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NEWTON

MBTA staff to be honored at appreciation day in Newton

Posted by Matt Rocheleau June 7, 2013 01:01 PM

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(MBTA)

Pictured are Green Line employees Bill Duke and Patrick Turner and Newton resident and T rider Robert Solomon

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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MBTA employees will receive refreshments, discounts to local businesses and other tokens of thanks for the first-ever "Streetcar Motorperson Appreciation Day" at a trolley station in Newton on Friday, officials said.

The event, also being called "Trolley Operators Appreciation Day," was organized by Newton resident and public transit rider Robert Solomon, T officials said.

Solomon, an active community member who has been advocating for accessibility improvements in the area, including working with T officials to get more employees trained on how to operate mobile lifts, officials said.

"Over the past six months, the operators, boosted by a new training program implemented by the office of the director of light rail, have collectively reduced wheelchair boarding times from 15-20 minutes and more to less than 5 minutes, reducing mental strain and frustration on all of the passengers and the operators as well," [The Boston Carmen's Union, Local 589](#), said on its website. "The improvement represents just an intermediate step toward bringing the Newton Highlands T station into full ADA compliance."

To show his gratitude for the improved training, Solomon led the effort to set up the employee appreciation day, which is set to run from 3 to 5 p.m. at Newton Highlands Station on the D branch of the Green Line, T officials said.

The Boston Carmen's Union, Local 589, the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council and the MBTA are helping to sponsor the event.

At least 10 merchants in Newton Highlands will offer discounts to T employees who show valid identification.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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