

NEWS RELEASE



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ExperienceLA.com Weds Culture & Transit in One-of-a-Kind Website

CRA/LA & MTA Website Paired With Metro Gold Line Debut



Union Station —As the Los Angeles-to-Pasadena Metro Gold Line debuts this weekend, ExperienceLA.com also will be up and running. The unique web portal links detailed information about the Los Angeles region's wealth of cultural offerings to the specific fixed rail and bus system that attraction-bound visitors and residents can use to avoid traffic-clogged freeways.



Online at www.experiencela.com, it is the first and only website to marry culture and transportation in such an integrated fashion.



The Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) have partnered to create the website with 19 other participants, including LA INC. The Convention and Visitors Bureau, which wrote the content for the Metro Adventures and will market the website to the travel industry and to conventions.



“ExperienceLA.com was originally conceived as an economic tool to promote cultural tourism within 10 CRA/LA redevelopment project areas,” said David Farrar, Chairman of the CRA/LA Board of Commissioners. “It evolved into a major regional partnership and has expanded to include more transportation options and cultural and tourism destinations. The partnership has been working together since September 2002 to create this essential first stop for anyone visiting our region's varied cultural attractions,” he added.



Cultural destinations listed on ExperienceLA.com include location descriptions, neighborhood walking tours, history and events, plus transit options using the Metro Bus and Rail system and the Wilshire and Ventura Metro Rapid systems. Links to local dashes/shuttles and buses operated by LADOT, Long Beach, Santa Monica and Pasadena, are also included, plus long-distance transit providers such as the Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA), Metrolink, Amtrak and Ports of Long Beach/LA cruise lines.



Users can find specific transit options from starting destinations using Metro Trip Planner, to be expanded to the new Metro Gold Line under Phase 2 of the website expansion.

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“By providing web-based transit information and tying it to specific cultural attractions in this unique way, MTA seeks to increase use of Los Angeles County’s public transit system for cultural tourism and for festivals, conventions, celebrations and Staples Center events,” said MTA CEO Roger Snoble. “With the opening of the Metro Gold Line July 26, there will be many cultural attractions to explore via rail in the heritage-rich communities between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena and throughout L.A. County.”

MTA was instrumental in establishing the website as a transit-focused site and ensuring coordination with all of the region’s transit providers. All cultural tourist points on the Experience LA website must be accessible via public transit.

Under CRA/LA leadership, the site was designed and is managed by Civic Resource Group, a technology solutions company based in Santa Monica and specializing in the civic market. The site was built with \$384,000 from state transportation funds awarded by the MTA, Los Angeles City Proposition C funds and CRA/LA money. CRA/LA is a public agency charged with attracting private investment into economically depressed communities, eliminating blight, revitalizing older neighborhoods, building housing for all income levels and creating and retaining employment opportunities. ExperienceLA.com will help attract new visitors to the numerous and diverse cultural destinations throughout CRA/LA’s redevelopment areas which translates into improving economic conditions in these communities.

“This unique web portal gives a world of visitors access to LA's most distinguishing qualities,” said Robert Barrett, Senior Vice President LA INC. “A visitor is given the tools to easily navigate a fascinating offering of communities and culture that make up the LA travel destination. By Spring 2004, significant portions of the site will be in Japanese, Mandarin, Korean and Spanish.”

The website will evolve over time as new cultural attractions are added via the Community Partners Network, an online application by which area cultural attractions can apply to list themselves on the website.

The complete list of partners includes:

<i>MTA</i>	<i>CRA/LA</i>
<i>City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department (CAD)</i>	<i>UCLA Advanced Policy Institute</i>
<i>City of Los Angeles</i>	<i>Alliance for Community Cultural Tourism</i>
<i>Los Angeles County Arts Commission</i>	<i>Staples Center</i>
<i>LA INC. The Convention & Visitors Bureau</i>	<i>Los Angeles World Airports</i>
<i>City of Santa Monica</i>	<i>Long Beach Transit</i>
<i>University of Southern California (USC)</i>	<i>Grand Performances</i>
<i>Santa Monica Big Blue Bus</i>	<i>Theatre LA</i>
<i>Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau</i>	<i>Hostelling International, LA Council</i>
<i>Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau</i>	<i>City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency</i>
	<i>City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation</i>