



In Transit

May/June 2007

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk
of the General
Manager*

Seeing double for the next budget cycle

Metro has been selected by the King County Council to be a test case for the coming budget process. For the first time, we'll be developing a budget that covers two years instead of one. If we thought forecasting revenues, expenses, and operational needs for just one year was tricky, our task is now doubly challenging.

Fortunately, challenges are not new to Metro. In fact, we seem to thrive on them, and this has earned us our richly deserved "can-do" reputation. Developing a biennial budget will give us an opportunity to be more forward-focused in our thinking and commitments. It will give us a chance to do more than just react to near-term circumstances, to do better long-range planning and to better control how we spend our limited resources.

As we develop this new budget, we need to focus on how to maintain and improve upon the quality of the services we deliver to our customers, both external and internal. To that end, I recently met with Transit managers, supervisors, and chiefs, and service quality was a key topic of that meeting. I want to take this opportunity to extend and reinforce the message I

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Artist Steve Gardner's daughter Miya peeks through an aluminum casting made by her father for a bus shelter on the Light Rail alignment (photo by Steve Gardner).

Sprucing up for light rail

Metro and Sound Transit partner on bus shelter projects

Metro and Sound Transit are rebuilding some 50 bus stops along the light-rail alignment on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Sound Transit is installing new landing pads and bus-shelter footings, and Metro will follow up by installing new shelters, 25 of which will include solar lighting. Many of the solar shelters should be in place by the end of this year as Sound Transit contractors complete work on sidewalks and shelter footings.

In a related Metro/Sound Transit partnership, Metro plans to install 17 new commissioned artworks in bus shelters adjacent to the Beacon Hill and Lander Street rail stations and the rail stations on Martin Luther King Jr. Way, and between the Royal Brougham Way and Henderson Street stations. Metro Project Manager Dale

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General Manager

gave them, which is that the delivery of quality services to your external and internal customers must be a primary focus, whether you are involved in direct service delivery or in the support of a service. Money may continue to be limited in the future, but I assure you that service quality issues will be foremost in our minds as the budget planning process moves forward.

We have a lot on our plate now and in the foreseeable future. Transit Now planning and implementation are underway, the long-awaited reopening of the downtown Seattle tunnel nears, preparations for the startup of light rail operations continue, and several major technology projects are in progress, not to mention a host of other demands vying for our time and attention. Amid all of this, we remain acutely aware that the safety and security of Metro customers and employees are critical dimensions to the delivery of quality services.

The Transit Safety Section has many initiatives underway or about to begin. To name only a few: In June, safety officers are engaging operators in one-on-one “safe talk” sessions, focusing on defensive driving techniques to help avoid accidents (see “We’ll Get You There” on page 7). Also in June, a Safety Summit was held as part of the 2007 Safety Awareness Campaign. In August, internal safety audits will begin, comparing Metro’s safety practices to best-practice standards identified by the transit industry. And before I forget to mention it, congratulations to Atlantic Base operators and staff for winning the 2006 Safety Award, given annually to the base that posts the best collision-reduction record for the year (see “Kudos” on page 6).

Not to be overlooked is the vital contribution that the Metro Transit Police unit makes to the security and safety of our customers and employees. A new swing-shift squad of full-time transit police officers allows the unit to systematically focus on times and locations that have a high incidence

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Performance corner

2006 Rider/Non-rider Survey identifies issues and opportunities

Metro Transit ridership reached a record level of more than 103 million boardings in 2006 — about 1.5 million higher than the previous record, set in 2000. The recently completed 2006 Rider/Non-rider Survey provides an updated look at Metro’s riders as well as information about non-riders. Among the findings:

Market share — After slight declines in 2002 and 2003, Metro’s market share of households again reached levels seen from 1999 through 2001. In 2006, 26 percent of King County households had at least one “regular” rider (5 or more rides in the past 30 days), and another 12 percent had at least one “infrequent” rider (1-4 rides in the past 30 days). Four out of 10 Seattle/North households and almost two of 10 East and South households had regular riders.

Riders versus non-riders — On average, riders are somewhat younger than non-riders (43 vs. 50 years). About half of both riders and non-riders are employed. The median household income of riders is \$65,000, while that of non-riders is \$79,000. Households with no riders are, on average, larger and more likely to have children than those with riders (55 percent vs. 46 percent), and they have a higher number of vehicles per household member (1.0 vs. 0.7). Almost half (46 percent) of Metro riders have been riding for five years or more. Metro has a substantial number of new customers as well, with 22 percent riding less than a year. Thirty percent of our riders rely on Metro for “all or most” of their transportation needs, and 17 percent are in households with no vehicle.

Opportunities and challenges for increasing market share — About 30 percent of non-riders find the idea of riding the bus to work or for personal travel to be “somewhat appealing” or “very appealing.” Respondents identified the following as the most important barriers to riding the bus: routes don’t go where they want to go, having to transfer, having to plan around bus schedules, the time it takes to travel by bus, and the frequency of service after 6 p.m.

Rider satisfaction, problems, and priorities — While 93 percent of all riders expressed satisfaction with Metro, there was a significant decline from 2005 in the percentage of riders who were very satisfied (see chart on page 3).

Riders were asked about their satisfaction with 21 elements of Metro’s service. Analysis of their responses identified seven areas where service improvements would have the greatest effect on increasing customer satisfaction: 1) on-time performance; 2) travel time by bus; 3) cleanliness of bus shelters; 4) frequency of service; 5) wait time when transferring; 6) personal safety on the bus after dark; and 7) ability to get parking at park-and-rides.

For more information on the 2006 Rider/Non-rider Survey results, contact Project Manager **Lori Mimms** at 206-684-2088 or view the report online at: <http://dot.metrokc.gov/mitts/mitthome/reports.htm#RNR>.

See chart on Page 3

Goat-to-guy

Some 250 weed-control specialists from Eastern Washington have been helping Metro address a few thorny vegetation management issues at East Base.



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General Manager

of crime, thereby providing better incident response and leading to increased arrests. In addition, **Stevie** the explosives-sniffing dog and his handler **Deputy Tim Morgan** add new dimensions to our transit police capabilities and employee training opportunities. Meanwhile, the **Bicycle Emphasis and Enforcement Squad (BEES)**, first established in 2005 to provide transit police officers with better mobility and responsiveness in crowded downtown areas and at transit centers, has taken on a leadership role in security planning for the downtown Seattle transit tunnel when it reopens. The induction of **Sergeant Lonnie Arnold** into the 2006 Transit Wall of Fame shows how fully integrated into the fabric of the Transit Division the Metro Transit Police unit has become.

Thank you, all, and keep up the good work. Let's enjoy the ride!
— Kevin Desmond

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Sprucing up for light rail

Cummings and **Carol Valenta**, former Metro Transit and Sound Transit public arts program administrator, developed the shelter artwork partnership in 2005 to help distinguish bus stops that serve as transfer points between light rail and bus services. Sound Transit commissioned and funded the artworks, while Metro provides project management, metal-working expertise, painting, storage, and installation of the artworks.

Local artist Steve Gardner created the artworks, which consist primarily of laser-cut steel, aluminum castings, and various antiquated electrical components. **David Wheeler**, Metro Power Distribution, Metro metalworker **Felix Hornberger**, and several South Facilities staff members worked closely with Gardner to incorporate the art elements into the shelters in a way that will withstand the test of time, as well as any unwelcome attentions from vandals.

In Transit



We'll Get You There

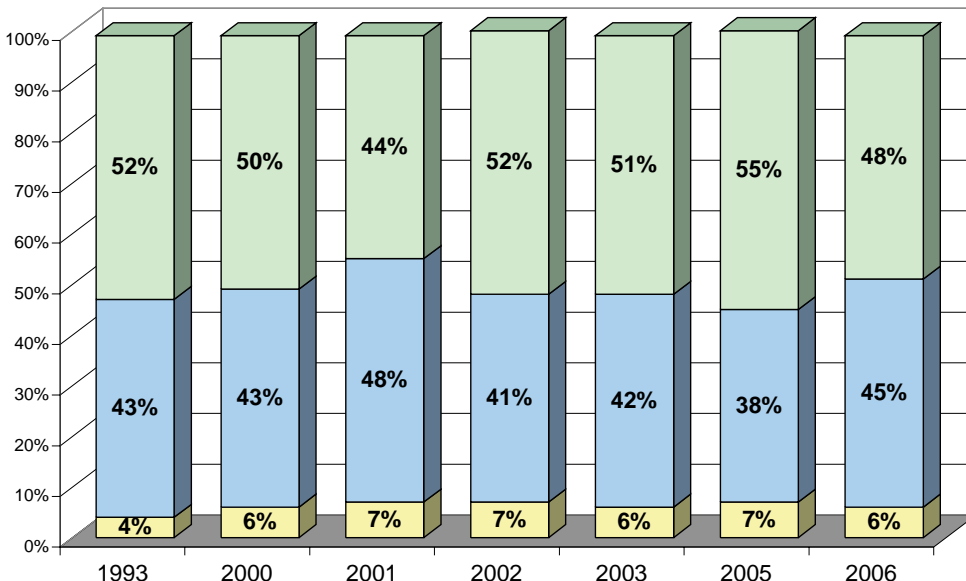
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Overall Satisfaction

■ Dissatisfied ■ Somewhat Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied



In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County Web site at:
www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/aboutus/intransit/

SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division



Passengers board the Elliott Bay Water Taxi for a ride to the downtown Seattle waterfront on the taxi's opening day in April (photo by Matt Reichmann).

■ **Water Taxi returns**—Metro Transit's Water Taxi celebrated the start of its 10th year on Sunday, April 29. Close to 3,000 people turned out at Seacrest Park in West Seattle for festivities and free opening-day sailings between the park and Pier 55 in downtown Seattle on the MV Sightseer, a 149-passenger vessel operated by Argosy Cruises.

■ **Free rides boost ridership on Earth Day** — To promote the environmental and quality-of-life benefits of using transit instead of driving a single-occupancy vehicle, Metro offered free rides on Metro buses on Earth Day (Sunday, April 22). Other regional transit agencies joined in, including Community Transit, Pierce Transit, and Sound Transit.

The number of people who took advantage of the free rides is difficult to determine exactly, but the promotion appeared to have a positive effect — Metro ridership that day was about five percent more than we would have expected without the free fares.

■ **You're never too old to be one of Metro's finest** — In a twist on the old saying, "like father, like son," Atlantic Base operator **Everett Minard** started driving for Metro in 1985 after riding along for the fun of it with his son, Frank. Now Minard senior, age 81, has the distinction of being Metro's oldest coach operator. His favorite route is the No. 2 trolley, and his story and photo were featured in the Seattle Times on April 11. You can check it out online at www.seattletimes.com (enter "Minard" and "Metro" in the search area).

■ **Metro Lost and Found goes to the dogs** — On April 16, **Stevie** the explosive-sniffing dog and his handler, Deputy **Tim Morgan**, both of the Metro Transit Police unit, hosted a training session for three other local bomb dog teams at the Metro Lost and Found Office and two storage rooms on the first floor of the King Street Center. Deputies planted different scents in the rooms before taking each dog through for an inspection. All four dogs succeeded in finding each of

the planted items. Deputy Morgan and Stevie also make regular visits to check out items received at Metro Lost and Found.

■ **Waste not, want not** — At the end of April, Metro received its first delivery of biodiesel fuel made from crops grown in eastern Washington. This "green" fuel is made from canola seeds that were grown on Yakima County farms and fertilized with biosolids from two King County wastewater treatment plants. Metro expects to purchase two million gallons of canola-based biodiesel and mix it with Ultra-Low-Sulfur Diesel to produce a one-year supply of 20-percent blended fuel for use in its diesel buses, preventing the release of an estimated 22,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide into the air.



King County Executive Ron Sims announces the biosolids-to-biodiesel link at an Earth Day event in downtown Seattle.

■ **New partner walks on the wild side** — Following its successful partnership last year with PCC Natural Markets, Metro has announced its second Partner in Transit — the Woodland Park Zoo. In support of its mission of sustainability, conservation, and education, the



zoo invited its 38,000 members to drive less this summer. More than 1,300 took up the challenge, and participants received Metro Free Ride tickets, an extra zoo guest pass, and access to information that will help them switch to alternative modes of travel. The program will be promoted through zoo publications, including e-mail newsletters, and the zoo’s web site, maps, and kiosks. *In Transit* congratulates program managers **Sunny Knott** and **Ref Lindmark** of Service Development’s Market Development Group for forging another great win-win relationship.

■ **Service partnership signed with Children’s Hospital** — Metro’s first service partnership under Transit Now was approved by the Metropolitan King County Council on May 14. Children’s Hospital and Medical Center has agreed to fund one-third of the cost of adding 63 trips to routes 25 and 75. The added trips will significantly improve the service span of these two routes and make transit a more attractive choice for Children’s employees. A call for proposals for future service partnerships with cities, major employers, and other organizations was issued June 11.

■ **Tukwila urban center taking form** — In the first phase of the Tukwila Urban Center, Transit Route Facilities Planner **Lori Kittredge** has worked closely with City of Tukwila staff to improve bus stops located on

Andover Park West. The city wants to develop a dense urban core around these bus stops, which are centered dramatically between the Westfield Shopping Mall (Southcenter) and the Tukwila Sounder Station.

■ **Transit employees at King Street Center have moving experiences**

— Thanks to Healthy Workplace Initiative funds, weekly classes in Tai Chi, yoga, and “All-in-1” fitness at a nearby Seattle Fitness site became available on May 4 to Transit employees who work at the King Street Center. Sales and Customer Services Administrator **Will Powell** called the initiative-sponsored yoga class “both fun and challenging,” and Research and Management Information Unit Program Manager **Greg Lipton** described the Tai Chi instructor as “very approachable” and

said, “He slowly brings beginners along on this low-impact, strength-building, balancing, and meditative exercise.”

Also on the fitness front at King Street Center, the building’s gym is slated to receive several pieces of new equipment this year, including a treadmill, an elliptical cross-trainer, a rowing machine, and new yoga mats. Weekly deliveries of fresh fruit and healthy snacks are set to begin in late June. These were all top picks in an e-mail survey of Transit employees in the building that was conducted by **Terri Lewis**, Transit’s King Street Center workplace coordinator, on how the employees would like their Healthy Workplace Incentive funds to be spent.

For information on benefits at your work location, contact your workplace coordinator:

- Yesler and Exchange Buildings — **Eileen Kadesh**
- King Street Center — **Terri Lewis**
- Power and Facilities — **Stephanie Erickess**
- Vehicle Maintenance — **Victoria Hughes**
- Operations — **Suzanne Keyport**



King Street Center employees work out in a fitness class paid for by the Healthy Workplace Initiative. Pictured are, from left to right: Tom Nims, Kathryn Peacock, Joan Jones, and Tony Longo.

KUDOS IN TRANSIT

Transit operators of the month

April 2007

Atlantic Base: **Donald Jones**
Bellevue Base: **John Karacand**
Central Base: **Chris Birkland**
East Base: **Stephen Flanagan**
North Base: **Stephen Laboff**
Ryerson Base: **Monique Ruffin**
South Base: **Erika Lorenzo**

May 2007

Atlantic Base: **James Curneen**
Bellevue Base: **Deborah Baytos**
Central Base: **Manjit Bains**
East Base: **Dinamarie Erickson**
North Base: (declined)
Ryerson Base: **Gary Reeve**
South Base: **Vernon Cavin**

■ **Supervisor(s) of the shake-up** — Co-recipients of the Supervisor of the Shake-up Award for Spring 2007 are **Cherie Toupin**, coordinator in the Communications Control Center, and **John Tuttle**, first-line supervisor in Service Quality.

Toupin arrived on the Control Center scene four years ago, and says she has learned something new every day since. To go along with her perfect attendance record as a coordinator, she has received nine commendations from grateful operators, customers, and managers, citing her “willingness to go a bit farther” and praising her for being “clear and decisive, but respectful when interacting with operators” and “a credit to the organization.”



Ken Montgomery

Montgomery named 2007 VM Employee of the Year

Interior coach signs will soon be honoring **Ken Montgomery**, a South Base mechanic with 23 years’ experience, as 2007 Vehicle Maintenance (VM) Employee of the Year. According to his chiefs and co-workers, Montgomery demonstrates exceptional talent, takes an active role in acquiring new skills through training, and maintains open lines of communication with co-workers. As one of the most senior mechanics in VM, he helps newer employees improve their skills. In addition, he is proactive in helping his leads, chiefs, and supervisor identify emerging maintenance issues. *In Transit* congratulates Montgomery on his achievement.

Tuttle’s transit roots go back to 1971, when he worked the summer for Seattle Transit. Over the next several years he worked on and off for Metro while attending the UW and Western Washington University. In 1978, he returned as one of Metro’s first part-time operators. He went full-time the following year and was promoted to first-line supervisor in 1980. He says he has enjoyed the past 17 years, spent almost entirely in Service Quality, but plans to retire in July. After that, he hopes to return as—what else?—a part-time operator.

■ **Bassett and Green honored with Turner Awards** — The George Turner Awards for the third and fourth quarters of 2006 were bestowed on Ryerson Base operator **Vornice Bassett** and Central Base operator **Ronald Green**, respectively. The award, given by the Paralyzed Veterans of America’s Northwest Chapter, recognizes operators who exemplify a positive attitude and awareness of the needs of people who are elderly or have disabilities.

■ **Atlantic Base wins coveted safety award** — Atlantic Base posted the best collision reduction rate for 2006, achieving a 0.6 percent reduction in collision accidents and winning the Base Safety Contest for the fourth time (previous wins came in 1990, 1991, and 2004). Base employees celebrated with the traditional pancake breakfast.



Central Base Operator Catherine Shultz serves Atlantic Base Chief Dareyl Plummer during the traditional pancake breakfast held in April in honor of Atlantic Base’s safety award win.

We'll Get You There

Spotlight on Safety & Security

Safety is a big part of our promise to riders. Every day, Metro employees are working hard to ensure that the transit system and its services are as safe as possible for everyone—customers, coach operators, and support staff.

Base Safety Committees have been organized at each of Metro's seven operating bases. Each committee includes a safety officer, a supervisor of base operations, a supervisor of vehicle maintenance, two operator representatives, and up to two vehicle maintenance representatives. The committee might meet once a month to review safety issues, but its members are on safety watch every day, listening to coworkers' safety concerns, identifying causes of safety problems, developing action plans to correct those problems, and continuously improving safety practices overall.

In addition to its Base Safety Committee, each operating base has a Base Safety Awareness Team. Each of these teams is made up of transit operators and a base chief, and is tasked with developing activities that promote awareness of accident prevention and injury avoidance among operators.

This year an expanded safety effort is underway, made possible by a new partnership between the King County Risk Management office and Metro Operations, Safety, and Base Safety Awareness teams. Part of this effort is directed toward finding ways to reduce on-board accidents and bus-pedestrian accidents. This effort is headed by **Michael List**, base supervisor at East

Base, **Mike Lemeshko**, supervisor of Transit Safety, and **Doug Johnson**, supervisor of training. Said Lemeshko, "We wanted to establish a system-wide safety awareness campaign that could be promoted throughout Metro while at the same time allowing each base to target safety activities specific to its own worksite." Teams are focusing on a different safety theme each month. In turn, Metro's Safety and Training group

during operator route qualification training.

The safety focus for June is falling accidents on buses. Safety committees are examining driving habits that create conditions for potential customer-fall accidents. Once these are identified, Safety and Training will emphasize specific driving skills to help minimize such accidents in the future. In addition, patterns of accidents involving Metro employees on buses will be examined to see what can be done to minimize those accidents. "The people on Base Safety Committees and Base Safety Awareness Teams really care about the safety of their fellow employees," said Bellevue Base safety officer **Sue Stewart**. "Employee safety benefits



Judges receive instruction before an East/Bellevue base mini bus "roadeo" in May. Several of the driving problems included situations involving pedestrian safety. Pictured left to right are Jim Struck, Dave Newton, Ray Coffey, George Bridges, Robert Duncan, and Jacquie Arriza.

adapts its safety messages and activities to support each base's specific needs and theme.

For example, the May theme was pedestrian safety. One component of the campaign was encouraging customers to cross behind, instead of in front of, a bus. Posters were installed on buses to create customer awareness. Another component was the identification of intersections with high potential for pedestrian accidents when buses are negotiating turns. Efforts to minimize such accidents are now being reinforced by instructors

customer safety, and vice versa. It's a symbiotic relationship."

Many safety features found on our buses, and used extensively by Metro bus operators, are a direct result of Base Safety Committee efforts and input. For example, the telescoping steering wheel, remote-controlled and heated mirrors, and the highly adjustable operator seat help ensure that Metro coach operators can readily see what's happening around them while they're on the road—which is good both for them and for riders.



ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Design and Construction

Jeff Wong, construction management III — June 1; 24 years

Operations — Operators

East Base:

William Duroe — April 27; 27 years

Richard Morgan — May 4; 15 years

Nancy Webb — March 10; 22 years

Ryerson Base:

Sam Darbous — Feb. 28; 30+ years

Robyn Diehl — March 31; 24+ years

Marvin Randle — June 2, 28+ years

Operations — Non-Operators

Brent Peterson, first-line supervisor (Service Quality) — May 1; 30 years

Power and Facilities

Wendell Hoyt, maintenance planner/scheduler — Jan. 31; 31 years

Sales and Customer Service

Ruth Hertz, customer services administrator — May 31; 33+ years

Vehicle Maintenance

Robert “Terry” Broman, equipment service worker — May 1; 38+ years

Nemesio Domingo, chief (Ryerson Base Maintenance) — May 1; 28+ years

Noel Nelson, sheet metal worker — March 30; 14+ years

Norman Smith, technical information processing specialist — July 1; 8+ years

Promotions/Job Changes

Information Technology

Tammie Wilson to senior systems engineer from information systems analyst I (Design and Construction)

Operations

James Kost to chief (Service Quality) from transit planner III (construction information coordinator/Service Quality)

Bruno LaRitz to light rail chief (Light Rail) from first-line supervisor (Service Communications)

Keith Sherry to light rail chief (Light Rail) from first-line supervisor (Service Communications)

Power and Facilities

Timoteo Alviz to acting facilities chief from lead custodian

Chuck Meredith to painter from temporary painter (South Facilities)

Otis Moore to line material worker from line worker helper

Walter Padilla to temporary transit custodian II from transit custodian I

Luisa Quiambao to acting lead custodian from transit custodian II

Kelly Smith to line material worker from line worker helper

Jeff Steuby to acting lead custodian from transit custodian II

Service Development

Ted Day to transportation planner III from transportation planner II (Service Planning)

Dan Gauthier to senior schedule planner (special service coordinator) from first-line supervisor (Service Quality, Operations)

Karl Otterstrom to transportation planner III from transportation planner II (Service Planning)

Kevin Winter — first-line supervisor on six-month training assignment in Scheduling from Base Operations

Transit Safety

Jerry LaBorde to chief (Light Rail) from safety officer (Transit Safety)

Dale Lewis to light rail safety officer (Transit Safety) from safety officer (Central Base)

Vehicle Maintenance

Mark Kelly to acting chief (Paint Shop, Component Supply Center) from lead equipment painter; backfill for **Jeff Sattler** (previously promoted to supervisor)

Kim Martin to senior program administrator from mechanic

New Hires

Information Technology

Steve Heard, senior application developer — May 24

Ben Lesh, senior application developer — April 23

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Cindy Hudson, transportation planner III (Rideshare Operations) — April 30

Power and Facilities

Fulton Johnson, carpenter (South Facilities) — Jan. 8

Fat Chung, temporary transit custodian I — April 17

Joel Nocum, temporary transit custodian II — April 17

Shawn Berry, electrician constructor — May 1

Sales and Customer Services

Martin Lee, administrative specialist III — April 9

Saunatina Sanchez, temporary administrative specialist III — April 5

Service Development

Wayne Hom, acting senior schedule planner for 6-months (retiree rehire) — April 23

Transit Safety

Frank Waynewood, temporary safety officer at Central Base (retiree rehire) — April 23

Vehicle Maintenance

David Bauman, equipment service worker — May 14

Jeff Cornthwaite, apprentice mechanic — May 14

Eric Miller, equipment service worker — May 14

Cho Myong, mechanic — May 14

Vincent Price, equipment service worker — May 14

Steven Robinson, mechanic — May 14

Jared Shepard, apprentice mechanic — May 14

William Tolson, apprentice mechanic — May 14

In Our Thoughts

John Ball, retired senior schedule planner/LAN administrator, passed away on March 11

Gil Pingeon, former lead mechanic (Vehicle Maintenance), passed away on April 22