

Metrolink to unveil state-of-the-art technology designed to prevent train collisions

By **Corey Moore** | Sep 10, 2012



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File photo: A man waits at the Civic Center Metro Station for a train going to Union Station. Railroads will be outfitted with a new brake system by the middle of next year.

Metrolink today plans to unveil technology designed to automatically stop or slow a train before an accident happens.

Metrolink will present a test train outfitted with Positive Train Control; officials with the commuter rail system said the sophisticated GPS-based operation will prevent train-to-train collisions and derailments in part by eliminating human error.

Metrolink board chair Richard Katz said engineers have finished half the work and they're smoothing out technical glitches.

Officials said that they will roll out the PTC system before any other railroad in the country.

"Whenever you're the first to do something, it means that there's trial-and-error from the engineers and the designers, and so we're going through those challenges," Katz said.

Besides technical problems, Katz said Metrolink has had to deal with one contractor going bankrupt.

Transportation advocate Bart Reed, who runs the San Fernando Valley-based non-profit "The Transit Coalition," maintained the \$201 million project is worth the cost.

"Nobody ever thinks about the cost of all those poor people that were in the hideous accident in Chatsworth," said Reed. "And that accident wouldn't have happened if there was Positive Train Control, there's no question."

Twenty-five people died and 135 were injured on September 12, 2008, when a **Metrolink train collided with a freight car in Chatsworth** (<http://www.scp.org/news/2010/09/12/19119/chatsworth-2yr/>).

Authorities expect to get the Positive Train Control system up and running by the middle of next year. That's well ahead of a federal deadline set for railroad operations to deploy safety systems. Metrolink is paying for the Positive Train Control project with money from local, state and federal resources.



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