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Trolley promoted as auto alternative

BY JUDY O'ROURKE, Staff Writer
LA Daily News

[Article Last Updated:](#)

SANTA CLARITA - The city is hoping its new old-fashioned trolley will catch the eye of weary commuters and woo them into leaving the car at home and using mass transit instead.

The wood-paneled Hometown Trolley seats just 34, but a quickie lunchtime loop between two valley industrial parks and the Valencia mall is like a moving billboard, meant to convert motorists into riders.

"It's a marketing tool," said Gail Ortiz, a city spokeswoman. "We want to encourage people to take a second look at public transportation and the changes made to Santa Clarita Transit."

Santa Clarita is home to three Metrolink stations, and city buses ferry workers for free from the stations to the work centers. Many workers commute from the Antelope Valley, and schedules distributed on the trolley extol the ease of train travel, the commuter bus and improved local bus services, Ortiz said.

The trolley will thread a 15-minute loop between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays from mid- or late November through the end of the year. The schedule and route are in the works, and the promotion will spread to other parts of town in 2007.

No fare will be charged for rides through the end of the year, except for a charity holiday light tour that is in the works, Ortiz said.

For information, call 294-1BUS or visit www.santaclaritatransit.com.

judy.orourke@dailynews.com

(661) 257-5255