

Director Wants To Improve BART Safety Approach

Director Wants To Improve BART Safety Approach BART director Zoyd Luce, who represents the Valley, said he thinks it's great that BART is receiving some money for security. However, he told the BART board that it's important to focus on safety, too.

Luce, a Dublin resident, told his fellow directors at their meeting Aug. 10 that he would like to see an outside consultant evaluate BART's safety program. Luce was BART's safety officer before he left the agency a few years ago.

He said that as a BART director, safety is an area of expertise that he can contribute to the board. Luce said that there are areas for improvement. He noted that BART ceased evacuation drills in the car shops. They had been held twice each year. Later, they were reinstated, but only once each year.

With BART on the lookout for terrorist problems, "how can you not have evacuation drills," he asked.

Luce was also critical of statistics on safety as presented in reports from staff. He said that quarterly report data was mixed with annual reporting standards. It was impossible to get a correct look at just where BART falls statistically in national standards.

With BART applying for millions in grants to beef up security, the agency might be able to attract more money if the agency could show it has a top-notch safety program, said Luce.

Tom Radulovich, a San Francisco BART director, told the Independent that he made the same pitch to staff at the following board meeting, on Aug. 24. "We have bomb-sniffing dogs. We are a leader, and have done it before any other district. When the issue of safety came up, (general manager Tom) Margro said that a report would not show any deficiencies on safety. But that's a different tone."

"I want to strike the same tone on both (safety and security), and be proactive on this (safety). We want to be leaders, not just sufficient. The staff didn't disagree. They are looking forward to see what can be done so BART can lead in safety," said Radulovich.

Although Luce called for a consultant's review of the safety department, which he said would cost \$25,000, other directors wouldn't go that far. They said they would prefer a peer review, conducted by people in the field who do not work for BART.

Luce said that a peer review is like "calling in your friends to say good things about you."

Directors said they definitely want to study Luce's concerns. They asked staff, and were promised, a clearer explanation of the safety statistics. They intend to discuss things further after they hear a report by a consultant about the structure of BART management.

There will be a series of reports on the topic, which was brought up by BART unions last year. The unions wanted to make sure BART is not top-heavy with management, said BART spokesman Linton Johnson.