



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

Art Leahy CEO, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Art Leahy is Chief Executive Officer of the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), a countywide transportation agency with nearly 2,000 employees and an annual budget of \$1 billion. Under the direction of an 18-member Board of Directors, he is responsible for planning, financing, and coordinating Orange County's freeway, street, and rail development; bus service; commuter rail service; paratransit van service for the disabled; and a host of other transportation related programs. He has served in the position since January 2001. Leahy's experience within the transportation industry is extensive. From 1971 to 1996 he served in a wide variety of progressively responsible positions at the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

Starting originally as a bus operator while a student in college, he worked his way up to Assistant General Manager of Operations, where he orchestrated a successful effort to start light rail service to Los Angeles with the opening of the 23-mile Metro Blue Line in 1990. Leahy was tapped to head the MTA's Operations Division in 1993, where he directed a 6,200-person workforce to provide bus and rail service to over 1.5 million daily transit riders. He was instrumental in the successful launching of both the Metro Red Line in 1993 and Green Line in 1995 and earned wide praise for his leadership in directing MTA's innovative alternative fuels and bus technology programs. In 1997, Leahy moved to Minnesota to become General Manager for Metro Transit in Minneapolis - St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was responsible for the daily operation of a fleet of 930 buses serving 2.5 million people with 245,000 daily riders. At Metro Transit he was credited with increasing bus ridership in the Twin Cities area by almost 20 percent -- a significant expansion after numerous years of consistent decline -- and playing an instrumental role in planning and gaining public support and funding for the Twin Cities' Hiawatha light rail project. Throughout his transportation career he has been very active with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), currently serving as the Chair of the Bus Standards Policy and Planning Committee and also serving on numerous committees striving to reshape the transportation industry to meet future mobility demands.