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Monday, March 3, 2014

After an eight day journey across country, a vintage Trolley arrives in San Diego

San Diego, CA – The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) took delivery Monday, March 3, of a 1946 Presidents Conference Committee (PCC) car that is destined to be restored for future service on the San Diego Vintage Trolley’s Silver Line.

The 68-year old PCC car was acquired as part of a trade with the United Transportation Corporation (UTC)/Rail Air Sources (RAS), a manufacturer of parts for rail and light rail, in exchange for two decommissioned Siemen’s U-2 light rail vehicles (LRV). San Diego’s LRVs will be displayed at UTC/RAS affiliated rail museums, one in Suisun City, California and the other in Rockhill Furnace, Pennsylvania.

“The addition of another PCC car to our vintage Trolley fleet means that MTS can offer more reliable service to passengers who want to experience a piece of San Diego’s transportation history first-hand,” said Harry Mathis, chairman of the MTS board of directors. “This PCC car is similar to the ones that provided service in San Diego from 1936 until the last car was retired in 1949. Riding one is like stepping back in time.”

The trade, which was approved by the MTS board of directors last September, will provide the San Diego Vintage Trolley with more flexibility and the ability to maintain service if PCC #529, currently the only vintage Trolley in operation, needs to be taken out of service for repair or maintenance.

The restoration of the newly acquired vintage Trolley will be completed by MTS personnel and involve mostly cosmetic refurbishments such as paint, interior, console, and body work. Once the restoration is complete, the car will join the fleet as PCC #530.

The San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) Company is contributing \$50,000 to the restoration costs of the Trolley, which will be named the “Centennial.” When finished, the interior of the new Trolley will include historic SDG&E photos related to history of electric transportation in San Diego.

SDG&E has been powering MTS trolleys in San Diego for over 100 years,” said Pedro Villegas, director of community relations for SDG&E. “We are very happy to commemorate our 100-year shared commitment with MTS to clean transportation by rehabilitating a second vintage trolley, named The Centennial, which invites San Diegans to participate in the Balboa Park Centennial celebrations. Look for it on the tracks downtown later this year, and take it for a ride through San Diego history.”

“Thanks to SDG&E’s contribution PCC # 530 restoration work is expected to be completed by the will be completed in six to eight months and be included as part of regular Trolley service on the Silver Line,” said Mr. Mathis. San Diego Vintage Trolley, Inc. (SDVTI), a non-profit 501(c) (3), was created and incorporated under the laws of the State of California September 14, 2005 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of MTS. SDVTI will assume operation and maintenance responsibility of PCC #530 once the restoration is complete.

In addition to operating the historic PCC vehicles on the Silver Line, MTS operates a modern fleet of buses and rail vehicles on more than 90 bus routes and three Trolley lines on 53 miles of double-tracked railway. Every day more than 275,000 passenger trips are taken on MTS services. For more information on how you can use public transportation and save money, go to www.sdmts.com.

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Photos available upon request:

A: PCC Car arrives MTS Trolley Yard on March 3, 2014

B. PCC Car #530 alongside Vintage Trolley PCC Car # 529 and one of MTS Trolley U-2 model vehicles.

C: Conceptual image of PCC Car # 530’s appearance after restoration is completed.

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