

Matters

METROLINK NEWS & EVENTS • MARCH '09
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Visit Railway History at Railfest 2009

Train buffs, take note: Railfest 2009 arrives March 28 and 29 in Fillmore. Presented by the Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society (SCRVRHS) in conjunction with Fillmore & Western Railway Company, this annual event gives Southern Californians a taste of railroad history.

Take a "So You Want to Be an Engineer?" ride down the tracks, climb aboard a group of Metrolink cars, relax in a vintage dining car, and view a restored 1906 railroad turntable. The free-admission Railfest also offers paid attractions such as speeder rides and vintage-train trips as well as food and arts-and-crafts vendors.

Railfest draws visitors from throughout the Metrolink region—from Ventura County, L.A., and even Orange County. Maybe that's because it's so much fun.

Take a trip between Santa Paula and Fillmore on a train featuring vintage cars from the 1920s to 1940s—including a diner car, a baggage car, and coach cars—and powered by a new hybrid diesel-electric engine. Tour the historic Fillmore Railroad Depot. Or be one of the first to be memorialized with your name on a brick in the paved area around the newly restored 1906 turntable by donating to SCRVRHS during the festival.

The nonprofit, volunteer-run SCRVRHS exists to preserve and restore the historic railroad corridor between Montalvo and

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Safety Matters: Sniffing Out Danger

Metrolink and Metro deploy 13 specialized teams to help keep Southern California's transportation system safe. These teams conduct random baggage searches, investigate

suspicious packages, and participate in Visual Intermodal Prevention and Response drills. An additional team works Orange County buses and Metrolink trains.

These unusual two-member teams have six legs between them—two for the handler and four for the specially trained dog.

The furry members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's canine security teams can be seen at Metro and Metrolink stations and on trains. The teams are deployed at random locations and at various times of day as a security

tool to deter individuals from carrying weapons, explosives, or other dangerous items onboard Metrolink or Metro passenger cars or into stations.

Before deployment, handlers and their canine partners complete an 11-week course where they learn to locate a variety of materials and to work effectively and efficiently as a team. They

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Amor



Baby



Top

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WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Rail fan Kevin Bleich, 13, of Claremont snapped this shot of one of our new engines, Locomotive 891, at the Claremont Station in January. Kevin rides Metrolink as often as he can and hopes to be a Metrolink engineer one day.



Safety Matters...(continued from page 1)

get acclimated to the railroad environment. And the dogs and handlers form a unique partnership. Dogs reside with their handlers and their families, living, working, and playing together. They even go on vacation together!

Meet your “guardian angels,” the three teams you are most likely to see protecting Metrolink property and passengers.

Amor: Teamed with Deputy Craig Roberts since July 2006, Amor likes boating at the river and camping.

Bady: Sergeant David Wessol and Bady teamed in September 2006. Born in Germany, Bady responds to commands in English and German.

Top: Deputy Mark Newlands has been Top’s partner since July 2006. Top enjoys spending off-hours swimming in the ocean.

Want to know more about your favorite canine? Ask a handler for a photo card!

Comet Cars Slow to Arrive

Comet cars are expected to show up at Metrolink stations, but it likely will be spring before passengers spot these cars from the 1970s and '80s.

We leased 10 cars from Utah Transit Authority and 14 cars from New Jersey Transit, but none of the cars are ready for service yet. The Utah cars, which have a distinctive red-and-blue color scheme, have not yet arrived. We currently are fixing some compatibility issues with the gray New Jersey cars. All are needed to replace leased passenger cars due to be returned to Seattle-area transit provider Sounder Commuter Rail.

Once they are ready to begin carrying passengers, no more than one Comet car will be used in a train set. They will always be situated behind the locomotive and will be accessible only from the Metrolink passenger car immediately behind the Comet car. Comet cars are not double-deckers or accessible to the disabled, and do not have operating restrooms.



A CLOSER LOOK: ANNUAL RAIL GRINDING

To help ensure the smooth, safe, and reliable operation of our trains, track maintenance is a constant priority. Metrolink’s tracks are regularly inspected and maintained to prevent defects and make any needed repairs. In addition, tracks throughout the Metrolink system annually undergo a special process called rail grinding.

In January and February, Metrolink maintenance crews conducted annual rail grinding on the tracks, an important procedure that helps maintain track strength and reduces wear and tear on train wheels.

Grinding the rails restores the proper profile to the top of the rails. Although each rail starts out with a preferred shape, the heavy weight of trains gradually flattens the top of the rail.

The rail-grinding machine started in late January on the Antelope Valley Line, then traveled to the Ventura County Line and onto the San Bernardino Line, followed by the Orange County Line from Tustin to Fullerton.

Specialized maintenance crews worked late into the evenings through mid-February—typically from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.—to avoid disruption of daily

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN

An arctic blast blew into Southern California in mid-December, dumped rain and snow in the mountains and high deserts, and froze traffic in its tracks. More than six inches of snow fell in the Antelope Valley. Freeways, highways, and city streets became impassable. Soon, Metrolink was the valley’s transportation lifeline, almost the only way to get home.

On the morning of December 17, snow was falling and expected to block Antelope Valley roads by nightfall. We immediately agreed to honor Antelope Valley Transit Authority bus passes so passengers could get home despite cancelled bus service.

But by 11 a.m., we were experiencing challenges. Limited visibility, frozen switches, signal outages, and impassable roads that kept maintenance crews from fixing those problems delayed trains north of Via Princessa Station. Delays on the northbound Antelope Valley Line turned into southbound delays, since the same trains are used for both trips. Many passengers faced long waits at stations.

And many more passengers than usual waited. By late afternoon, many Antelope Valley roads were closed and commuters flocked to Metrolink stations. Average weekday ridership of 7,400 passengers soared to 11,688 passengers on December 17. Unfortunately, we do not have extra train cars or locomotives to supplement normal service. We had to make do with existing trains.

Some suggested that Metrolink should have extended all northbound trains all the way to Lancaster, when some usually stop at Via Princessa Station, to provide more southbound trains out of the Antelope Valley. But doing so would have delayed the return of several train sets to L.A., which would have forced cancellation of peak-hour departures northbound.

Because of train delays, snowbound vehicles in the



train service and your commute schedule.

If you spotted these crews at work, you might have thought you were watching an unannounced fireworks display. The



grinding often leads to a showy spray of sparks as the machine's 16 30-horsepower electric motors spin grinding wheels against the rail while the grinder creeps along the track at 5 to 10 miles per hour. During this process, the grinder sprays water on the tracks before and after grinding. Fire-suppression crews follow closely to ensure that sparks do not ignite any brush or debris fires.

The grinding machine made multiple passes in some areas to achieve an optimal track profile. It won't return to the tracks until the next grinding project in early 2010.

parking lot, and very challenging road conditions, passengers were still waiting for rides home at the Palmdale Station as the station's 10 p.m. closing time approached on December 17. We worked with the City of Palmdale, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metrolink Board member Mike Antonovich to keep that station open in frigid weather, until all trains had arrived and passengers departed.

Delays did not vanish at daybreak on December 18. Train crews worked late the previous night to get passengers to their stations. But federal regulations mandate off-duty rest time to ensure crews are not fatigued, so those crews could not report on time for their next shifts. And with still-closed roads, replacement crews couldn't get into place.

We cancelled one southbound train (204), coupled the cars and locomotive to the next train (206), and carried more passengers to Los Angeles. We were forced to cancel Train 208 due to crew unavailability, but scheduled an additional departure later that morning. Since the news media trumpeted that Metrolink was the only way to travel out of the Antelope Valley, ridership again jumped, hitting 8,000 passengers.

We regretted that we could not provide more assistance at Antelope Valley stations, particularly to commuters who were unfamiliar with Metrolink. It was impossible to get staff there on a timely basis.

The city, county, and transit agencies that dealt with this extraordinary two-day period met in mid-February to work out ways to streamline coordination in any emergency. For instance, city and transit agency officials agreed to loan staff to Metrolink stations in an emergency, when our staff cannot get there and local staff is available.

This snowstorm passed quickly, but the lessons learned will last.

RAILROAD GRUB

Cask 'n Cleaver

At Cask 'n Cleaver, great steaks are an art. And luckily for Metrolink O.C. Line riders, the family-owned Orange restaurant is adjacent to the Orange Metrolink Station.

Cask 'n Cleaver's first restaurant opened in 1967 in an old ranch house in the vineyards of Rancho Cucamonga. Founders Linda and Chuck Keagle had just graduated from college and decided to start a life inspired by the restaurant jobs they'd loved while in school. They offered good steaks, California wine, and reasonable prices in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere—their first menu was hand-painted on old wine bottles, and the servers wore shorts. Decades later, there are four Cask 'n Cleavers, all in northeastern Southern California, and all of them offer custom-cut steaks of top-choice Midwestern corn-fed beef, an extensive wine selection, and a sense of family tradition.

The Cask 'n Cleaver happy hour is a particular favorite of Metrolink riders. From 4 to 7 p.m. on weekdays, cocktails and appetizers are half off, and you can save \$2 on wine by the glass or \$1 on beer. On weekends, the Cask 'n Cleaver banquet room is available for meetings—and many organizations that rent it encourage meeting participants to take the train to get there.

From the Orange Station, just step off the train and you're there! Cask 'n Cleaver's Orange restaurant is located in a historic railroad station adjacent to the current Metrolink platform. To learn more, visit www.caskncleaver.com.

Let us know about diners, eateries, and restaurants that you enjoy near the station you commute to or from. Tell us what you enjoy most about your favorite eating establishment! We have three rules:

1. Restaurant must be within walking distance of a Metrolink station.
2. No corporate chains, please. We want to hear about places other riders may not know about.
3. Your eatery must have been in business at least a year.

E-mail metrolinkmatters@scrra.net, with the subject line "Railroad Grub."



Railfest 2009

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Saugus, which helped the Southern California citrus industry thrive. In addition to organizing Railfest, SCRVRHS volunteers annually help travelers get from Metrolink stations to the Ventura County Fair.

Railfest 2009 takes place March 28 and 29, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Learn more at www.scrvrhs.com or by calling (800) 773-8724 or (805) 524-2546.





2009 WORLD FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

March 22-29 • STAPLES Center

Los Angeles is the site for the 2009 World Figure Skating Championships, happening March 22 to 29, 2009, at the STAPLES Center. This

prestigious event is the annual figure-skating competition sanctioned by the International Skating Union (ISU) for elite figure skaters in men's singles, ladies' singles, pairs, and ice dancing.

Individual session tickets are available now for the ISU World Figure Skating Championships at STAPLES Center in downtown Los Angeles. Metrolink riders save up to 50 percent on select sessions and price levels. Visit www.aegtickets.com/train, choose a session, and use the password TRAIN for special discounts. Session packages, mini-plans, and group tickets are on sale. Visit www.isuworlds2009.com for more information.

Directions to STAPLES Center: From Union Station, transfer free to any Metro Red or Purple Line train to the Seventh Street Metro Station. Transfer free to the Metro Blue Line (upstairs) and exit at the Pico/Chick Hearn Station. STAPLES Center is across the street.

RESIDENCE INN BY MARRIOTT-DOWNTOWN BURBANK CONTEST

Take a staycation without ever leaving town at the Residence Inn by Marriott in downtown Burbank. You'll be minutes away from trendy shopping and fine dining in picturesque downtown Burbank. Or just spend the day at your own private retreat. Each guest room is an oversized suite with a comfortable sitting area and a fully equipped kitchen. The hotel offers a complimentary hot buffet breakfast daily, as well as an outdoor pool and exercise facilities. Metrolink riders receive special weekend discounts through June 30, 2009. To learn more, visit the Special Events page at www.metrolinktrains.com.

Enter to win a one-night weekend stay for a relaxing upscale experience. Fill out the form below for a chance to win a free one-night weekend stay at the Residence Inn by Marriott-Burbank Downtown. Send your entry to Metrolink Matters, Residence Inn Contest, 700 S. Flower Street, Suite 2600, Los Angeles, CA, 90017. All mailed entries must be postmarked by March 31, 2009. Or enter online at www.MetrolinkChanceToWin.com. Online entries must be received by March 31, 2009.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Daytime Phone Number _____

No purchase necessary to enter or win. One entry per household. Must be 18 years old or older to enter. Void where prohibited.



Residence Inn by Marriott
Burbank, CA

Los Angeles Kings

Save 50 Percent on 100- and 200-Level Seats



On Saturday, March 7, join the Los Angeles Kings and Metrolink as the home team battles the Minnesota Wild on the first Public Transportation Day. Game time is 1 p.m. at STAPLES Center in downtown Los Angeles. Metrolink riders can purchase tickets in the 100-level and 200-level seating areas at 50 percent off.

For more information or to order tickets, please visit www.lakings.com/gometro and use the password TRAIN to receive your 50 percent discount.

Why drive? Weekend Metrolink service is available on the Antelope Valley, San Bernardino, and Orange County Lines to Los Angeles. For weekend schedule information, visit www.metrolinktrains.com.

Los Angeles Clippers

Save 50 Percent on \$85 and \$35 Seats



March 4 7:30 p.m. Los Angeles Clippers vs. Memphis Grizzlies
March 18 7:30 p.m. Los Angeles Clippers vs. Washington Wizards

Show your valid Metrolink ticket or pass at the STAPLES Center box office and use the promo code TRAIN for these Wednesday games. Or purchase your tickets online at www.ticketmaster.com/promo/p3mvtz.

Anaheim Ducks

\$5 Savings with Track Pack



Fri., March 6 7 p.m. Anaheim Ducks vs. Dallas Stars
Wed., March 11 7 p.m. Anaheim Ducks vs. Vancouver Canucks
Wed., March 18 7 p.m. Anaheim Ducks vs. Nashville Predators
Fri., March 27 7 p.m. Anaheim Ducks vs. Edmonton Oilers

Purchase tickets at the box office, by phone at (877) WILD-WINGS, or online at www.anaheimducks.com/tickets.

For more special discounts, visit the Special Events page at www.metrolinktrains.com.

Take the Fast Track and Save \$15 at Universal Studios

Although King Kong is getting a makeover this spring, there is plenty to see and do at Universal Studios Hollywood. New attractions include the Creature from the Black Lagoon and sets from *Desperate Housewives*.



The Entertainment Capital of L.A.

Through a special partnership with Universal Studios Hollywood, L.A. Inc., Amtrak California, Metro, and Metrolink, transit riders can receive \$15 savings off admission through June 30, 2009.

To order your special Fast Track discount tickets, go to www.UniversalStudiosHollywood.com/gotransit or request a special \$15 off coupon from Metrolink by calling (800) 371-LINK (5465).*

For more information, visit www.universalstudioshollywood.com or call (800) UNIVERSAL.

*Offer expires 6/30/09. One coupon per guest for up to six tickets. Present coupon at ticket booth. Cannot be combined with any other offers, special events, pre-sold tickets, or discounted tickets of any kind. Prices subject to change without notice.

METROLINK MATTERS

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