

# *TUG Tidbits*

*Newsletter of the Natural Gas Transit (& School Bus) Users Group*

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WMATA (Washington, DC Metro) "Topiary Bus"

March 2008

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## Get Money for Using Natural Gas - TUG Webcast April 3

Did you know that federal tax rebates are available to transit and school bus fleets using natural gas fuel, EVEN IF THEY PAY NO TAXES!

From 1-2 p.m. eastern time, on Thursday April 3, TUG is holding a FREE webcast on how to claim the 50¢ per gasoline-gallon-equivalent rebate on natural gas used as vehicle fuel. Jeff Clarke of NGV America will go over the laws and regulations, tell you how to file for your rebate and answer questions. And representatives of three



transit agencies will discuss their experiences in filing for and receiving their rebates.

You have probably already received a separate notice about the webcast, but if not, just dial in to 1-888-790-5897 (use the passcode TUG) and join the video directly at

<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PG9397983&p=TUG&t=c> or  
<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join/> using conference number PG9397983 and passcode TUG at 1 pm on Thursday April 3.

Make sure you pass this information on to your finance department and invite them to join us!

### **Natural Gas Fuel Half the Price of Diesel (BEFORE the rebate)**

On March 14 the *Alternative Fuels Index* reported that natural gas was selling at \$1.64 per DGE (diesel gallon equivalent) while diesel was selling at \$3.35 per gallon. And that was BEFORE the 50¢ a gallon federal rebate on natural gas (see article above)! The environmental and economic benefits of using natural gas as a transit/school bus fuel are stronger than ever before. Save more on fuel costs, use zero petroleum fuel, AND meet 2010 emission standards today!

### **Washington Metro's "Topiary Bus" Wins Three AdWheel Awards**

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) presented three AdWheel Awards to Washington, DC Metro (WMATA) for advertisements stressing the environmental and financial advantages of using the bus to commute.

One ad, called "Go Green on Metro" features one of Metro's "Topiary" buses painted with leafy plants, colorful flowers, a panda, a fox and deer. The buses promote the new fleet of CNG and hybrid buses, stressing how customers help reduce air pollution by riding Metrobus.

We feature Washington Metro's Topiary Bus on the masthead of this quarter's *TUG Tidbits*.

All three of the ads were part of the "Go Green on Metro" campaign reminding the region's residents about the environmental and economic benefits of using Metrobus and Metrorail. The "Go Green on Metro" ads appeared at gas stations, bus shelters, Metrorail stations and on Metrobuses. (Source: WMATA Press Release)

### **Clean School Bus Funding Available Nationwide**

The 2005 Highway and Energy Bills authorized a number of programs at the US EPA to help reduce pollution and petroleum use by existing diesel vehicles. The program provides grants for the replacement, retrofit, repowering or rebuilding of America's school bus fleets (as well as any other public fleets) with significantly cleaner natural gas engines. EPA has grouped these programs under the DERA (diesel emission reductions) umbrella. For fiscal year 2008, Congress appropriated \$49.2 million for the program, and the EPA has recently posted basic information on the program on its national clean diesel campaign website: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/diesel/index.htm>. Four sources of funds will be available, and they will be distributed either through the

EPA headquarters, one of seven regional collaboratives or through individual states. Visit the regional collaborative websites (which are accessible through the EPA link above) for more regional program background. For more information, contact Paul Kerkhoven at NGV America (202-824-7363, [pkerkhoven@ngvamerica.org](mailto:pkerkhoven@ngvamerica.org)). (Source: NGV America newsletter)

## Chinese Manufacturer Plans to Ship 1,000 CNG Buses to the US

Youngman Automobile Group of China plans to ship 1,000 high quality German technology-based CNG buses to the US within the next 12 months.

Youngman Automobile Group and US electric car maker ZAP announced plans to ship the buses to the US within the next 12 months, with projected revenues of \$200 million by 2009.



ZAP (an electric car manufacturer) has been appointed exclusive importer and distributor for these buses in North America. Lotus Engineering Inc., the US-based subsidiary of Lotus Engineering, a global Company headquartered in the UK, will be leading the homologation and US certification process, which is expected to take a few months to complete. The Company expects to deliver its first shipment by fourth quarter of 2008 under the ZAP brand.

"For the last fourteen years we have been building luxury motor coaches based on German standards of quality in partnership with Neoplan and we are number one in our domestic market," said Mr. Pang Qingnian, Chairman and President of China Youngman Automobile Group. "Now for the last four years we have managed to penetrate into the international market, selling in countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Europe and The Middle East. The US is one of the last and prize trophies for us. With Chinese-based economics and German-based quality, I believe our buses offer the best quality at half of the price."

China Youngman Automobile Group and ZAP also plan to open a final assembly plant in California, creating green collar jobs for the United States.

Depending on the final vehicle specifications, ZAP expects to price these buses between US\$175,000 to US\$230,000. (Source: ZAP Press Release)

## New Natural Gas Buses in the USA

**San Francisco International Airport** is to get 14 alternative fueled shuttles following a Bay Area Air Quality Management District grant for advanced technology demonstration programs to improve air quality in the region. The vehicles will be fueled by Hythane Company's 80/20 natural gas/hydrogen blend using engines converted by BAF Technologies. The Hythane portion of the project includes the development work to create an HCNG version of these vehicles, as well as actual conversion of the 14 shuttles. (Source: NGVAmerica newsletter)

**The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)** recently began taking delivery of an order of 95 additional 60-foot CNG Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) vehicles from North American Bus Industries. The order was the result of the MTA exercising its second group of options from an earlier order. When delivered, this group of buses will give the MTA a total of 391 CNG articulated buses. Since taking delivery of the first 200 BRTs under this contract in 2005, the MTA has been putting them to the test. Mike Bottone, MTA's director of vehicle technology, said the CNG BRTs provide the power these large people movers need to keep up with traffic. Their durability has also scored well, as the MTA has had very few maintenance issues with the BRTs. (Source: NGVAmerica newsletter)

**WMATA's (Washington, DC Metro)** Board has approved the purchase of 22 60-foot NABI CNG articulated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) style buses, utilizing piggyback options available from the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The buses should be delivered by May 31, 2008

## New Natural Gas Bus Purchases Overseas

**Spain** - The Transport Municipal Company (EMT) of Mallorca's Palma, Spain, will acquire 52 new buses this year – ten of them Natural Gas Vehicles. In the near future EMT anticipates that half its of 150 buses fleet will be NGVs. (Source: GNV Magazine)

**Thailand** – In January Sunlong Motors Thailand begin assembling natural gas buses. Initial plans of the joint venture between the Thai company Bestlin Group and Xiamen Golden Dragon Van Co, of China are for the production of 40 buses, and their delivery to the private operators who act with the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA). Sunlong has signed contracts to provide 2,500 buses with natural gas to the BMTA and 1,500 to private operators. (Source: GNV Magazine)

**India** – The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) continues the modernization of its bus fleet, calling for tenders for the supply of a total of 3,500 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses as the city prepares for the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The fleet op-

erator issued two separate tenders during January for a total of 2,500 non air-conditioned low floor CNG buses and 1,000 air-conditioned low floor CNG buses. Delivery dates range from between 6 and 18 months from the issuance of a letter of acceptance. (Source: NGV Global)

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Please send all questions, comments, requests for information, etc. to Hank Seiff at 703-534-6151 or [hseiff@cleanvehicle.org](mailto:hseiff@cleanvehicle.org). See the TUG website at <http://www.nrel.gov/vehiclesandfuels/ngvtf/tug.html>