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In my August newsletter, I started by saying how hot it was. Things haven't cooled down too much out there! I hope all of you working from home are keeping cool. I am definitely looking forward to real fall weather.

I know many of us have experienced a lot of change since COVID-19 began. We have had to learn new ways to educate our children. Working from home has brought many challenges. Staying connected to colleagues and loved ones is perhaps the hardest part of our new normal. Some of our families have suffered greatly and my heartfelt sympathies go out to those who have lost a loved one.

I need to say it every time: please continue to be diligent. Protect yourself. Protect our riders and our fellow employees. Wear your mask when in public or close proximity to others. And maintain your distance. We need to get through the next few months without a major outbreak. Hopefully, by the New Year, the light at the end of the tunnel will be much brighter.

Yes, these are hard times. I'm given strength, however, every day knowing that all of you continue to work hard. Evidence of your commitment can be seen everywhere, and I just want to point out some of the major accomplishments we have achieved recently.

Yes, we're perfect again!

The MTS bus operations team once again earned perfect scores after a surprise visit from the California Highway Patrol. Every three years the CHP pops into our maintenance facilities and examines the records of at least 20 of our vehicles. They look at every aspect of bus maintenance, driver training, and more. I don't want to jinx anything, but perfect scores are part of the MTS "normal." We do it a lot. The teams working with Mike Wygant are exceptional. Everyone there should be extremely proud. But don't relax! We need to be perfect next time, too. I had a great time, by the way, celebrating with the team with some great social distanced comradery with sandwiches this week.



Another MTS/Siemens milestone is reached

MTS hires great new employees all the time who need to learn our history. And while those of you have been around a while might know this story, it always bears repeating: MTS led the renaissance of light rail development in the United States. Given our region's long reliance on the automobile to fuel our growth, it surprises many that San Diego took the lead in developing new mass transit modes. But it's true. In 1981, MTS (then called the Metropolitan Transit Development Board) built the first modern light rail system from San Ysidro to downtown. Our system, of course, has grown tremendously since then and it is about to get 20% bigger with the addition of the 11-mile Mid-Coast project next year.

Along for the entire ride has been Siemens Mobility. They have built every single light rail vehicle MTS has operated (except for Vintage Trolleys). Since the first 1000 series car rolled off the assembly line, we have put more than 240 Siemens cars into service. They also build all of our new substations (71 of them). The first Siemens cars were built in Germany, but because of our commitment and the potential to reach new markets in the U.S., Siemens located a new manufacturing facility in Sacramento. It's been a huge success for the company.

Last Friday, Michael Cahill, President of Siemens's Rolling Stock division, was in town to celebrate the delivery of the last of 45 new cars we ordered for the UC San Diego Blue Line extension from Old Town to University City. To recognize our long-time partnership, Siemens dedicated this car to Paul Jablonski and produced two plaques that will be installed on the 5045. And Siemens is already gearing up for the production of the 10th order of cars for MTS. These will replace the 2000 series of rail cars, the last of our high-floor models.



Also attending the event was Hilary Norton, the chair of the California Transportation Commission, which was responsible for funding nine of the 45 cars. Getting to see our operations close up (and she will be taking a trolley tour this afternoon) will position us nicely for future grants. CTC manages several pots of State revenues to enhance transit projects. Other MTS projects in the works thanks to CTC are a third rail at the El Cajon Transit Center and a second rail at the Bayside station. Both of these projects will enhance our operations.

COVID, Transit and MTS

A study released last week looked at transit in many major metropolitan areas and found **no direct correlation between use of urban public transit and the transmission of COVID-19**. The reasons cited were public's adherence to the face covering requirement, good air circulation on board vehicles, the relative short duration of transit trips and the fact that people generally talk little while riding public transportation.

We're going to put the study on the intranet. Look it over... the information can help us give people confidence to ride transit.

To give us even more data on attitudes regarding COVID-19 and riding transit, **we released a public survey** last week. We're asking people about their riding habits before COVID-19, what they are today and how they think they will ride in the future. We're also testing what factors are important to them that would make them more strongly consider taking transit. We've advertised the survey on our digital platforms and in our Rider Insider newsletter to get the opinions of riders and non-riders. We plan on having the survey available to fill out for four weeks. The results should be very interesting.

Go Padres!

For all the baseball fans out there, I hope you watched the Padres come from behind to win on Thursday and then take the deciding game on Friday. Incredible! Bring on the Dodgers! Beat L.A.!

Have a great weekend everyone!



These MTS staff were just a few who rocked their Friar Faithful gear to work for game 3!

(Top row, left to right)

Clarke Peters, Supervisor of Passenger Facilities

Ben Stallman, Transit Operations Specialist

Karen Landers, General Counsel

(Bottom row, left to right)

Tim Curran, Deputy Director of Transit Enforcement

Julia Tuer, Manager of Government Affairs