

Members in Action

Andy Novak and Charles Powell attended the Pacific Bus Museum (PBM) AC Transit Excursion in Oakland and Berkeley on Sept. 26th.

Ken Ruben attended the afternoon session of the Culver CityBus outreach meeting on Sept. 30th, along with the Metro Westside Sector Governance Council Meeting on Sept. 9th and the Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Council Meeting on Sept. 14th.

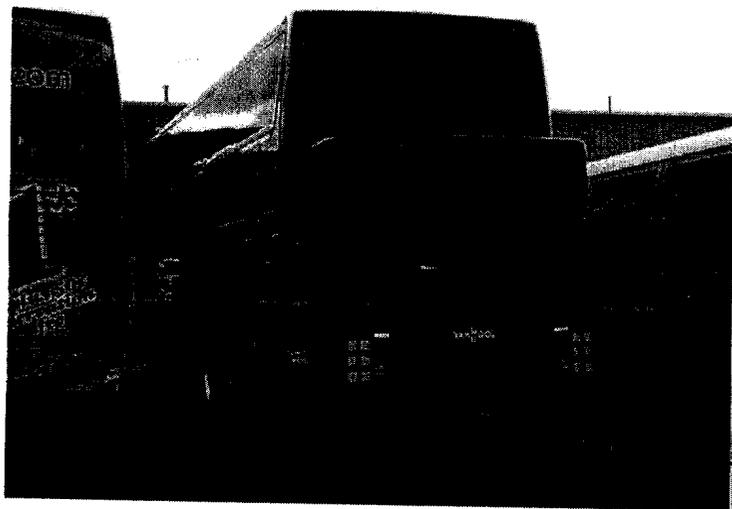
Ken Ruben, Nate Zablen, Joe Dunn, Bart

Reed and Kymberleigh Richards attended the Metro Board Meeting on September 24th.

Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruben attended the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting on September 23rd.

Bart Reed, John Ulloth, and Ken Ruben attended the Friends 4 Expo Meeting on Sept. 15th. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Buses with backpacks



Above is one of the new Van Hools with the "backpack" attached. At right we see a couple of the "backpacks" waiting to be installed on buses.

Both photos were taken at the Coach USA yard in Elizabeth, New Jersey on September 26, 2009 by Wayne Doran.

For more info visit: www.megabus.com

Recently Mega Bus began placing Van Hool Double-Decker buses in service on their New York routes.

The Van Hools have a limited amount of space for luggage and so Mega Bus has purchased these "backpacks" that are attached to the rear of the buses for additional luggage space.

Mega Bus offers low-cost bus service in the New York and Chicago areas.



Transit Updates

Disneyland Resort Express

On September 23rd, the Disneyland Resort Express, operated by Coach America, changed their schedules for both the LAX and Santa Ana airport schedules.

The 5:00 am buses from Anaheim (Disneyland Hotel) to both airports were canceled and the first trips now leave Anaheim at 6:00 am.

The 11:30 pm and 12:30 am trips from LAX to Anaheim were canceled. The last bus from LAX is at 10:30 pm. The midday half hour service from LAX to Anaheim now operates between 10:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Service from the Santa Ana airport to Anaheim now operates hourly from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm with half hour service from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

For more information visit:
www.graylineanaheim.com



LADOT

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) has begun an analysis of all their transit services due to budget shortfalls.

The agency will be look at all routes and focus on those that have low ridership, are under performers, or duplicate existing bus service provided by other agencies.

Aside from the cost savings, LADOT is also hoping to improve the efficiency of their service with these changes.

LADOT is seeking input from riders to help in the analysis process.

Riders and concerned parties can contact LADOT in the follow ways:

By Internet at: <http://ladotlbl.tmdinc.net>

By Telephone at: 213.455.0880

By Mail at:
LADOT

201 N. Los Angeles Street, Space #18B
Los Angeles, CA 90012

LADOT will schedule a series of public hearings to discuss the changes once the analysis is complete.

Norwalk Transit System

Several routes in the Norwalk Transit System were restructured on September 27th, see September Transit Advocate for details. Along with the route changes Norwalk Transit also made adjustments to the frequency and span of service on various routes.

Route 1 on weekdays will now operate from 5:29 am to 11:01 pm every 30 minutes.

Route 1 on weekends will now operate from 8:02 am to 5:35 pm every 45 minutes.

Route 3 on weekdays will now operate from 5:31 am to 7:31 pm every 60 minutes.

Route 3 on weekends will now operate from 7:52 am to 5:31 pm every 90 minutes.

Route 7 on weekdays will now operate from 6:17 am to 6:55 pm every 45 minutes.

Route 8 on weekdays will now operate from 5:08 am to 8:57 pm every 60 to 80 minutes.

Routes 7 and 8 do not operate on weekends.

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Transit Updates Continued

Norwalk Transit System continued

On November 1st, Norwalk Transit will raise base fare to 90¢ and will also raise the interagency transfer price to 50¢.

The senior, disabled, and student fares will remain unchanged. Also the price of local transfers will also remain unchanged.

Construction is scheduled to begin on December 1st for a new parking lot at the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink station. The new parking lot will be on the Santa Fe Springs side of the station and work is expected to be completed by June 30, 2010.

OCTA

On October 26th OCTA will hold a public hearing at their headquarters to hear comment on the proposed changes for March 2010. Any and all OCTA riders are encouraged to attend this event and comment on the changes proposed.

Details on the proposed changes are available on the OCTA website at:
<http://www.octa.net/pdf/reductionbooklet.pdf>

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)

On September 21st RTA began new evening Route 53 "Bear Runner" line serving UCR Lot 30, University Village, Canyon Crest Towne Centre and off-campus housing.

The RTA Board awarded a \$4.5 million construction bid to San Dimas-based Seawest Enterprises to construct the Corona Transit Center. The project will include eight bus bays and a bridge to the North Main Corona Metrolink Station. The funding for this project is coming from federal, local and Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) sources. Construction is expected to begin by January.

Rail 2 Rail Changes (Amtrak-Metrolink)

On August 1st, Amtrak single and round-trip tickets will no longer be accepted on Metrolink trains. Metrolink will continue to accept Amtrak monthly passes under Rail 2 Rail.

All Amtrak and all Metrolink ticket types will continue to be accepted daily on both Metrolink and Amtrak trains between Burbank Airport and Los Angeles Union Station. This also includes shared service trains, Metrolink 158/Amtrak 768 and Metrolink 153/Amtrak 799.

Marina Del Rey WaterBus

Over the summer the Marina Del Rey WaterBus carried over 40,000 passengers between various points within the Marina. This was a ridership record for the service funded by Los Angeles County which began operation in 2002. Contractor Hornblower Cruises & Events, utilized four new pontoon boats and the vessel "Cabaret" for the water-based service. 🚢 🚢 🚢

OCTA's Action Plan TO BALANCE BUDGET

APPROVED & PLANNED POSITION REDUCTIONS

Approved Position Reductions

Service Change	Bus Operators	Mechanics	Service Workers
December 2008	18	0	0
March 2008	32	6	11
June 2009	31	4	2
September 2009	64	7	4
December 2009	0	0	0
	145	17	17

Planned Position Reductions

Service Change	Bus Operators	Mechanics	Service Workers
March 2010	191	35	20
June 2010	0	0	0

Metro Board Report for September 2009 by Kimberleigh Richards

After a month off, there was surprisingly little in the way of major Metro Board actions in September. We'll take advantage of that to spend a little extra column space reporting on the item that consumed more of the Board's time than anything else in recent memory; even the annual budget discussions took less time than ...

The Final Chapter Of The AnsaldoBreda

Story?: Despite the simplified version that appeared in the local media of what happened at the Board meeting about the long-debated AnsaldoBreda (AB) light rail vehicle contract, it's not quite a done deal.

Having sat through a full two hours of public comment and Board discussion, I have to say that I have never seen anything like this before ... and I've seen a lot of strange things happen in that room.

We start with the memo CEO Art Leahy distributed to the Board two days before the meeting, in which he listed the remaining deficiencies in his attempts to negotiate some kind of commitment out of AB. It turns out that the much-ballyhooed "letter of credit" from AB was actually their way out of a performance bond covering the full amount of the contract. AB's proposed modifications to the cars to cover the overweight issue raised "technical concerns" with Metro Rail operations, and AB did not agree on the price per car, all of which caused Leahy to recommend that Metro "not exercise the options with AB and proceed with seeking industry bids on a new rail car procurement."

Of course, "no" is an answer very few like to hear. The labor unions didn't like it, AB didn't like it, most of the Board members didn't like it. (The BRU, in its usual single-minded way, asked why their bus plan couldn't be

considered instead so that Metro wouldn't have to worry about light rail cars.)

Although Mike Antonovich, citing all of the unresolved issues, put forward a motion to abandon the option and start a new bid process, and Mark Ridley-Thomas wanted to delay another 30 days in order to determine if federal stimulus money was being put at risk by the delay thus far (the contract has gone more than a year past the point where Federal Transit Administration rules allow federal money to be spent on it).

What finally passed was a motion by Richard Katz, modified by John Fasana to up the ante by raising the "refillable \$300 million" letter of credit to \$75 million per filling (rather than the \$50 million they proposed) and by Zev Yaroslavsky to require that every previous deficiency be resolved, to allow the CEO to go one more round with AB to resolve the remaining issues. The difference this time: If the issues are resolved, Leahy has been directed to exercise the option ... but if those issues aren't resolved by October 24, he cancels the option and starts a new bidding process.

Of course, there is another Board meeting two days before that "drop dead" date, so anything can – and probably will – happen. In the meantime, thank Antonovich, Diane DuBois, and Pam O'Connor for refusing to go along with the new compromise (José Huizar had a conflict of interest; Gloria Molina was conspicuously absent when the vote was taken).

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I grow tired of the Gold Line Foothill extension folks and their lies. It is beyond sad to see current Metro Board

Chair Ara Najarian pander to them with comments like "There are still officials at the MTA who want to kill the Gold Line project." ("Agency seeks deep-pockets contractor willing to fast-track Gold Line extension project" Pasadena Star-News Sept. 30th). I pray he doesn't believe that nonsense.

Meanwhile the Sierra Madre Weekly (<http://sierramadreweekly.com>) and blog Sierra Madre Tattler (<http://sierramadretattler.blogspot.com>) report that city is about the withdraw from the Southern California Association of Governments. This is all treated as if was a uprising by the beleaguered masses overthrowing big bad SCAG. Too bad the elects and locals are unaware the various mandates they despise will stay in force whether or not they belong to SCAG. But I am sure eventually they'll learn that bit of news...

My report on the Mobility 21 Conference appeared Sept. 23rd on Streetsblog (<http://la.streetsblog.org/>). Coverage of the summit seemed rather thin in the local media and I felt it deserved more attention than that, even if it is just a glorified dog and pony show.

Turns out the Transit TV story is more complicated than first reported. Sun Valley based Tezo Systems, which provides technology to transit agencies, acquired Transit TV in late May. Transit Systems are assisting in providing content and also the logistics of installing equipment at Metro's divisions for downloads.

After a long period of denial Metro management concedes TAP is in poor shape. The Sept. 21st Board Box memo by Metro CEO Art Leahy in reaction to the initial findings of a KPMG review heralds a shakeup of the program.

Meanwhile Foothill is spending \$2.4 million to have mag stripe readers installed on its buses, a huge rebuke of TAP. I have to agree with many who call TAP a utter fiasco in the making.

Alex Clifford, until recently General Manager of the Metro Gateway Sector, is now the agencies' lead for high speed rail issues.

At our Sept. 9th meeting Michael Biagi, the landside operations manager at LAX, shared some interesting information about Flyaway. Such as Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) has made a commitment via various legal agreements to implement nine (9) total Fly-Away locations by 2015. Which he concedes considering the weak economy may be an overambitious goal.

I was surprised to learn the Flyaway contracts for Westwood & Irvine have been linked--while Biagi said LAWA is seeking to encourage smaller companies to bid on Flyaway routes I don't see how being asked to handle operating from such widely separated locations is in line with that goal. And the justification Biagi gave for no longer taking cash at Van Nuys Flyaway seemed very thin and essentially boiled down to an inability to overcome their own incompetence. What?

Recently some folks on the 7th floor of Metro's Taj Mahal tried to toss the historic line records, a irreplaceable resource documenting service comments and other infor-

Public and Legislative Affairs Continued

mation reaching back decades. Thankfully they were saved at the last moment and will be kept henceforth in the Metro library. Words fail me!

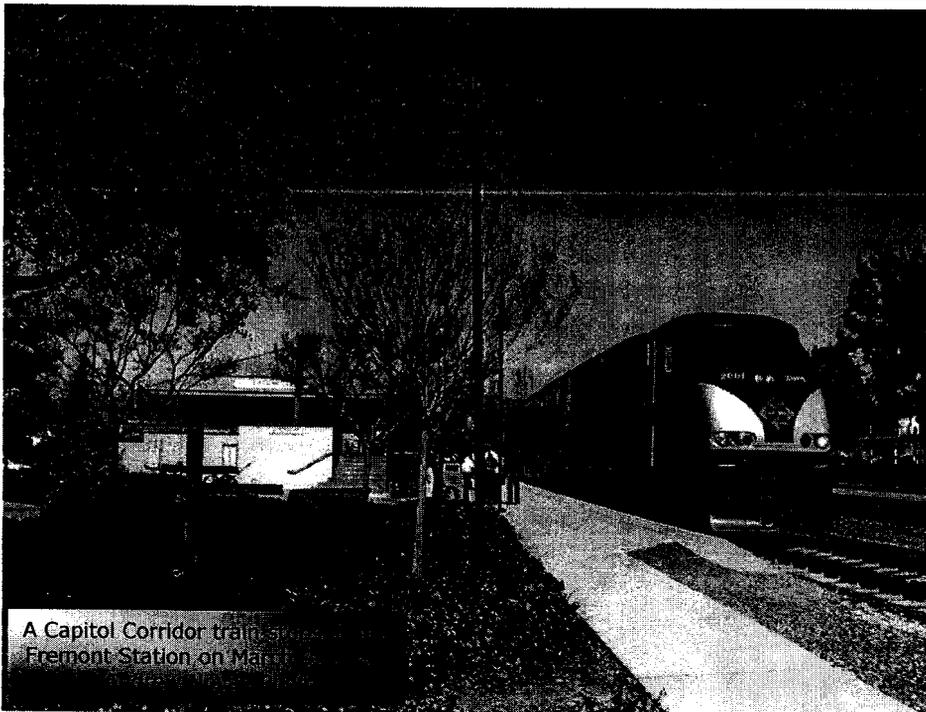
I am getting caught up with my transit reading and found buried in Metro staff reports some interesting tidbits.

For instance travel on the ferry by Avalon residents continues to be subsidized by Metro to the tune of \$600,000. This is to increase federal formula funding by having the ferry count as part of our fixed guideway network (agenda item #6, June 25th Metro Board meeting).

Both the Inspector General and Metro's ADA Monitoring Program plan to have undercover "ride along" programs to spy on bus opera-

tors. I'd say why not just put a take one brochure on the buses letting passengers know how to comment on the various matters the IG and ADA people think need monitored? (IG Program--agenda item #35, July 16 Metro Board Executive Management Committee meeting; ADA Program--agenda item #52, July 16th Metro Board Operations Committee meeting). Why the need for all the cloak and dagger?

I'll conclude by noting the retirement of Eugene K. Skoropowski who oversaw Amtrak California's Capitol corridor service. His devotion to customer service is laudatory and is partly why he is a widely admired figure in the industry. Best wishes and hopefully he'll enjoy a well earned rest. 🚂 🚂 🚂



A Capitol Corridor train at Fremont Station on March 1, 2011.

Metro Board Report Continued

And The TAP Program Stumbles Along: The Board received a verbal report from the auditing firm KPMG which said little that we didn't already know without paying for an audit ... TAP has taken three times as long to implement as it was originally timeline, has cost almost double what it was envisioned to back in 1998, and that completing the fare gate installation at subway stations will create further delay in making the system work countywide. Nevertheless, Zev Yaroslavsky now wants to revisit the question of gating all the light rail platforms that have been excluded from the program (here comes another convoluted staff report!).

Richard Katz, though, stood his ground, saying that even though fare evasion levels have turned out to be significantly higher than had been estimated (revenue from ticket vending machines at the stations with gates has increased by 22% since the gates were installed), the new figures still aren't proving the cost-effectiveness to him. (Antonio Villaraigosa now says Katz "is beginning to sound more and more prescient about this.") The final audit results will be delivered to the Board at the combined November-December meeting, at which point we can probably expect more posturing on both sides of the debate.

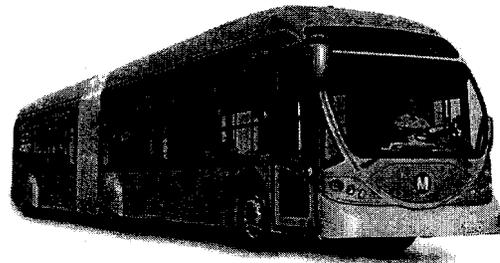
Why The Feds Are Important (Continued): It now looks like Metro's best chance of getting federal dollars over the next decade or so hinges on pushing the Purple Line extension and the Regional Connector through the New Starts program. Although some still think the Foothill Gold Line extension should compete (and regular followers of that debate know which Board members those are), Metro's consultant in Washington advised the executive management and audit committee

by phone that it is "unrealistic to push more than two projects at once" and that the most likely scenario will be a 50/50 match of local funds. Remember the days when FTA would approve a 60/40 match? No longer seen as probable, with so many projects competing for funds now.

The Edward R. Roybal Gold Line Might Open Yet: Despite five minutes of Gloria Molina not understanding what "pre-revenue testing" means - somehow managing to confuse that with the stress testing of the infrastructure that has been underway for months now - staff has finally said that the pre-rev test will take place for five weeks, from October 2 until November 7, after which they expect the PUC to approve regular service starting November 15. Someone who won't be around to see the opening after all is Metro Rail Director of Transportation Duane Martin, who retired October 2 to take an executive position in the private sector side of the light rail industry. What I don't know is why Metro doesn't just move the start date to the December 13 shake-up.

Quote Of The Month: Gloria Molina, frustrated at not getting an answer above that she could understand: "My office needs to figure out when the ribbon cutting will be!"

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Metro Board Report Continued

Micro-Manager Extraordinaire: I can't end this month's column without mentioning the latest bit of micro-managing by the Board. This time, the target was Metro's chief financial officer, Terry Matsumoto, who (among other things) is responsible for complying with all the legal requirements that surround the management of the agency's huge debt service. To no one's surprise, some of the financial institutions holding parts of Metro's debt have had their ratings downgraded in recent months, requiring Matsumoto to shift their portion of the debt to other, higher rated, institutions.

He had to do so eight times in fiscal year 2008-09, fighting a 30-day deadline to take action once advised of the downgrade. This, however, does not sit well with Mark Ridley-Thomas, who is "uncomfortable" with staff

having that level of authority without monetary limits or Board approval of each move. So now Matsumoto's hands are to be tied by a new requirement that Ridley-Thomas added to the debt service policy requiring him to notify CEO Art Leahy, as well as both the Board and committee chairs, before he can take these actions which are necessary to protect Metro from the downturns in the economy. I predict this will backfire eventually ...

There are several other items which I will report on verbally at the October 10 meeting, such as why Foothill won't be getting new artics with the congestion pricing money after all, how a state commission almost undid Proposition 42, and why the BRU suddenly cares about the way Rapid service is operated. See you there. 🚍 🚍 🚍



Photo of the month

Gardena Municipal Bus Lines GMC New Look 764 at the Gardena yard in October 1978.

Photo from the Jim Husing Collection.



Miscellaneous from APTA

Recovery Act Funds Benefit Transit Construction

Public transit agencies are using their American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds in a variety of ways beyond purchasing buses and rail cars.

The \$6.8 million in ARRA funds received by Los Angeles Metro will go for the installation of five entrances to three Metro Red/Purple Line stations: Civic Center, Pershing Square, and Westlake/MacArthur Park. While the main purposes of the canopies are to protect the escalator machinery from exposure to bad weather and to reduce the incidence and frequency of equipment failures and replacement, thus enhancing passenger safety, the canopy design will enhance and maintain the architectural integrity of each station.

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), operator of Metrolink commuter rail, received \$21.9 million through APTA; \$17.5 million of the amount will fund Positive Train Control (PTC) improvements, and the balance will cover safety and capacity upgrades such as the replacement of approximately 5,000 feet of rail on the San Bernardino Line; rehabilitation of two grade crossings; and new communications components in Riverside County.



FTA Exceeds Goal: Nearly 90% of ARRA Funds Awarded

The Federal Transit Administration announced on August 31st that, in partnership with the nation's public transit systems, it had surpassed its goal of providing all communities in the nation with 50 percent of their funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by September 1st. So far, \$6.7 billion has been provided to nearly 600 transit providers, FTA reported.

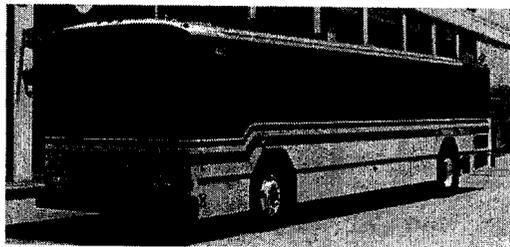
More ARRA Funds Put to Work

Public transit systems continue to use their ARRA funds to make needed upgrades.

The city of Torrance, CA, received a \$4.5 million grant to buy new 40-foot alternative-fuel buses, replacing eight aging vehicles, a project that would have waited another 1-2 years without federal assistance.

Metro Transit in Madison, WI, will use its \$9.7 million for the purchase of 17 hybrid 40-foot buses, as well as four 25-foot paratransit vehicles and one light-duty accessible van; the remainder will fund electronic display signs that will announce next-bus arrivals in real time within 10 minutes.

In Salem, OR, Salem-Keizer Transit received \$3.9 million for repairs to its downtown transit mall and completion of a transit center, as well as eight replacement buses, one expansion bus, and automated fareboxes. 



Bulletin Board

Our thanks to Michael Biagi, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) Landside Operations Manager, for an most illuminating presentation at our Sept. 12th meeting. At that meeting we also approved a statement outlining our concerns regarding the Metro line 910 fare proposal. Afterward an Ad hoc group crafted our stances on the Culver CityBus and Long Beach Transit service change proposals and our opposition to Metro's proposed line 902. All statements are posted on our website.

Brynn Kernaghan, Executive Director/VP for Communications and Planning at Long Beach Transit, will be the speaker at our Oct. 10th meeting. We will also select where to go on the Day After Thanksgiving trip.

The latest transit entities to post announcements on twitter:

- Riverside County Transportation Commission
- <http://twitter.com/RCTC>
- Riverside Transit Agency
- <http://twitter.com/RTABus>
- L.A. Dept. of Transportation
- <http://www.ladottransit.com/twitter.html>

Californians for High-Speed Rail has posted the first issue of their new newsletter, The High-Speed Rail Advocate, on its website:
<http://www.ca4hsr.org/newsletter/>

Member Kymberleigh Richards is looking for the timetable route maps for Glendale Beeline from December 1984 (the first timetable) and/or October 1993 (the original Routes 3 and 5). She would appreciate a loan of same so that they can be scanned and added to the appropriate history page on the Transit Insider. These are the only maps she is missing from Beeline's history.

Rapid Transit Press now has a list of upcoming bus and rail excursions:
<http://www.rapidtransit-press.com/excursions.html>

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website

<http://socata.net/calendar.htm> 🚗 🚗 🚗

From Pacific Railroad Society:
"The Amazing Journey of Santa Fe's RDC Cars" by Ed Saalig

This book is the newest offering from the Pacific Railroad Society (PRS) and chronicles the history of Santa Fe Budd Rail Diesel Car (RDC) DC-191 and DC-192. The book has a detailed history of these two cars from the time they were first delivered to Santa Fe in 1952 to the present. The book contains over 300 photos showing these two cars and their storied history. This is a must have book for any Santa Fe fan or anyone interested in southern California railroad history.

To order this book contact Pacific Railroad Society at:

Pacific Railroad Society
210 West Bonita Avenue
San Dimas, CA 91773

Downloadable order form on-line at:
www.pacificrailroadsociety.org

