



INSIDE METRO: THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE TRANSIT

Meet Jason LoGiudice: A Lead Mechanic Keeping METRO Moving for 25 Years

For nearly 25 years, Jason LoGiudice has been one of the steady hands behind Santa Cruz METRO's fleet—someone who knows every bolt, every engine, and every era of bus technology that has rolled through the district. As a second generation METRO mechanic, Jason grew up around the shop, shadowing his dad, listening to stories about the work, and learning the craft long before he ever clocked in. Today, he carries that legacy forward as a Lead Mechanic, guiding his team, solving complex mechanical puzzles, and helping ensure that every bus on the road is safe, reliable, and ready to serve the community.

Tell us a little about yourself, Jason

Hello. My name is Jason LoGiudice, I am a Lead Mechanic at Santa Cruz METRO and I've been working at METRO for almost 25 years.

What first sparked your interest in becoming a mechanic?

I've always been tinkering since a young age. I'm a second generation METRO employee—my dad was a mechanic here for 30 years. I grew up shadowing him while he worked on vehicles and equipment at home, and I loved hearing his stories about METRO. That's really where it all started.

Can you talk a little bit about your dad's history at METRO?

My dad worked here for 30 years. He transferred over right after METRO separated from the City of Santa Cruz and became its own entity. He worked at both the Watsonville and Santa Cruz facilities.

Did you ever work with him?

My dad and I actually worked together here at METRO for about ten years.

How have you seen the technology and fleet transform over your time here?

It's been a drastic transformation. When I first started, our oldest series of buses were 1981 Gillig Phantoms. Now in 2026, our current oldest series is our 1998 New Flyer Low Floors, with three only left remaining in the fleet and our newest series are 2024 New Flyer Excelsiors.

Also 25-years ago when I first started we had two stroke diesel engines—the cream of the crop in 2000. In 2002, METRO introduced CNG (Compressed Natural Gas). We went from a tiny fuel station that could only fuel eight buses to a permanent station that can fill close to 100. Since then, we've moved from diesel to diesel hybrids, all electric buses, and now hydrogen. Our fleet ranges from 1990s buses to 2024 models.

How have these changes impacted your job and learning as a mechanic?

When I came in, I had a small amount of experience. I learned one on one from the previous generation of mechanics and on the older fleet. As new buses came in, we got training from manufacturers and hands on group training. It's bumper to bumper learning.

Do you have a favorite kind of bus to work on?

All the buses have been fun and frustrating at the same time. Some of them have bugs that can be challenging.

Were there any training certifications you needed for this role?

When I got hired, I only had general mechanical knowledge from the auto industry. METRO still hires mechanics with that same background. You don't need heavy duty bus experience—you can come from automotive school, a dealership, or past mechanic work. We'll train you.

How is maintenance different on the new hydrogen buses?

It's a whole different level. CNG is similar to a combustion engine—just running on natural gas instead of gasoline. Electric is a whole other ballgame. Hybrids run fuel to power a generator that charges batteries. Hydrogen requires retrofitting the shop—like installing hydrogen sensors, which are different from CNG sensors.

How do you handle learning new technology?

Whenever the technology changes, the manufacturer provides training. Every new piece of equipment comes with new training to help us learn.

Does the job ever get boring?

Each day you'll find something new to learn. It keeps you on your toes—you never know what a brand new piece of equipment will throw at you.

What does a typical workday look like for you?

My day is unpredictable. I always have a plan, but it doesn't always pan out. It's similar to emergency services—you never know what's coming.

How is the mechanic team organized?

We have four levels:

- Mechanic 1: Entry level
- Mechanic 2: Based on outside experience
- Mechanic 3: Heavy duty work like transmissions and internal engines
- Lead Mechanic: Oversees the shift, assigns work, orders parts, and keeps everything moving

What types of vehicles do you work on?

Transit buses, Paratransit vehicles, staff vehicles—basically anything METRO owns with wheels.

What are some of the most important safety checks you perform?

Monthly bumper to bumper inspections that include fluid changes, brake and tire checks, light inspections, and fixing driver reported defects—like a seatbelt that doesn't work.

What do you enjoy most about being a mechanic?

Figuring out how things work—what part failed and why. I enjoy working with my hands.

What's the first thing you focus on when starting your shift?

There are set tasks that need to be done, but beyond that, every day is different.

How does your work contribute to METRO's safety and reliability?

We make sure the fleet is ready to serve the public every single day of the year.

What advice would you give someone considering who is considering a mechanic career at METRO?

It can feel intimidating, but you'll fit right in. The on the job training is awesome, everyone helps each other, and you'll enjoy it.

What shifts are available?

We have:

- Day shift: 6:30 AM – 3 PM
- Swing shift: 3 PM – 11 PM
- Graveyard shift: 10:45 PM – 6:45 AM
- We work weekends and some holidays, but those come with holiday pay.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I love spending time with my two sons, who are 12 and 14, along with going on adventures with my partner Heather. I also enjoy traveling with my dad to his Army regiment reunions to learn about his time in the service. I also like BMX riding, visiting Pismo Beach, riding ATVs, hanging out with friends, and working on remote control cars and trucks. I love the sunny Central Coast.

Any hobbies or interests that might surprise people?

Not really—I'm all about new adventures and new hobbies. ATVs, RC cars, tinkering, BMX riding. Nothing too surprising.

How do you maintain work life balance?

It's chaotic. When I'm off work, I'm doing home stuff. But if I'm out in town and see a bus, I think, "I worked on that last night. It's constant."

How does it feel seeing buses you worked on out in the community?

It makes me proud. Seeing them operating shows that the equipment I worked on is serving the community.

"Jason is one of those rare team members whose dedication is felt in every corner of METRO. His deep knowledge, steady leadership, and commitment to safety keep our fleet running reliably for the community we serve. Whether he's guiding newer mechanics, troubleshooting complex issues, or stepping in wherever he's needed, Jason brings professionalism, patience, and pride to the job every single day. His work may happen behind the scenes, but its impact is seen on every bus that rolls out to serve Santa Cruz County."

-Freddy Rocha, Maintenance Deputy Director