

Meeting of Feb. 8, 2016

Employees of the Year for 2015 honored

The Orange County Transportation Authority board presented resolutions of appreciation to the employees of the year for 2015.

The honors went to:

- David Madrid, Coach Operator of the Year
- Esteban Ponce, Maintenance Operator of the Year
- Gary Hewitt, Administrative Employee of the Year

Madrid has been with OCTA for 39 years and works out of the Santa Ana base. Along with performing his day-to-day duties safely, reliably and professionally, Madrid has worked as a behind-the-wheel trainer for new coach operators, is a member of the operations teamwork and has been an active participant in OCTA's Veteran's Day Event. Madrid said he enjoys working with the people he serves each day and is looking forward to retiring this year.

Ponce was hired as a facilities technician in December 2001 and was promoted to a senior facilities technician less than seven years later. Ponce led the Anaheim base maintenance team in refurbishing the maintenance and operations buildings, readying them for transition of service to OCTA's contract operators last June. Throughout the process, Ponce communicated important project and schedule information to management.

Hewitt joined OCTA in 2012, bringing with him more than 20 years of transit planning experience. He was honored for his efforts and contributions to the 2016 Bus Service Plan. Hewitt was also recognized for building OCTA's transit and non-motorized planning section to now include active transportation activities. He consistently displays a high degree of integrity, honesty and professionalism and is oftentimes given the most challenging assignments that require his expertise, negotiation skills and flexibility.

Board receives capital programs update

The board received a Capital Action Plan update for the second quarter of the 2015-16 fiscal year.

The Capital Action Plan is used to assess the progress of highway, grade separation, rail and station and facility projects from the beginning of the environmental approval phase through construction completion.

In the second quarter of fiscal year 2015-16, six of the 11 milestones originally planned and one milestone planned for the third quarter were completed.

Accomplishments include:

- The OCTA board approved the shortlist of four design-build teams for the design and construction of the Interstate 405 Improvement Project.
- Woodcliff Corporation was awarded a contract for the construction of a pedestrian access ramp at the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Metrolink Station.

Thirty-four major project milestones are planned to be accomplished in the fiscal year 2015-16.

Call for projects aims to improve water quality

The OCTA board approved a Measure M call for projects that will help provide cleaner waterways throughout Orange County.

Measure M, a half-cent sales tax approved by Orange County voters in 2006 for transportation improvements, includes funding for an environmental cleanup program that awards money on a competitive basis to cities and the county for projects that reduce the impacts of water pollution related to transportation.

Since the program's inception in 2011, the board has awarded \$14 million of this funding to 122 projects. These projects focus on removing visible pollutants, like litter and debris, from roads before they reach waterways. The projects include purchasing or upgrading screens, filters and inserts for catch basins, as well as other devices designed to remove pollutants.

Board reviews 2015 accomplishments

The board received a presentation to review the accomplishments made in 2015 based on the strategic plan goal areas of mobility, public service, fiscal sustainability, stewardship and organizational excellence. Seventy-four out of the 81 milestones were completed.

The accomplishments in 2015 included:

- On Jan. 12, the board approved funding through the Arterial Pavement Management Program for 43 projects, totaling \$19.94 million. The program provides funding to local agencies for pavement rehabilitation and preservation.
- On March 10, the Federal Transit Administration issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the OC Streetcar project, allowing it to advance into the design phase. Construction on the project is planned to begin in 2017 and be completed by 2019.
- On April 27, the board awarded \$32.04 million to 23 local agency projects to improve streets and intersections and \$16.29 million to seven local agency projects to synchronize traffic signals.
- On Sept. 4, the improved I-5/SR-74 interchange was opened to motorists. The improvements will help accommodate existing and future traffic volumes and alleviate traffic within the area.
- On June 22, after extensive public outreach, a new bus branding paint design was approved by the board. As part of a multipronged approach to stimulate bus ridership, the new bus design will help increase awareness of the transit system.

- In the third quarter of 2015, the Angels Express closed out the season with more than 54,000 boardings, nearly 24 percent ahead of last year and the highest ridership since the service was launched in 2011.