

TRANSIT UPDATES *Have anything to report? Call 213 388 2364*

The **Metrolink** Santa Clarita Line now serves Lancaster on Saturdays (three round trips - two additional round trips operate between Los Angeles and Santa Clarita only)

Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley commuters can now take advantage of a new "Flexpass" that is valid for both Metrolink and **SCT/AVTA** buses. For more information, call (800) 974 6866 x200

MTA Route #215 weekend service has been cancelled (Weekend service between Redondo Beach and the Green Line is provided by the Redondo Beach WAVE dial-a-ride system)

New MTA route #646 was created. It is a service that runs late nights only (i.e. owl service) between Carson Mall (connecting with #446) and San Pedro. #646 is a flexible-route line, similar to #608 (Crenshaw Connector)

Due to construction on Sixth St. in Downtown Los Angeles, the following routes have been rerouted to use Seventh St: MTA #16, 18, 53, 460, 462, 470/471; **Montebello** #40,341/ 342/ 343; and **OCTA** 701, 721

As of March 2 the following changes will be in effect for **Santa Monica Muni. Bus Lines**:

- #9 (Pac Palisades-Olympic Blvd) will operate along Olympic Blvd all day, every 30-minutes (#9 used to run peak-hours only on Olympic, leaving that portion of Olympic unserved for most of the day)
- #12 will have 30 minute mid-day service, and will operate all the way to UCLA on Saturday
- #14 will have 15-minute peak hour headways, as well as new Sunday service.

The City of **Avalon**, on Santa Catalina Island, has started its new fixed route transit service. Currently, service is only provided during the following days and times:

- Thursday: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Friday: 4:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
- Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Sunday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

Service will expand with the summer tourist season. The single route starts at Pebbly Beach and includes the Mole (where Ferries dock), the Botanical Garden and the Casino. Fare is \$1, service is bi-directional and with 30 minute headways. No schedule is yet available, service is provided by Catalina Transportation who also operate the taxi service in Avalon - (310) 510-0342.

OCTA Route #309 (Irvine-Rancho Santa Margarita) has been cancelled; new routes #162 (weekend-only minibus serving Santa Ana, Little Saigon and Westminster Mall) and #479 (Metrolink shuttle from Santa Ana to Costa Mesa) were created.

Inland Empire Connection Route #496 has been given a short reprieve. The Riverside County Transportation Commission has supplied funding to run it thru March weekends only.

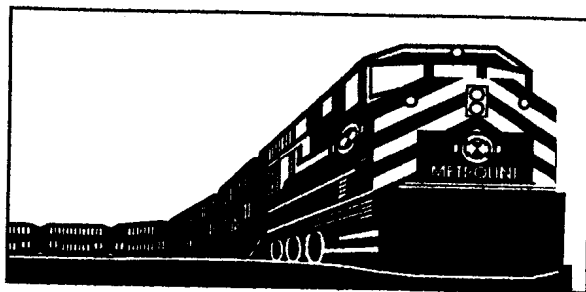
The **Morongo Indian Reservation** now has a transit system (dial-a-ride?) that connects with Banning's Cabazon express bus at the Morongo Casino.

Camarillo has dropped most of its fixed-route service in favor of dial-a-ride. The remaining fixed route connects Leisure Village with several shopping centers in Camarillo.

Five **Harbor Freeway Transitway** bus stations will open in 1997: Slauson (Apr 30); Artesia (May 31); Manchester and Rosecrans (July 31) and 37th St (Nov 30). Carson St and Pacific Hwy stations will open in late 1998.

BULLETIN BOARD

Edward Simburger, author of *The Complete Guide to the Los Angeles Metrolink Commuter Rail System*, will give a presentation at our March 8th meeting beginning at 2 p.m. As usual the meeting will begin at 1 p.m. We will likely try the 3x5 card format for the question and answer portion with a moderator.



State Senators Quentin Kopp and Tom Hayden have authored Senate Bill 837. This bill would abolish the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and would create the Los Angeles Transit District, the Los Angeles Rail Authority, and the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission as successor agencies.

Woody Rosner and John Ulloth continue working on a proposal for a SO. CA.TA T-Shirt. They actively solicit input, and will have a brief workshop on it after our March 8th meeting.

MTA has settled on a new color scheme for its buses - white with gold trim. It is reported to cost 25% less to repaint their buses than the present color scheme. All rail cars, signage, etc. will eventually coordinate with the new look.

MTA may have adopted an alternative for expanding Santa Monica Blvd. between the San Diego Freeway and Beverly Hills by the time you read this (or not, as there is some resistance to the plan in the surrounding community). To get on the mailing list for meeting notices, etc. call Peter DeHaan at MTA - (213) 922-3062. A Report Summary of the final report can be obtained by contacting MTA'S Lynne Goldsmith at (213) 922-3068.

OCTA is conducting a survey for a Corridor Major Investment Study in central Orange County (Fullerton to Irvine) for a possible rail system as mandated by Measure M or other alternative. For a survey or further details contact OCTA Community Relations at (714) 560-5553 or do the survey via the net: <http://www.octa.net>.

We will discuss at our March 8th meeting a motion supporting the later weekday service South Coast Area Transit plans to implement this summer. These are the sorts of initiatives that need support from groups like ours to aid agencies when seeking funds for such improvements.

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) 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 date.

I saw MTA's bus 4735. Two words: Totally awesome!!! Let me tell you the features on it:

- Talking Bus. Not only does it call out the next stop (only stop announced on this demo version was Century & Concourse), but just as the door opens, it calls out on the exterior speaker the number of the bus (limited or express if it is a 300, 400, or 500), and let's not forget a LED headsign on the inside. Once the cord is pulled, it will say "Stop Requested" and what the next stop is. The supervisor on there also said that they will be calling out stops and service in Spanish as well.

- Camera with TV. The driver can switch it between 3 locations (outside right, view from the front to back, and from the back to front), and also, can turn on the record feature for taggers and criminal acts. It also relays information to the police.

- The new MTA paint job. It does not look like 1445 or 2000, but it is sharp. There are no stripes in the back, the striping begins at the words "Metro Bus", and 2 orange stripes cover the bus. However, there are no M's! Also, what was unusual is that near the back wheels, they put stickers saying "Operated by MTA". It's weird because we know MTA operates it, unless they do a San Diego and buy new buses for the contractors. Also, advertisements will now be stuck directly on the sides of the bus, similarly to Torrance Transit, rather than, using a metal rack.

- Leather Recaro seat for the driver.

Don't expect this bus to operate very soon. It still needs a farebox installed. It might go to either Division 5 or 10. (Yes, Division 5, because the ONE driver who gets 4500s on Vermont likes it so much that they might bring the 4700s to 54th & Arlington).

(from page 5) But it will require both a sustained effort and a rethinking of tactics.

Rail passengers need to contact their legislators and remind them of the contribution to our region's economic survival that Amtrak, MTA, Metrolink, and the other public transportation systems make. Here as in most areas of the country, transit equals jobs, and rail equals communities that people want to live in. If highway lobbyists give us "HOTEA," our

region, city and suburbs alike, gets burned. With a conservative Congress no longer a one-time aberration but a realignment, liberal arguments for balanced transportation have to be augmented by conservative ones. But reason and the facts are in favor of ISTEAs' basic principles. Will they be able to overcome the dollars and clout of the highway lobbyists?

ISTEA REAUTHORIZATION. *Matthew Mitchell, DVARP*

NOTE: This material appeared in the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers newsletter, and is being reproduced here, (modified to reflect Southern California issues) with their permission. For more information, contact DVARP at Box 7505, Phila, PA 19101 (<http://www.libertynet.org/~dvarp>)

When Congress convenes this month, reauthorization of Federal transportation programs is on the must-pass agenda. But there will be heated debate over the very soul of those programs. Highway lobbyists have been looking forward to this reauthorization ever since Republicans won control of the House and Senate in 1994. Landmark legislation passed five years ago, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), turned the Federal government's transportation policy away from a road-building program laden with pork-barrel projects, and towards a flexible approach where decisions are made locally and highway-only policies are explicitly rejected.

Transit advocates and supporters of a more balanced transportation system say ISTEA is working, but being undercut by state government officials who still haven't gotten the message that expanding roads sometimes makes transportation problems worse rather than better. That view is borne out by the news from the states. The new approach is making planners in some states more responsive to local needs, and to the needs of non-drivers. In other states, it's still business as usual: transportation equals roads, roads equal

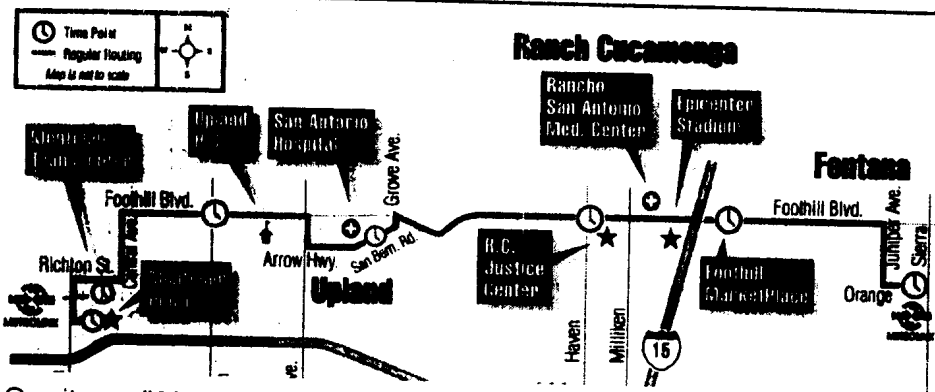
transportation.

ISTEA opponents are hanging their case on appeals to the Republicans' efforts to reduce the size of the government. They see ISTEA's requirement of a level playing field as an intrusion, and a blueprint for expanding bureaucracy at all levels of government. Opponents are also using budget restraint arguments to mask their demand for more road spending. Names like "truth in budgeting" have been attached to measures intended to force the government to increase road spending, and to abolish programs for mass transit programs or Amtrak. The clever acronym "HOTEA": highways-only transportation efficiency(?) act, has been applied to their alternative to ISTEA renewal.

Pro-transit votes from urban Democrats are assured, but are not enough to pass a bill. Republicans from northeastern states will be the deciding votes on the issue. ISTEA first passed with bipartisan support, including that of President Bush. Many of those Republicans have expressed support for transit because they know their constituents, both business and commuters, want it.

Some of those Republicans will be torn between the needs of their constituents and ideological arguments against Federal support of Amtrak and mass transit. They may be swayed by the recent surge in interest in public transit as a conservative issue. Opportunity exists to build a strong bipartisan consensus, protect the balance forged by ISTEA, and even to make sure that all the states follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law. (*see page 4*)

ROUTE OF THE MONTH



ROUTE: Omnitrans #66

WHERE DOES IT GO:

Montclair Plaza, Montclair Transcenter, Upland, San Antonio Hospital, Rancho Cucamonga, Epicenter Stadium, Foothill Marketplace, Fontana, Fontana Metrolink

WHEN DOES IT RUN:

Weekdays from 4:45 a.m. to 10:14 p.m.;
 Saturday from 7:05 a.m. to 6:55 p.m.
 Sunday from 8:06 a.m. to 6:04 p.m.
 No service on major holidays

WHAT IS THE FARE?:

\$.85 regular, \$.35 seniors/disabled

SPECIAL NOTES:

- Route #66 is named after historic Hwy 66 (Foothill Blvd) where it operates.
- All Omnitrans buses are equipped with bike racks.
- Omnitrans issues day passes (\$2 reg/\$1 s/d) instead of transfers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call Omnitrans at 1-800-966-6428

TRANSIT TRIVIA *Chris Ledermuller/Russ Jones*

Last month's Transit Trivia question was:

Question: This month's route of the month is Long Beach Transit's Land Shark II. What line was the original Land Shark?

The answer:

Line 141-Long Beach to San Pedro. (LADOT then took over the service until it was combined into current Line 142).

This month's Transit Trivia question:

How many MTA routes run Monday through Saturday only and which are they?

(The answer will be in next month's Transit Advocate, and announced at the March SO.CA.TA meeting!)