

## **Meeting of Feb. 27, 2023**

### **OCTA Board Honors 2022 Employees of the Year**

The Orange County Transportation Authority's board of directors honored three employees of the year for 2022.

The honors went to:

- Ignacio Cuica, a coach operator who started at OCTA in 2001. He is a model coach operator with outstanding attendance, and recently achieved 21 years of safe driving. Ignacio is recognized for his excellent customer service, meticulous attention to detail, and for always being willing to assist with shift coverage on short notice.
- Gilberto Anaya, a journeyman mechanic who joined OCTA as a service worker in 1997. Gilberto's exceptional diagnostic skills help keep OCTA buses running at peak performance and contribute to the mentoring of others.
- Ross Lew, a project manager who oversees the OC Streetcar project. Ross continues to diligently lead the OC Streetcar project toward completion and demonstrates a strong dedication to meeting project commitments. In addition, Ross oversees the SR-55 Improvement Project, which broke ground last summer, as well as other projects on SR-55 and SR-91.

### **Board Recognizes February Employees of the Month**

The OCTA board recognized three employees of the month for February.

The honors went to:

- Christopher Hooper, a coach operator at the Garden Grove base who started at OCTA in 2019. He is a model coach operator who has achieved three years of safe driving. Chris recently responded to a passenger having a medical emergency on board the bus. As a result of his immediate actions, the passenger was safely transported to the hospital.
- Curt Molenda, who joined OCTA as a facilities technician in 2008. Curt currently works at the Sand Canyon base in Irvine as a senior facilities technician. Curt is an essential member of his team and constantly strives to ensure OCTA's facilities and building systems are kept in top condition.
- Fiona Huertas, a section supervisor of schedule checking. Fiona proved to be a tremendous asset during OCTA's successful certification of the automatic passenger counters on buses as required by the Federal Transit Administration. Fiona also organized the data collection for the Youth Ride Free program to ensure OCTA was providing an appropriate level of bus service around schools throughout the county for students.

### **Board Approves Framework for Finding Coastal Rail Solutions**

OCTA's board was presented with a framework for working with local, state and federal partners to further study and understand the issues behind the coastal erosion impacting the railroad tracks in south Orange County.

As the emergency work to stabilize the tracks in San Clemente nears completion, OCTA and its partners continue to search for long-term solutions to protect the coastal rail line. OCTA's framework for finding solutions beyond the current emergency work includes a phased approach to examine additional short- to medium-term solutions, as well as a Phase II study that would look at longer-term solutions.

The Phase I study is expected to cost approximately \$2 million, with grant funding already identified. Future costs for making the necessary improvements to ensure ongoing rail operations along the 7 miles of south Orange County coast would be identified through the study.

The cost of the second study is estimated at \$5 million. The study will more clearly identify the costs and schedule associated with more long-term solutions and is expected to be a multi-year effort requiring billions of dollars.