtime Principal Consultant to the Assembly Transportation Committee, has retired.

I'll conclude by sharing comments by SO.CA.TA co-founder Steve Crosmer: "Public transit and Amtrak supporters lost a supporter for their causes in Congress [October 18th]. Long-term congressman C.W. "Bill" Young, who was my congressional representative from Florida, passed away from health problems involving cancer related issues and back problems. ... he was the longest-serving Congressional member on the Republican side of the aisle. He had served for over 20 terms, and was first elected as a Democrat back in 1972. His home was in the Tampa Bay area in St. Petersburg. SO.CA.TA founder Pat Moser had known him, as well as myself. Congressman Young was a true supporter for public transit and Amtrak, as well as a supporter for the health care for our Veterans of the armed forces. We have one of the finest VA Hospitals in the nation here at Bay Pines in St. Petersburg. He will be sorely missed, as he was a household name throughout Pinellas County". 🚌 🚌

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<p>SUN</p>  <p>BASEBALL</p>	<p>MON</p>  <p>Disneyland</p>	<p>TUE</p>  <p>GRIFFITH PARK</p>	<p>WED</p>  <p>NU-PIKE</p>	<p>THU</p>  <p><i>Arboretum</i></p>	<p>FRI</p>  <p>EXPOSITION PARK</p>	<p>SAT</p>  <p>Knott's Berry Farm</p>
<p><i>Take Your Pick</i></p> <p>Olvera Street Forest Lawn LaBrea Tar Pits International Airport Mountain Resorts</p>	<p>MON</p>  <p>PACIFIC OCEAN PARK</p>	<p>TUE</p>  <p>hollywood BOWL</p>	<p>WED</p>  <p>Marineland</p>	<p>THU</p>  <p>Huntington Library</p>	<p>FRI</p>  <p>Orange Empire</p>	<p>SAT</p>  <p>FARMER'S MARKET</p>
<p>SUN</p>  <p><i>Beaches</i></p>						

For details on how to use M·T·A Service, read the back of this Calendar...and remember...

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Transit Updates Continued

RTA

The Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) customer information center is now open until 10:00 PM seven days a week. On weekdays the center opens at 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM on weekends. The call center can be reached at 951.565.5002

Effective November 3rd the northbound Route 22 and southbound Route 27 stop on Trautwein Road at the Albertson's Shopping Center in Riverside has been moved north approximately 150 feet to a bus turn-out.

VVTA

In September and October the Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA) made several changes to their service. Below is a summary of those various changes.

Effective September 23rd the dock assignments at the Lorene and 7th Transfer facility were changed to improve passenger connections.

Effective October 7th the following changes were made:

Route 32: This line has been extended to Muskat and El Mirage and re-routed through the Southern California Logistics Airport.

Route 33: Re-routed to serve the Adelanto High School area.

Route 40: This line no longer travels on Ramona Avenue and now serves the Granite Hills High School area.

Route 41: The line now serves the Apple Valley Town Hall area.

Route 43: The line now serves the Apple Valley Town Center area.

Route 44: This line will now serve the Mall of Victor Valley via the new Nisqualli overpass.

Route 45: The 45 has been split into two routes. The 45 goes from Lorene and 7th to

Victor Valley College via Burning Tree, Green Tree, Yates, Mariposa, Nisqualli, Hesperia and Bear Valley. The other half of the line is the new Route 55:

Route 51: This line now operates bi-directionally and only serves the northern half of the former loop from Lorene and 7th to Victor Valley Community Hospital. The southern portion of the loop is now served by the re-routed 45 and the new Route 55.

Route 53: The line now serves Bear Valley directly between Victor Valley College and the Mall of Victor Valley.

Route 54: The loop has been shortened west of US 395 and has been extended east to the Mall of Victor Valley.

Route 55: This new route goes from Lorene and 7th to Victor Valley College via La Paz, Hughes, Rodeo, Seneca, Hesperia, Green Tree, Arrowhead and 7th Avenue, Jasmine, Hesperia and Bear Valley.

Starting on October 8th Route 15, the BV Link now operates Monday through Friday. With this service operating five days a week, VVTA will no longer selling Greyhound Tickets.

Effective October 13th new Sunday began with hourly service on Routes 31, 32, 41, 43, 44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 53 and 55. Routes 21, 22 and 23 operate every two hours on Sunday.

For more information contact VVTA at 760.948.3030 or online at:

<http://www.vvta.org>

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Transit Topics Continued

Little Joe's falls: Once an institution in downtown Los Angeles, Little Joe's restaurant on North Broadway will soon be torn down to make way for a new mixed use complex that will link the Chinatown Gold Line Station to Broadway. The project named "Blossom Plaza" will be a five story building with an ethnic flair to compliment the neighborhood. Little Joe's opened in the early 1900s and in 1927 moved to it's location on Broadway. The legendary restaurant closed in 1998 when the owners were faced with expensive upgrades to comply with building codes for earthquake safety and disabled access.



Santa Train Returns: On November 23rd the CSX railroad will once again operate the annual Santa Train from Shelby Kentucky to Kingsport Tennessee. Along the 110-mile route Santa and his elves distribute more than 15 tons of toys, food and other gifts to people gathered at the 14 scheduled stops. This marks the 71st anniversary of the Appa-

lachian tradition which was started by the Clinchfield Railroad in 1943. For more information visit: www.teamsantatrain.org

Sun Rail Testing: At the end of October Sun Rail in Orlando Florida began testing trains. The new commuter rail service is scheduled to begin operation from DeBray (north of Orlando) to Sand Lake Road, 32 miles south. The service is similar to Metro-link and is scheduled to begin operation in early 2014. The service is expected to operate every 30 minutes during the peak hours and every two hours during the non-peaks. For more information visit: www.sunrail.com



RTP News and Views: I will conclude this month with some self promotion. RTP News and Views Jr. Newsletter (Volume 11½, Issue 6, October 2013) is complete. This issue contains 10 years of the Gold Line Part 1, the San Pedro Red Car at 10 Part 1 and a look at Metro Line 401. Issues are for sale/trade in either print or PDF, email me at rtd1121@yahoo.com for more information. Written inquiries can be sent to:

Andrew Novak
P.O. Box 2383 - Downey, CA 90242



Transit Updates Continued

VISTA

Effective October 21st the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) issued a new schedule for the Vista Coastal Express with slight schedule changes, added stops in Carpinteria, and more direct service between Carpinteria and Goleta. For more information contact VCTC at 800.438.1112 or online at: <http://www.goventura.org>

Wellness Center Shuttle

Coming soon, the Wellness Center Shuttle will operate from County USC Medical Center to County USC busway station via USC University Hospital. This new service is expected to start before the end of the year and will operate every 15 minutes from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday to Saturday. 🚌 🚌

Day After Thanksgiving Trip

Don't forget this year for our Day After Thanksgiving Trip we will be traveling to Victor Valley on the newly expanded BV Link Service operated by the Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA).

This trip will be on Friday November 29th and we hope to see you there!

Our trip begins at Los Angeles Union Station and we will meet between 5:00 AM and 5:30 AM at the fish tank under Gateway Plaza.

Below are some of the key departure times for the trip. For the complete schedule see our October Issue or email our newsletter editor at rtd1121@yahoo.com

Metrolink Train 300

Departs (DP) LA: 5:45 AM

Arrives (AR) San Bernardino 7:50 AM

If the train is running late we can catch the BV Link at Fontana at 8:40 AM. Train 300 is scheduled in Fontana at 7:30 AM.

VVTA Route 15 (BV Link)

DP San Bernardino: 8:08 AM

AR Lorene & 7th: 9:30 AM

(VVTA riding at this point.)

Return to Los Angeles:

Metrolink Train 333

DP San Bernardino: 4:00 PM

AR Fontana Metrolink: 4:11 PM

AR LA: 6:05 PM

**Optional riding including Omnitrans or a round trip on Pass Transit Line 120 to Beaumont.*

Projected Cost:

Metrolink: Round Trip to San Bernardino \$26.50 (\$13.25 one-way) (In years past Metrolink has offered the \$10 weekend pass on the day after Thanksgiving.)

VVTA Round Trip on BV Link and all other VVTA buses \$12.00

To download complete schedules and get information on senior/disabled fares visit:

www.metrolinktrains.com

www.vvta.org

As Always you are welcome to join us for all or any portion of the trip. 🚌 🚌



Photos of the Month

Fresno Area Express (FAX) Gillig 9701 in downtown Fresno on October 4, 2013.

FAX still has a handful of these high floor buses still in service.

—Andrew Novak Photo



Metrolink F59PH 18520 brings up the rear of Metrolink Train 689 at the Orange Station on October 21, 2013. This is one of three former GO-Transit units Metrolink is currently leasing. This one still wears GO-Transit colors.

—Josh Thurman 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. 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.

Opinions: Unless clearly marked as "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all written material within, including all inserted flyers and postcards, are the expressed opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

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NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Nov 9th** and **Dec 14th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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