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CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter/Light Rail/Modern Streetcar News!

LOS ANGELES, CA - The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is marking the 30th anniversary of the opening of the subway's Red Line during the second week of February 2022 according to Progressive Railroading.



Los Angeles first subway riders on January 30, 1993!

The Red Line — now known as the B Line— has always been the busiest line in L.A. Metro’s network, agency officials said in a blog post. On an average weekday, the line logs 75,000 riders, and combined with the subway's Purple Line, which shares some of the route, it's recorded more than 400 million riders in the past decade. The Red Line opened on a 4.4-mile segment on Jan. 30, 1993, between Los Angeles Union Station and MacArthur Park, the first "modern subway" service to open in Los Angeles, L.A. Metro officials said. The line recorded more than 52,800 riders on its first day of service, and by April 1 that year, it logged more than 1 million riders. The Red Line’s first segment was under construction for six and a half years at a cost of \$330 million per mile. Today, it operates along 16.4 miles of track between downtown Los Angeles and North Hollywood. As part of the Red Line’s creation, L.A. Metro focused on installing public art elements at each station, dedicating half a percent of the capital budget to the initiative, L.A. Metro officials said. “Each station was envisioned as an underground gallery that channeled a unique sense of place,” L.A. Metro officials wrote. “Art was also regarded as a social salve that could discourage litter and vandalism.”

NEW YORK CITY, NY - In early February 2023, the [Metropolitan Transportation Authority](#) unveiled [New York City Transit](#)'s new R211 subway cars according to Progressive Railroading.



The rail cars are the first of a **535-car order**, MTA officials said in a press release. The cars are undergoing testing and expect to be put into service by fourth-quarter 2023 to determine potential future NYCT fleet purchases.

Twenty of the cars feature an open gangway, which allows the entire train set to be connected, making it easier for riders to move between cars. The 58-inch-wide door openings are larger than standard door openings, and will help speed up boarding and reduce idle time in stations, MTA officials said.

The remaining cars have standard amenities, including security cameras, more accessible seating, digital displays and brighter lighting and signage.

The cars are being manufactured by [Kawasaki Rail Car Inc.](#) at its facilities in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Yonkers, New York.

MTA placed an additional order of 640 cars in October 2022. A total of **1,175 R211s** are expected to enter service within the next two years, MTA officials said. If testing of the open-gangway cars is successful, there is a second option to add 437 more cars with open gangways, they added.

PHILADELPHIA, PA - Progressive Railroading reported on February 24th that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) awarded a \$714 million contract to [Alstom Transportation Inc.](#) for the purchase of modern, fully Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trolley vehicles to replace SEPTA's aging trolley fleet, SEPTA officials said.



Trolley modernization is a key component of [SEPTA Forward](#), the transit authority's strategic plan, which aims to create a "lifestyle transit network" that can be used for any kind of trip, not just morning and evening commutes, SEPTA officials said.

Under the contract, Alstom will deliver 130 trolleys with the option to order up to 30 additional vehicles. Delivery of the new trolleys is scheduled to begin in 2027 with full fleet delivery by the end of 2030.

The new trolleys will be longer and have higher capacity to move more passengers, SEPTA officials said. They'll also feature low floors and ramps, wider pathways, audio and visual messaging systems, and designated open space for wheelchairs, walkers, strollers and bikes.

They're designed with 44 seats and able to hold as many as 120 people, counting people who stand to ride. The new cars will have wide aisles and room for wheelchairs, bicycles, and strollers, SEPTA officials said. The current Kawasaki LRT trolleys — used primarily West Philadelphia and Delaware County — are squared-off 53-foot vehicles and can carry half as many passengers.

Riders must climb four steps to board those current trolleys, a barrier for many people with mobility issues and those wrangling groceries or young children. The modernization plan includes new street-level stations with shelter and stations with raised platforms.

SEPTA expects the first new trolleys to arrive in the winter of 2027, with all 130 scheduled to be in place by 2032, said Zachary Sullivan, chief engineering officer for new rail vehicles.

Philadelphia's trolley network is the largest in the United States, though it has shrunk over the years from 69 miles in 1980 to about 40 miles currently. At one time, trolleys were everywhere in the city and many people have nostalgic feelings for the old-style form of transit.

Busess currently serve passengers on Route 15 along Girard Avenue as they ran there until the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The transit agency hopes some of the historic vehicles will be back on Route 15 in the fall.



OTHER TRACTION ITEMS:

Arnie's Model Trains Builds Super Size Layout in Westminster, CA Store!

Arnie's Model Trains has existed in the Westminster, CA community for over forty years. Founded by Jerry Arnold, the store is now in the hands of his son, Greg Arnold, who has placed the management of the store several years ago in the hands of Kevin Honda, who may have the distinction of being one of the very few under-40-year-olds to have that position.

In June of last year they started moving into their fourth store, which was larger and able to accommodate their growing business. They set aside a large area in front of the windows for a model train layout but set up a smaller one quickly for the 2022 Christmas season. Now with that season gone, construction began on Valentine's Day on a large layout, twenty five feet long and in some places seven feet wide.



(Above Left) Greg and Kevin posing in front of the layout just before the first run on February 17th on the first of two complete HO scale loops. (Above right) The first, outer loop, track work completed.



(Above left) Kevin Honda's FEC passenger train makes the first trip around the second inner loop. (Above right) The FEC passenger train on the inner loop passes a short freight train on the outer loop.



(Above) Store Manager, Kevin Honda's Florida East Coast observation Car "Kevin Honda" during March 1 test runs!



(Above) George Huckaby's Broadway Limited PRR Centipedes 5833-5821 with a coal drag also during the March 1 test runs for curve and clearance testing. The store that this new layout will run almost anything DC or

DCC that is "...run-able..."

At the rate they are working, customers will want to see this layout in April!

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