

**Remarks by Jim Graham, Outgoing Metro Board Chairman  
January 28, 2010**

"IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES"

Everyone knows these famous words by Charles Dickens but let me now recall the entire paragraph:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going directly to heaven, we were all going the other way."

First, I recall the last time I served as Chairman, it was 2003 when our greatest challenge was a major blizzard – about 16 inches of snow. Another major blizzard came in 2009 with about the same snowfall -- but it was the least the least of the challenges we would confront.

The outlook was bright when my turn came to again serve as the Metro/WMATA Board Chairman in February 2009.

Metro has just been praised for successfully moving 1.5 million passengers on Inauguration Day. We would soon be told that we had in John Catoe the best transportation manager in the U.S. The Board was unanimous in its view that Mr. Catoe's soon expiring contract should be renewed.

Federal capital money seemed at long last to be within reach. Congress had not appropriated the funding but at least it had taken a first step by authorizing \$1.5 billion in capital funds over a 10 year period. I take pride in the role I played as a DC Council member to make Washington, D.C., the first jurisdiction to approve the federal proposal and appropriate our \$50 million. Maryland and Virginia also soon acted.

These additional funds will make a huge difference. We have long known that the aging infrastructure needed improvements. But we had Metro Matters. We had about \$650 million annually for Capital and now that amount would be hopefully added by an additional \$300 million in fiscal year 2010.

Other successes followed to name just a few:

- Metro was awarded \$202 Million in economic stimulus funds which were fully obligated well ahead of the federal deadline.
- Metro further expanded the use of eight-car trains – increasing our rail capacity and reducing overcrowding.
- Metro launched Next Bus real time bus arrival technology.
- In the spring we added the very popular new Metro Express limited stop route on 16th Street joining the very popular Georgia Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue express lines.
- After decades of work, we finally broke ground on the new Southeast Bus Garage at the former DC Village site.
- We were on our way to expanded cell phone service to include all major cell phone carriers in Metrorail stations.
- Staff developed the first-ever capital needs inventory (of more than \$11 billion) focused exclusively on safety and customer needs.

Of course there were challenges even early in the year. We had to deal with an FY10 budget gap that ultimately totaled \$29 million. But the gap was closed largely by additional subsidies from the member jurisdictions, and the use of reserve funds from fiscal year 2008.

Another challenge – the federal dollars didn't seem to be moving. The President hadn't included the funding in the budget he had presented to Congress. Maryland Virginia and the District of Columbia had acted but the apparent inaction in Congress worried us all.

Then came the June 22nd Red Line crash and everything changed. 9 people died, including the train operator, and scores were injured, the most serious train collision in Metro's history.

I well remember the hurried trip to the scene of the accident. The mangled cars, the dashed hopes, the lost lives. I remember – was it the second day – directly in front of the crash here, as we were leaving, we were warned that we would pass by the temporary morgue. Nearly aloud, I thought, don't look, don't look. But then, who knows why, I looked as I walked by. What my eyes saw on makeshift tables never be forgotten.

From that day forward, it is as if the heavens opened and all manner of woes descended upon us. What a seven month stretch it became! There were 4 Metro

employees were killed since the crash – August 9, September 14, and two this past Tuesday, January 26. 7 people committed suicide, even while Metro staff worked with national experts on how to prevent such tragedies -- June 26, August 12, September 13, September 17, November 16, November 20, and January 4, 2010.

And then there all the consequences of the crash itself. Manual operation – a wise decision – slowed everything down. Resources and energy were shifted to address safety concerns. This was the proper priority, but there were consequences for our customers and for service quality.

And the press hammered away daily, hourly, using information and reports often leaked from agency sources. Board members and managers frequently were reading information for the first time along with everyone else.

With more than 10,000 employees, Metro takes great pride in the many staff who respond courteously, drive with impeccable safety records, and who care deeply about the riding public. But in the months following the crash, the exceptions were more exceptional than ever – the employees who rudely responded to customers' inquiries, the distracted driver who drove too fast and so on.

The National Transportation Safety Board has yet to inform us, as they must, the "probable cause" of the June 22nd collision. They have to advise us on what must be fixed, if anything to avoid other possible future accidents. So this is our true budget wild card -- probably very substantial costs for which we at least have \$300 million new capital dollars in this fiscal year.

And now, amidst all of this, we must find a new General Manager. We need an extraordinary person capable of successfully overcoming extraordinary challenges.

I was surprised when Mr. Catoe announced his unexpected departure. But I ought not to have been, having witnessed up close all of what we had to absorb – and we had to absorb – in the weeks and months after June 22. An able and good man, he was overcome by events beyond his control and ultimately came to the realization that he didn't have what it took to respond any longer.

Through all of this difficulty, our employees continue to work as hard as ever. And we depend on them more than ever. We honored 85 employees for outstanding work during my term as Chairman. Among these were:

- 31 Bus operators who have driven more than one million miles without a preventable accident.
- 12 Rail operators who have gone at least five years without any safety related incidents.
- 28 employees with exceptional customer service records and proactive safety interventions.
- Other employees who intervened when individuals intentionally put themselves in harm's way.

Of course, most important are the thousands of Metro employees who do their often challenging jobs with great care and pride, day in and day out. These employees – and our dedicated riders who have stuck with us throughout this extremely challenging period, are our sources of hope for a better year ahead.

I am also heartened by the arrival of our new federal board members who I would like to again welcome. Ten months ago, the Virginia, Maryland and District of Columbia legislatures paved the way for this to happen. I am pleased that we now have individuals with such great experience in the industry who I am certain will contribute to our work going forward.

A fellow Board member has called Metro the region's success story. In a region with so many competing interests, in Metro, we have come together for some 40 years to establish and operate a public transportation system

Name anything else we do successfully on this scale in this region.