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## Table of Contents

### **1. California Rail Board To Reopen Bidding On PR Contract**

Los Angeles Times

The California High Speed Rail Authority has scrapped a staff recommendation to award a \$9-million contract to a firm with close ties to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and ordered the bidding process restarted.

### **2. Fountain Valley**

Orange County Register

Scoping meeting: Residents are invited to learn more about a proposal to widen the I-405 from Euclid Street to the I-605 from 6 to 8 p.m. Sept. 22 at the senior center, 17967 Bushard St.

### **3. Tree Planting To Mark First Anniversary Of Metrolink Crash**

Los Angeles Times

City officials will plant a tree this morning on the lower field of Chatsworth Hills Academy in remembrance of the 25 people killed in the Metrolink train crash. Officials also will unveil a bench and plaque to honor the victims and first responders.

### **4. Irvine Station To Get Direct-Route Buses To LAX**

OC Metro

The Irvine City Council this week agreed to a licensing agreement that would allow the Los Angeles World Airports' FlyAway direct-route bus service to travel between LAX and the Irvine Station. The program could be launched as early as mid-November.

### **5. Spare Me The Details, Officer**

Orange County Register

Honk answers your transportation questions. Sometimes with an attitude.

### **6. Man Killed By Freight Train In Apparent Suicide**

Orange County Register

A 38-year-old man was killed Thursday night when he apparently walked in front of a freight train, police said.

## **7. Daredevil Tagger Gets Nearly 4 Years In Prison**

Los Angeles Times

"Buket," the daredevil tagger who gained Internet notoriety for his brazen, daylight tagging of a sign over the 101 Freeway and vandalism of a Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus, was sentenced Thursday to three years and eight months in state prison.

## **News Articles**

### **1. California Rail Board To Reopen Bidding On PR Contract**

**By Shane Goldmacher**

Los Angeles Times

Reporting from Sacramento - The California High Speed Rail Authority has scrapped a staff recommendation to award a \$9-million contract to a firm with close ties to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and ordered the bidding process restarted.

Members of the board expressed concern over the original recommendation to give the contract to Mercury Public Affairs after The Times published an article detailing how the decision was made. It came from a staff panel of three, two of whom had close ties to Adam Mendelsohn, a Mercury partner who is the governor's political advisor and former communications director. Board members declared the recommendation inadequate and demanded more information.

Curt Pringle, who chairs the rail board, sent members a memo Thursday saying the process "could have been more transparent" for selecting the winning firm. The process will begin from scratch, Pringle wrote, with a new recommendation likely by November.

Mendelsohn said Mercury would reapply: "We have always maintained we're the most qualified firm . . . and nothing has changed as far as we're concerned."

shane.goldmacher @latimes.com

### **2. Fountain Valley**

**By Ellyn Pak**

Orange County Register

Scoping meeting: Residents are invited to learn more about a proposal to widen the I-405 from Euclid Street to the I-605 from 6 to 8 p.m. Sept. 22 at the senior center, 17967 Bushard St.

The project is spearheaded by the Orange County Transportation Authority.

There are four build alternatives being considered, including adding a lane or two in each direction on the I-405 from Euclid Street to the I-605; adding a toll lane to the existing car-pool lane; adding lanes in various locations and improving interchanges. Information: [www.octa.net](http://www.octa.net) or 714-560-5717.

### **3. Tree Planting To Mark First Anniversary Of Metrolink Crash**

**By Ruben Vives**  
Los Angeles Times

City officials will plant a tree this morning on the lower field of Chatsworth Hills Academy in remembrance of the 25 people killed in the Metrolink train crash. Officials also will unveil a bench and plaque to honor the victims and first responders.

The remembrance and appreciation ceremony, which is closed to the public, will be held on the school's lower field, just yards from the crash site. Guests will include Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Councilman Greig Smith, whose district includes the Chatsworth area, law enforcement and fire officials, and dozens of students.

On Sept. 12, 2008, Metrolink Train 111, en route from Los Angeles Union Station to Moorpark, left the Chatsworth station and collided head-on with a Union Pacific freight train. Twenty-five people were killed and 135 were injured. Investigators have said a Metrolink engineer was text messaging on a cellphone about the time of the crash and apparently ran a red light.

A triage center was established on the school's lower field that day, and for the next three days served as temporary headquarters for the National Transportation Safety Board during its investigation into the fatal crash.

Smith is scheduled Saturday to unveil a memorial plaque at Stoney Point Park in Chatsworth. Topanga Canyon Boulevard between the Ronald Reagan Freeway and Chatsworth Street will be closed off. The ceremony will be open to the public; attendees should park at the Church at Rocky Peak and take a shuttle.

### **4. Irvine Station To Get Direct-Route Buses To LAX**

*Los Angeles World Airports, Irvine City Council expect to begin program by mid-November*

**By Kristen Schott**  
OC Metro

The Irvine City Council this week agreed to a licensing agreement that would allow the Los Angeles World Airports' FlyAway direct-route bus service to travel between LAX and the Irvine Station. The program could be launched as early as mid-November.

The bus service is a longtime initiative of the City Council to provide transportation alternatives, according to Irvine spokesman Craig Reem. And it's good news for Orange County business travelers who frequently fly out of the international airport.

Reem calls the Irvine Station a logical location for the program, because the site is Orange County's busiest transportation center, with service from Amtrak, Metrolink and the Orange County Transportation Authority.

The FlyAway bus service is expected to provide 12 nonstop roundtrip rides between LAX and the Irvine Station a day. LAWA, which operates current locations at Union Station, Van Nuys and Westwood, will set the fare for the rides between \$20 and \$25 one way.

## **5. Spare Me The Details, Officer**

*Honk answers your transportation questions. Sometimes with an attitude*

**By Jim Radcliffe**  
Orange County Register

Q. I got pulled over the other day by a California Highway Patrol officer on the I-5 for not having a spare. I have large tires on my Jeep Wrangler, so the spare doesn't fit on the bracket on the back. The officer was nice and didn't write me a ticket. The officer said it would be a good idea to have a spare with me. I should have had a spare and am paying \$600 to buy and install an adequate bracket. Is there some odd law requiring vehicles to have spares?

– Steven Oatman, Mission Viejo

A. No.

Officer Eric Barnard, in the CHP's San Juan Capistrano headquarters, took a good look at the Vehicle Code and then spoke to a sergeant and another officer. Barnard said the trio are aware of "nothing on the books" requiring a spare.

Based on your description, Steven, officer Barnard figured the cop might have pulled you over for another mechanical violation and noticed when he got close to your Jeep that it actually was fine. And then just wanted to chat away about spares, apparently.

Q. Ahoy Honkdude! I understand a private company has taken over the south O.C. bus routes. Who is this new company (the logo says "MV" on the drivers' uniforms)? Will the fare increase again? Any chance the new company will install wet bars on all of the buses?

– Honk reader, Anytown

A. (First, a little business – Honk misplaced the reader's name. As it was his first mistake since, as a newspaper boy, he smashed Mrs. Davis' screen door on French Street in Santa Ana in 1972 with an errant Register, he is plowing ahead without the name. ...)

The Orange County Transportation Authority, which operates the county's public bus system, has hired MV Transportation for \$33 million over four years to run 26 bus routes that another private company had been operating. The arrangement saves the OCTA money.

MV Transportation covers several types of bus routes, including some regular routes, mostly in South County. The drivers use OCTA buses and wear their own uniforms. There is no plan to increase the current \$1.50 bus fare for the next couple of years. And until you see "Jimmy Buffett Margarita Express" painted on the side of the coaches, don't step into a county bus looking for a stiff drink.

Fact of the week: The Honkmobile has had it. Where does Honk research the gas mileage of the potential Honkmobile II?

At [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov), run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and another federal branch.

Contact the writer: Got a question? Contact Honk at [honk@ocregister.com](mailto:honk@ocregister.com) or 714-704-3740. See Honk online: [www.ocregister.com/honk](http://www.ocregister.com/honk).

## **6. Man Killed By Freight Train In Apparent Suicide**

*The incident occurred Thursday night in Fullerton, police said*

**By Denisse Salazar**  
Orange County Register

FULLERTON - A 38-year-old man was killed Thursday night when he apparently walked in front of a freight train, police said.

The incident occurred at 7:30 p.m. at Raymond Avenue and Valencia Drive when the man was struck by a Burlington Northern Santa Fe train, said Fullerton police Sgt. Michael Chlebowski.

"It appears that the incident was a suicide," Chlebowski said. "It looks like he walked right in front of the train based on witness statements."

The man has not been positively identified. The railroad track was closed for several hours. The investigation is ongoing.

Contact the writer: 714-704-3709 or [desalazar@ocregister.com](mailto:desalazar@ocregister.com)

## 7. Daredevil Tagger Gets Nearly 4 Years In Prison

*Cyrus Yazdani, a 26-year-old San Jose State graduate, gained a near-cult following after a YouTube video was posted of him vandalizing a sign 20 feet above the busy 101 Freeway*

**By Andrew Blankstein**

Los Angeles Times

"Buket," the daredevil tagger who gained Internet notoriety for his brazen, daylight tagging of a sign over the 101 Freeway and vandalism of a Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus, was sentenced Thursday to three years and eight months in state prison.

Cyrus Yazdani, a 26-year-old San Jose State graduate who has developed a near-cult following, was on probation after pleading guilty in December to 32 felony vandalism counts.

In July, he pleaded no contest to one count of felony vandalism and accepted financial responsibility for five vandalism incidents. Four of the counts were dismissed Thursday. Yazdani must pay \$117,196 in restitution.

Los Angeles County sheriff's transit investigators arrested Yazdani in May after Buket tags appeared on the 7th Street and Cesar Chavez bridges and in the 4200 block of South Broadway.

Sheriff's officials said Yazdani was found in possession of scribes, which are used in tagging. He also had paint splatter on his clothing.

In December, after pleading guilty, Yazdani was sentenced to 10 months in county jail, 256 hours of graffiti removal duty and five years' formal probation. He was released from jail based on credit for time served.

That case stemmed from a tagging spree between 2005 and 2007, during which Yazdani sprayed his tags on buses, freeway walls and overpasses, as well as the concrete lining of the Los Angeles River, authorities said.

Yazdani became something of an Internet sensation when he plastered his Buket "bomb" 20 feet above the busy 101 Freeway near Melrose Avenue -- vandalism that was captured on videotape and posted with a rap soundtrack on YouTube and numerous tagger-related blogs.

Another daylight attack, which also was videotaped, appeared to show Buket applying

his moniker to an MTA bus as passersby and passengers watched in surprise.

A YouTube video that captured both tagging exploits has had more than 450,000 views. But the notoriety also got the attention of sheriff's transit investigators, who arrested Yazdani in May.

Sheriff's officials said they had evidence that Yazdani had marked hundreds of freeway overpasses, concrete walls and transit buses throughout California and southern Nevada.

Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies and officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified at least 20 Buket scrawlings along a stretch of the river spanning a couple of miles, which caused an estimated \$60,000 in damage.

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