

METROLINK® 2019



ADWHEEL AWARDS

2019 AdWheel Award Entry– Category 2-B Best Marketing and Communications Educational Effort – Electronic Media – Metrolink Matters Blog – www.metrolinkmatters.com

Target Audience

Metrolink has a variety of target audiences for the Metrolink Matters Blog, which provides general public information to readers. The primary target audience for this issue was current Metrolink commuters who take the train on a regular basis. The secondary audience was destination/infrequent riders. The tertiary audience was local community members/enthusiasts.

1. Current Metrolink Commuters

- Riders who currently commute to destinations (work/school) using Metrolink
- Employed part- and full-time
- Live near Metrolink Stations
- Ages 18-64

2. Destination Riders

- Riders who have used Metrolink for recreation, but do not have a pattern of frequency
- Employment status varies
- Live near or have access to a Metrolink station or connecting transit
- All ages

3. Community/Enthusiasts

- People are aware of Metrolink but do not use Metrolink's service
- Employment status varies
- Live near or have access to Metrolink stations, or live in cities where Metrolink operates
- All ages

Situation/Challenge

Traditionally, Metrolink shared news and information with riders through a bimonthly printed magazine that was placed onboard trains. This limited the amount of information because of space constraints and printing schedule. In March 2018, Metrolink created the Metrolink Matters Blog in an effort to increase our avenues of communicating with riders for news and events that affect them. Our challenge is to grow the readership of the blog to have it become our top communication tool for news and upcoming events that aren't real-time service updates that is found on our social media pages.

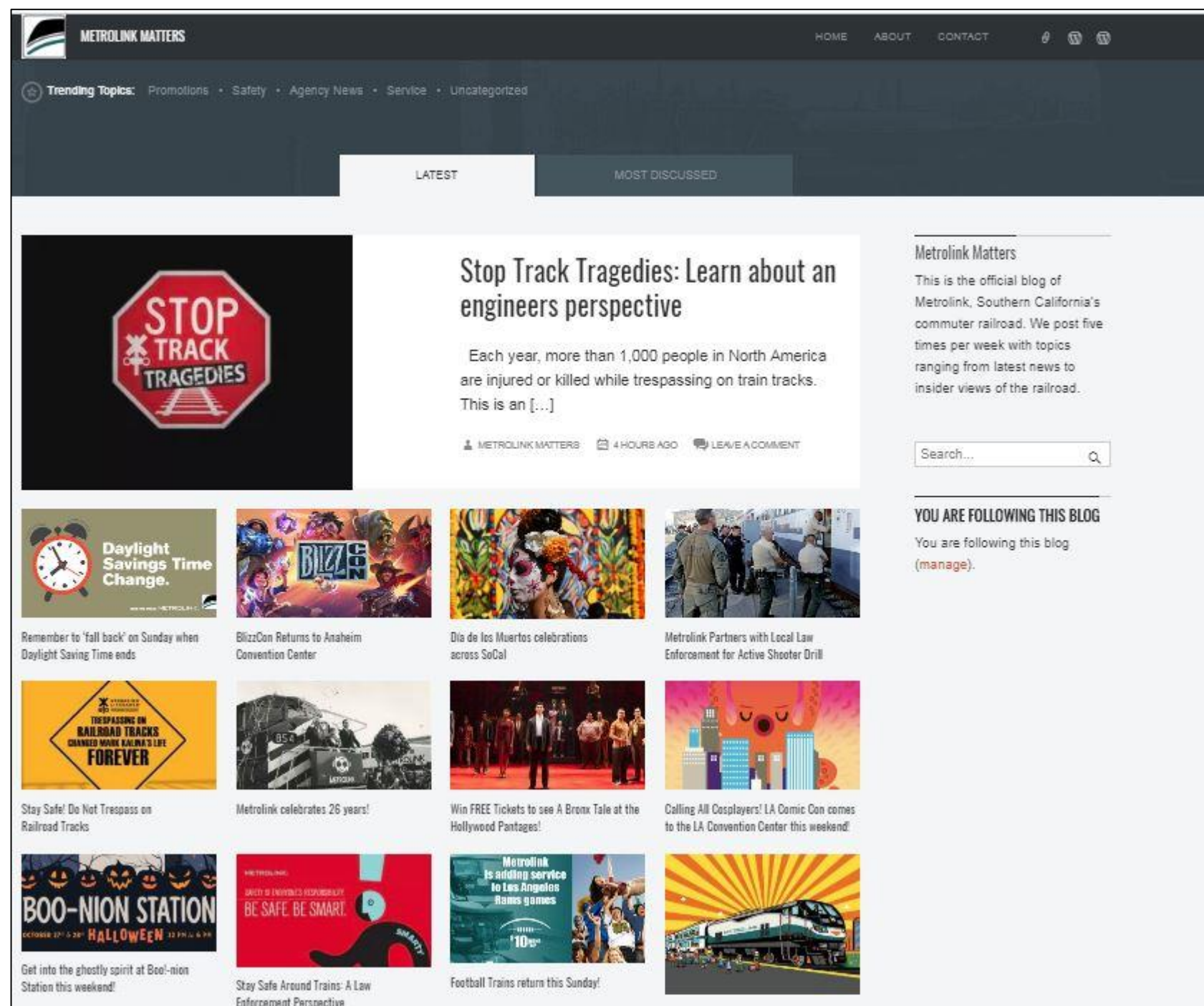
We wanted to reach a regular commuters who may not always use the train because they were unable to see this content anywhere but on our trains. We chose to share agency news, such as awards, projects and grants, then travel ideas, including weekend, day-trips and events and we also focused on planned schedule changes and advisories to have another source of information when planning travel, whether it was for leisure or business.

Strategies

Create content that promotes agency, travel and service. The content is focused on how Metrolink is an important and useful travel option in Southern California. Showcasing agency achievements, such as grants, projects and proposals help readers understand the importance of Metrolink. Travel pieces focus on places or events near Metrolink stations or ones that are easily accessible using transit connections. Service posts helped to communicate any issues a rider may experience when planning any type of travel, including track closures or station updates.

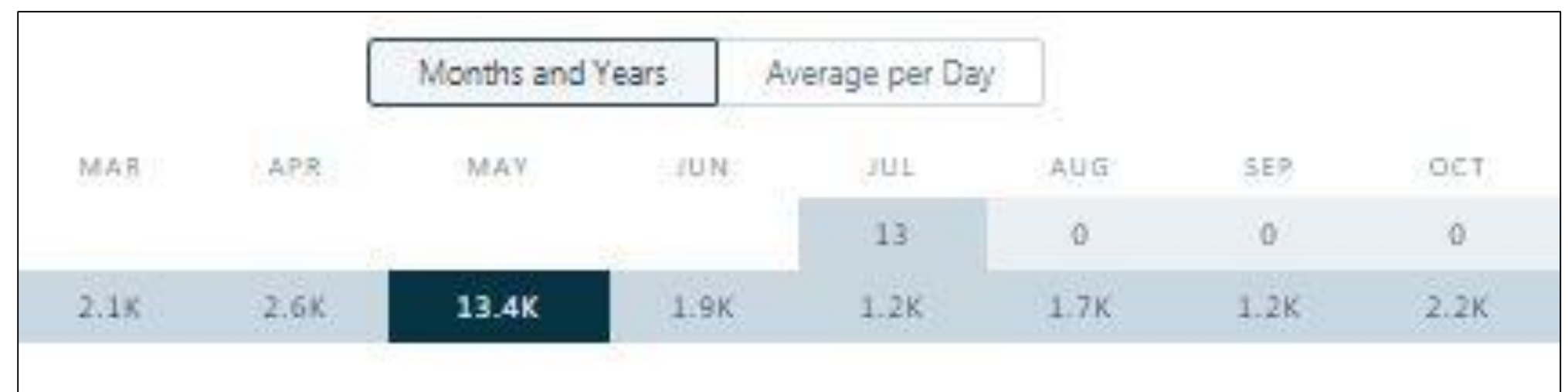
Utilized social media to share content. When we developed the blog, we decided that the best way to grow an audience was to wait until there was a variety of posts before any paid advertising so readers would have options. We created a paid Facebook campaign during the month of May 2018. Since then we have used Facebook to promote posts organically and included blog advertising in printed Time Tables.

METROLINK SAMPLES



Metrolink Matters Blog Homepage

The homepage highlights the most recent stories about Metrolink. These include safety posts, scheduled work affecting commutes, news and destinations.



Monthly Views March – October

The Metrolink Matters Blog formally launched in March 2018. In May 2018, we conducted a month-long Facebook campaign to help grow readership. Since then we have utilized organic Facebook posts to promote the blog with increasing readership numbers.



Project Update: Los Angeles Union Station Canopy Renovation

METROLINK MATTERS APRIL 4, 2018 LEAVE A COMMENT



As many of you may be aware, platform 2 (tracks 3 and 4) has been closed since early February as part of a construction project. This project, known as the **Los Angeles Union Station** Canopies Renovation Project, will include platforms 3 and 4 and work is expected to through June.

The canopies, which are designated as historic structures, are now being renovated, repaired and repainted to remove existing lead-based paint, for asbestos abatement and to repair the drain and gutter system that leak during rainy weather. This project is funded by grants from Metrolink's five member agencies.

Over the past eight weeks, the construction crews have made considerable progress on platform 2 in its goals to renovate the canopy, while giving the platform itself a touch up. Crews have removed both lead and asbestos, replaced speaker and lighting systems, repaired the drains and gutters, have repainted, which not only makes the platform and canopy more visually appealing, but makes them safer with brighter striping on steps and near the tracks.

Platform 2 is scheduled to end construction on Friday and return to service on Monday, April 9. At that time, platform 3 will close to begin work.

Sample Post: *Project Update: Los Angeles Union Station Canopy Renovation*

This article showcases the work that one done on the canopies about the tracks at Los Angeles Union Station. To highlight the work, we described the processes of the project and included before and after comparison photos so that riders were able to understand the work that went into the project.



Know Your Station: Vincent Grade/Acton

METROLINK MATTERS | MARCH 21, 2018 | LEAVE A COMMENT

At first glance, you may think that you're approaching a California ghost town from the 1800s after driving along the lonely Sierra Highway, but it's actually the Vincent Grade/Acton Metrolink Station, with facades that evoke a feeling of the Old West.



The station was built in just two weeks, and opened on Jan. 31, 1994, just 14 days after the 6.7 magnitude Northridge Earthquake. The Vincent Grade/Acton station is one of six stations Metrolink built immediately after the quake to help commuters who were impacted by the freeway closures as a result. While the station was part of the plan to connect the Antelope and Santa Clarita valleys to the west San Fernando Valley, the plan was accelerated by nearly 10 years as a response to the quake.

Sample Post: *Know Your Station: Vincent Grade/Acton*

This article is part of a series that highlights some of the unique stations along Metrolink's service area. It includes the history of the station, the inspiration of the design and historical photos so that readers can learn why some stations are designed the way they are.



Sample Post: *Delays on the 91/Perris Valley Line due to BNSF Work*

In an attempt to make a service disruption post more interesting, we explained what exactly the work being done included and why it was important to do so. There are many train terms a regular rider may not be familiar with and this was to help explain why this work happens, in addition to the impact it makes.



Wooden railroad ties. Photo by [Nick Ares](#). Licensed by [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

Railroad tie is the rectangular support for the actual rails. These are generally made from wood or concrete and lie perpendicular to the rails. They work to transfer the weight of the train to the track ballast (the rocks along the tracks) while holding the rails upright and maintaining the gauge of the trains. There are about 3,520 ties per mile of mainline track in the United States and are fastened with a railroad spike.

Rail tie replacements are a regular form of track maintenance and is an essential and never-ending task for railroads in order to maintain a safe and reliable system for passengers.

Results & Impact

Reached more than 12,000 visitors (12,872) individual visitors for posts for March 2018 – October 2018, with 26,484 views.

From March to October, we have created 173 posts – at least one per weekday.

The blog compliments our other publications, including the 32,500 physical copies of the Metrolink Matters newsletter, social media pages and website pages.

Used as a source for media outlets including Progressive Railroading and Urbanize LA.

Why this entry should win the AdWheel Award

This entry was submitted due to the successful approach taken by Metrolink to inform all of our riders of Metrolink initiatives. We've proven it is possible to deliver content that is engaging to both previous and new fans, spanning multiple generations.

The Metrolink Matters Blog is continuing on a trend of increasing readership and will begin to look at new ways to communicate the benefits of using Metrolink when compared to other commuting options.