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## **INTRODUCING METRO:**

### **A NEW FEATURE HIGHLIGHTING THE MEN AND WOMEN MAKING METRO MOVE**

*Santa Cruz METRO will operate a regular weekday schedule on Monday, Nov. 11, 2019.*

Supply chain logistics and transportation are two essential functions at the heart of military activity. To deploy thousands of troops quickly and efficiently to countries around the world it takes detailed planning and a huge amount of transportation to ensure that everything our armed forces need – from medical care, to electronics, to the basic necessities of day-to-day life – to service our military on the front lines.

This is just part of the reason that many military veterans look for jobs in the transportation sector upon discharging from the armed services. There's also a mindset among veterans that is shared by the public transportation field.

"Service is in our blood, that's what makes veteran employees such a good fit – they are steeped in a culture of service to one's country, one's community," said Santa Cruz METRO CEO and veteran Marine (USMC), Alex Clifford. "Several years ago at METRO we made a commitment to service by turning our hiring model on its head. Instead of hiring bus operators exclusively based on whether a candidate had experience driving we began focusing on customer service. We can teach someone how to drive, but teaching someone how to have a service-oriented mindset can be more challenging."

At Santa Cruz METRO, 22 employees have voluntarily identified themselves as veterans. Those service members include Ignacio Mata. Ignacio – or Mata to his friends – has been a Bus Operator for METRO for more than 6 years. But he started his career first as a member of the United States Marine Corp. and then later as a member of the National Guard.

During his time in the military, Mata served two tours in Iraq, more than a year in Japan and was deployed to support the recovery effort in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Mata, a Corporal in the Marines, performed as a vehicle operator and licensed trainer during his tours with both the Marines and the National Guard.

While in Iraq, Mata drove as part of the logistics convoy, moving the critical goods needed to support military members deployed in that country. His convoys were attacked repeatedly during his second tour in Iraq.

"We were attacked eleven times because we were logistics," said Ignacio Mata, Santa Cruz METRO Bus Operator. "I saw so much. It affects me every day."

Since discharging from the military Mata makes an effort to support veterans and to help get them connected with services. He even provides for vets in need out of his own pocket.

“A couple of years ago I went out and bought a bunch of sleeping bags and warm clothes and I walked around Santa Cruz handing them out to homeless veterans,” said Mata.

Ignacio is also a Santa Cruz County native. Santa Cruz METRO is very proud to have him on our team.

On this Veteran’s Day and every day, Santa Cruz METRO is proud to hire and serve the men and women who stood to defend American values around the world.

Each Veteran’s day at METRO we gather to highlight the service of our employees who have served and thank them personally for all that they have sacrificed for our country.

### **About Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District**

Established in 1968, Santa Cruz METRO provides fixed route and Highway 17 commuter service throughout Santa Cruz County, with limited service connecting to Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center and Santa Clara County, transporting more than 5 million passenger trips a year. METRO also operates Paracruz paratransit service to Santa Cruz County service, providing about 72,000 trips per year. METRO’s operating budget in FY19 is \$52 million and is funded through a combination of farebox revenues, sales tax and state and federal sources. Today it operates a fleet of 98 buses on 26 fixed routes. For more information, visit [www.scmtd.com](http://www.scmtd.com)