TUG Tidbits

Newsletter of the Natural Gas Transit Users Group

December, 2006

Successful Fall TUG Meeting at LA Metro

Los Angeles Metro hosted this year's Natural Gas Transit Users Group (TUG) meeting on October 24-26. Highlight of the meeting was a no-cost CNG cylinder inspector training course taught by Cal Macy of Long Beach City College and Bill McGlinchey of AFV International. After the course 23 "students" took the CSA cylinder inspector certification test.

Students Inspect Cylinders Under Bus

LA Metro operates 2225 of its 2490 transit buses on compressed natural gas. It is the largest clean-air fleet in the country and the winner of APTA's Outstanding Public Transportation Award as the best transit agency in America in its class.

LA Metro Bus Maintenance Facility

Along with the cylinder inspector training program the TUG meeting included tours of LA Metro's CNG bus maintenance and fueling facility and SCI's cylinder manufacturing facility. The group rode from LA Metro in Los Angeles to SCI in Pomona on a state-of-the-art CNG articulated bus.

The group also heard presentations on alternative fuel tax credits available for transit agencies, recent natural gas bus incidents, LA Metro's first-responder program and a hydrogen and HCNG (mixture of natural gas and hydrogen) fuel project jointly funded by LA Metro and South Coast Air Quality Management District.

For more information on TUG, contact Hank Seiff at hseiff@cleanvehicle.org or 703-534-6151.

FREE Cylinder Inspector Training Still Available!

If your transit agency didn't take advantage of the Los Angeles TUG meeting to have its technicians trained and tested as certified CNG cylinder inspectors, you can still get FREE training and testing during 2007! The Clean Vehicle Education Foundation (CVEF) is conducting a CNG Cylinder Safety, Training and Inspection Program including availability of scholarships for CNG cylinder inspection training and certification. The program is underwritten by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Like a gasoline-or diesel fueled-vehicle, a natural gas vehicle's fuel system should be inspected periodically. In fact, U.S. Department of Transportation regulations require all vehicular CNG cylinders to be labeled with a notice stating, "This container should be visually inspected after a motor vehicle accident or fire and at least every 36 months or 36,000 miles, whichever comes first, for damage or deterioration."

For more information on cylinder safety and scholarships to cover the cost of training and certification testing go to www.cleanvehicle.org/technology/cylinder.shtml or contact Hank Seiff at 703/534-6151 or hseiff@cleanvehicle.org

Alternative Fuel Tax Credit Provisions – An Update for Transit Agencies

Recent legislation provides tax credits for the use of alternative fuels in motor vehicles. Although many transit systems are governmental entities which do not pay taxes, they may still be able to receive payment for the use of natural gas fuel. The tax credit is taken by the alternative fueler, the "person" who would be required to collect excise tax on the fuel (if such a tax were due), i.e., the "person" who delivers the fuel into the tank of the vehicle. To obtain the payment ($0.50 per gasoline gallon equivalent for CNG) the applicant must file various forms with the IRS. For more information contact Jeff Clarke at 202-824-7364 or jclarke@ngvamerica.org.

New Natural Gas Buses Meet 2010 Emission Standards

Cummins Westport (CWI) announces that Sacramento Regional Transit has ordered 91 ISL G engines to be installed in 40-foot low-floor buses in 2007. CWI says "the ISL G is the most advanced natural gas engine available and will feature NOx and PM

emissions that will meet 2010 emissions guidelines while at the same time providing improved performance and fuel economy."

Ned Fox, Sacramento Regional Transit's Director of Maintenance, said the new natural gas buses "…will deliver improved performance while producing the lowest emissions in the industry." "The ISL G will surpass EPA and CARB 2007 phase-in levels and meet 2010 emission standards of 0.2 g/bhp-hr NOx and 0.01 g/bhp-hr PM at launch in 2007." The engine uses "proven Exhaust Gas Recirculation ("EGR") and stoichiometric combustion allowing for the use of a three way catalyst, which is maintenance free and has been in common use in passenger cars since the 1970s."

New Natural Gas Bus Purchases Around the World

Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Regional Transit has ordered 91 40-foot low-floor buses with Cummins Westport's new ISL G engine which will meet EPA's 2010 emission standards (see article above). (Source CWI Press Release 10-26-06)
Thousand Palms, CA: SunLine Transit Agency has received 15 new CNG Orion V buses to complete the first phase of a program designed to replace the Agency's old fleet and provide expansion vehicles to meet growth in the Coachella Valley. SunLine has been providing public transportation with a 100% alternately fueled fleet for over twelve years. (Source: SunLine Press Release 9-11-06)
Sydney, Australia: State Transit Authority of New South Wales, Australia wants to expand a historic bus depot to handle 200 natural gas buses "which are quieter and less polluting than diesel." "The chief executive of State Transit, John Lee, said the change would save just under 3 million kilograms of carbon dioxide a year. 'In terms of our own business, that's more than a 20 per cent reduction in emissions.' " (Source, 10-30-06 Sydney Morning Herald.com)
Linz, Austria: Under a government directive, by 2010, 12 percent of the primary energy used in Austria must be renewable energy. As part of that effort, Linz AG will replace its entire 86 bus fleet starting next year, with 25 single chassis and 61 articulated buses powered by CNG generated from biogas sources. The move is expected to lower CO2 emissions by 50 percent and NOx emissions 70 percent. (Source: NGVAmerica Newsletter, 10-27-06)
Yu Yang City, China: "Yu Yang City has become the second city in China's Hu Nan province to commence operations of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. A total of 11 CNG buses began operating on 3 different lines in the city earlier this month. Chang Sha City was the first in Hu Nan to operate CNG buses." (Source: NGV Global 10-25-06)
Augsburg, Germany: "The city of Augsburg in Germany has acquired 12 new compressed natural gas (CNG) powered MAN buses…with a 310 bhp EEV engine, meeting Euro V standards (not due for implementation till 2008.)" "… 64 out of the total 90 buses used in Augsburg now run on methane gas." (Source: NGV Global 10-11-06)

"You Can't Win-'em-All" Department

The Greater Vancouver Transit Authority in Canada "TransLink will buy 126 new buses and they'll all burn diesel – despite objections from lobbyists pushing for compressed natural gas as the fuel of choice."

"The battle over fuel types has raged for more than a year. TransLink has relied on tests showing modern diesel buses with particulate traps are near-equivalent in emissions to natural gas. But because diesels are cheaper, TransLink can buy more for the same amount of money and replace old heavily polluting diesel buses faster – cutting pollution quicker."

"Natural gas advocates say it's short-sighted thinking and say their fuel does better on some measures. 'We're surprised and disappointed,' said Garnet Glover, general manager for Clean Energy in Canada. He noted TransLink has declined to release its latest test results of buses using various fuels, and claims test inconsistencies worked against the natural gas option."

It's also not clear whether fuel pricing was included in their analysis or not, as natural gas prices recently hit a two year low compared to diesel prices which hit record highs during the same period.

"The TransLink board battled back and forth between diesel and natural gas before its previous order was split down the middle."

(Source: TriCity News 10-8-06)

Please send all questions, comments, requests for information, etc. to Hank Seiff at 703-534-6151 or hseiff@cleanvehicle.org.