



BusRoots

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BC TRANSIT SHOWCASES FUEL CELL TECHNOLOGY AT THE 2010 OLYMPIC GAMES

The world's largest fleet of hydrogen fuel cell buses in operation in a single location has captured the attention of the world during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics and Paralympics.

"This is a milestone achievement," says Joanna Morton of BC Transit. "We've seen demonstrations from other transit systems around the world that have included one, two or three buses but ours will be the first to utilize and test a fleet of this size."

After undergoing testing and evaluation in Victoria, the location of BC Transit's headquarters, the fleet of hydrogen fuel cell buses was relocated to Whistler in time for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In order to accommodate demand for public transportation during The Games, the Whistler fleet grew from 39 to 135 buses operating in Whistler and connecting routes to Squamish and Pemberton.

"There has definitely been a lot of local and international media interest in the fleet," says Morton. "We had put all of this in place in 2007 when the province announced it would be contributing to the project. When Whistler was selected as a host site for the Olympics, we thought it would be a great opportunity to showcase this technology in our backyard."


"At end of Olympics, the hydrogen fuel cell buses will form the backbone of Whistler Transit's fleet so we can further assess the ride and performance of

hydrogen fuel cell technology," says Morton. "Because it is the largest fuel cell fleet in the world, we also have the largest hydrogen fueling station."

The development of a hydrogen bus fleet is part of British Columbia's commitment to fuel cell technologies and the Hydrogen Highway as part of its overall plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020.

The Hydrogen Highway is a government-industry initiative seeking to accelerate the demonstration and commercialization of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.

Hydrogen fuel cell-powered vehicles produce no smog-creating or greenhouse gas emissions and can be twice as efficient as internal combustion engines.

New Flyer Industries of Winnipeg manufactured the fleet of low-floor buses, which have a range of 450 to 500 km, a top speed of 90 km/h and a life expectancy of 20 years. Air Liquide, together with Canadian companies Sacre-Davey Group, Hydrogen Technology and Energy Corporation, and Hydrogenics Corporation designed and supplied the hydrogen fueling stations and will continue to operate and maintain them. Ballard provided the fuel cells. 

KUDOS TO OUR OPERATORS

From operators and mechanics to dispatchers and trainers, the industry takes pride in the many dedicated and service-driven professionals responsible for transporting millions of Canadian workers, students, seniors, vacationers and people with special needs.

At its November conference in Quebec, the Canadian Urban Transit Association recognized outstanding professionals like Radenko Knezevic of British Columbia. While operating his bus one day last summer, the Coast Mountain Bus Company operator noticed flames coming from a house. After calling 911, he honked the horn of his bus and knocked on the front door, finally awakening the occupants. Thanks to his determination, all made it to safety.



Radenko Knezevic

Fellow Excellence Award recipient Marino Verzeroli, an OC Transpo operator, noticed a youngster alone at an intersection and dressed improperly for the harsh winter conditions. He stopped the bus and learned that the

boy didn't know the whereabouts of his parents. Verzeroli contacted Transit Control and met Ottawa Police at a nearby transit station. The three-year-

old was safely reunited with his mother. Verzeroli's actions earned him OC Transpo Transecure Awards 2008 Winner of the Year.

The Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA), meanwhile, recognized operators like Clarence Denny during its 2009 Awards Celebration. Denny's career began in 1954, when he inherited a vehicle from his father and transported five students to four local schools. Soon, he began purchasing school buses and adding more routes.

In 1978, Denny purchased his first motor coach and operated local tours before expanding across Canada and into the United States. Today, he serves as president his third-generation company, which operates 80 vehicles and employs 100 people from its Acton location. Denny received a Hall of Fame Award in recognition of his contributions to the motor coach industry.

OMCA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Allan Cherrey is a second-generation mechanic, licensed since 1969. He's taken on countless responsibilities, from washing buses in the middle of the night and starting trips at the break of dawn to dispatching and operation. Cherrey has invested time and money in his business to remain at the forefront of the industry. A dedicated OMCA volunteer, he's recognized for making the industry stronger and safer, while increasing its profile among governments and the public.

Congratulations to these and other award recipients, along with the many professionals who make our industry proud! 🍀

Public Transit Woos Young Riders

Real-time updates that tell you the next few times your bus is really due at your stop – available online, by phone or email. Frequent and comfortable rides complete with complimentary WiFi and TVs so you can surf the Internet or catch up on the latest news while getting from point A to point B.

Those are just some of the features that are making public transit the way to go, particularly among today's multi-tasking generation who would rather be texting friends or working on their laptop than negotiating traffic. Public transit also appeals to their interest in protecting the environment.

"Because we have a modern fleet, we're moving away from the perception that transit is an evil necessity," says Mark Roberts, customer service manager of York Region Transit/Viva in the Greater Toronto Area. "At one time, public transit seemed like a last alternative if you didn't have a car."

Viva is changing that perception. In addition to the features listed above, it boasts stops with ticket vending machines and ticket validators to speed up boarding times. It operates along major corridors much like an above-ground subway. Security features include on-board cameras and well-lit stops that give parents peace of mind. "We are seeing that teenage ridership is up quite a bit," Roberts reports.

Putting transit at the centre of communities is a driving force behind the Canadian Urban Transit Association's (CUTA) Vision 2040. It's looking ahead 30 years because that time span represents a generation, explains director of communications Maureen Shuell. "A lot of travel decisions are cemented fairly early. If you have a transit system that will get people

where they need to go, young people will get into the habit of taking transit," she says.

To better understand the needs and interests of youth, CUTA hosted a Youth Summit on Sustainable Urban Transit in 2008 and invited representatives to attend its national media launch for Vision 2040 in June 2009. View the report at www.cutaaact.ca.

"Our key messaging going forward is that transit has to be the centre of urban planning," says Shuell. "Transit must be linked to municipal decisions on zoning, density, roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes ... It's about making transit a core element of communities rather than building a development



and thinking of transit as an afterthought ... We have to think about how to accommodate transit in communities of all sizes, including suburban and more rural communities."

CUTA recently made a presentation to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and will continue to push its message with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other stakeholders. "We have some work to do so transit can be the best option," says Shuell. "If transit can live up to the challenge and be convenient and frequent, provide excellent service and get people where they need to go, it will be a great option." 🍀

Industry and MCPCC Conduct NOS Review



National Occupational Standards (NOS) describe the tasks and related knowledge and skills needed to perform competently in the workplace and help companies and individuals plan their skills development and maintain their competencies. The Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada (MCPCC) introduced the first multi-sector NOS in the year 2000 and these thorough and rigorous standards are being implemented across the country in all sectors of the industry.

Committed to reviewing the NOS every 3 years, the MCPCC called upon industry representatives from across the country to take part in the National Occupational Standards (NOS) Review workshop. Held in Toronto during November 2009, the NOS Review brought together representatives with a proud history in the industry and an even greater pride in representing their sectors. A number of participants shared their experience.

Denis Paquette of Société de Transport de Montréal worked as a bus operator for 17 years, a trainer for 13 years and is now a trainer counsellor. "When I was young, I always wanted to work with people," he recalls. What began as a summer job evolved into a rewarding career. "It was my first and only job. I really enjoy what I'm doing. My company recognizes experience and has given me the opportunity to do different jobs."

Debbie Wellein has been with Société de Transport de Montréal for 25 years. The former school bus operator took up the challenge of operating a bus in Montreal – in a time when female bus operators were few and far between – and hasn't looked back. Now a bus trainer, Wellein appreciated the opportunity to be part of the NOS Review. "It brought together bus operators and trainers from across the country and from companies of all sizes. We share a pride in our careers."

Gurpreet Jagpal of First Student in Burlington has been a school bus operator since 2005 and also works as a trainer. A medical doctor in his native India, he was forced to pursue a different career path in Canada. What began as a part-time job is evolving into a rewarding career, as Jagpal aspires for a career in management.

School bus operator **Kathy Keam** of Shuswap District #83 B.C. wasn't looking for a job when she sat behind the wheel of a bus 29 years ago. "The operator of my son's school bus encouraged me to give it a try and I quickly discovered that I loved it. Every day is different. I love the kids. They keep you entertained." She also enjoyed being part of the review. "No matter how large or small your company, we share the same concerns and need the same skills."

Wayne Warren of Region of Peel TransHelp in the Greater Toronto Area is proud to be an accessible transit operator. "It can be a challenge because people have different needs but every day is a fun day. It's very rewarding," he says. "For many passengers, TransHelp is the only way they'll be able to get around and they look forward to their outings. I'm proud to be part of that."

As a bus operator and driver trainer with GO Transit, **Don O'Meara** of Hamilton, Ont. looks forward to seeing the same faces every day. "As a commuter service, I typically transport the same people and people get to know you. I've been best man at a few weddings. Several passengers have also asked me to be godfather to their children. They become family."

O'Meara was proud to be part of the NOS Review. "It's quite an honour to be entrusted with this responsibility. At one time, driving a bus was something you did when you ran out of options but it's not like that any more. When someone comes on the bus and asks to talk about the industry, it's nice to be able to discuss careers and National Occupational Standards. Operating a bus is recognized by the federal government and that's important to us."

Mike Mahar of Amalgamated Transit Union in Rexdale, Ont. began a career as a bus operator 32 years ago. "People recognized the uniform and treated us with respect, much like a police officer." He believes credentials and standards are helping elevate its reputation today. "It brings back credibility and will go a long way to making this a career of choice and not one you just happened upon."

The NOS document can be used as a basis for training, curriculum development, recruitment, performance improvement, career development and the certification of practitioners. The NOS serves as a foundation for MCPCC's innovative driver training accreditation programs and operator certification.



April 13-15, 2010
Toronto, Ontario

National Occupational Standards for Driver Trainers Workshop.

This is the first of 2 national workshops to develop the NOS for driver trainers harmonizing the training delivery of Accredited Programs.

April 18-21, 2010
Toronto, Ontario

Ontario Transportation Expo Conference and Trade Show.

Meeting the Challenges of a Post Recession Environment. The only trade show of its kind combining the school bus, motor coach, public transit and community transportation industries in one location!

www.ote.ca

May 15-19, 2010
Ottawa, Ontario

CUTA Conference.

The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2010 Annual Conference in Ottawa from May 15-19. Educational sessions address the hottest topics in transit, management and policy issues.

www.cutaactu.ca

May 16-19, 2010
Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian Pupil Transportation Conference:

Educational workshops, best practices and a trade show specific to pupil transportation are among the features of this conference.

www.cptc2010.ca

Putting Careers in Gear

Do you know someone interested in a career in the busing industry?

You can help them put their career in gear by letting them know opportunities exist in all sectors of our vibrant industry:

- Bus mechanic
- Tour and charter coach operator
- School bus operator
- Urban bus operator
- Inter-city bus operator
- Accessible services operator

Interested candidates can learn more at www.driveabus.ca, an informative Bus Council website.



Did you know?

- Motor coaches are “green” alternatives for your transportation needs. Since October 2006, motor coaches use only ultra low sulphur diesel fuel, which virtually eliminates sulphur emissions. Coaches with 2007 or newer engines will eliminate 90% of particulates (“black smoke”) and those with 2010 engines will eliminate most nitrous oxides. (Motor Coach Canada)
- Public transit is in a stronger position today than it has been since the 1950s. Ridership is growing, with a record ridership in 2007 of 1.76 billion trips across Canada – that’s a 3.1% increase over 2006. (Canadian Urban Transit Association)

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU



This is truly your newsletter, written for and about Canada’s professional Bus Operators. So, to keep it relevant and interesting to you, please let us know what you think, and the types of stories you’d like to see. Better yet – if you have a great story about how you dealt with a tricky situation, professional tips, interesting ‘life on the road’ anecdote, or an outstanding achievement of yours or a colleague, please contact us at the address below.

And, please remember to send us any change of your address, so that you can continue to receive your copy of BusRoots.

Visit us online at www.buscouncil.ca

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Please submit your story ideas, feedback and comments to: editor@buscouncil.ca or **Editor, BusRoots**, Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada, 9555 Yonge Street, Suite 306, Richmond Hill, Ontario, L4C 9M5.

We reserve the right to edit submissions for content and length.

