



## NEWS RELEASE



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### **Santa Monica's Visionary "Bus of the Future" Project Receives High Marks from Transportation Industry**

- ***Recent exhibits at AltCar Expo in Santa Monica and the American Public Transportation Association's International EXPO in San Diego showcase designs that are sustainable, efficient and heavy on the Wow factor***

**SANTA MONICA, Calif.** – If the success of a never-before-tried transit design project can be judged by thousands of visitors, glowing reviews from around the world and overwhelmingly positive feedback from the transportation industry, then the Big Blue Bus and Art Center College of Design's "Bus of the Future" should be considered a colossal hit.

Fresh from its successful exhibition at the recent American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Annual Meeting and International Expo in San Diego, the Big Blue Bus will take its visually compelling "Bus of the Future" project to two additional transportation events in California in the next few months to showcase what the future of transit might look like.

The original idea for the project came out of the transit agency's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration earlier this year amid reflections on what the Big Blue Bus had accomplished, and where public transit needed to go in the future to inspire people to become regular transit riders instead of drivers.

Stephanie Negriff, director of transit services for the Big Blue Bus, said the feedback they've received from the transit industry itself has been nothing short of phenomenal.

"The comments and high scoring marks from the bus manufacturers who were judges on the project have been extremely enthusiastic," she said. "Many of them have said that increasing the "Wow" factor, offering expanded features that incorporate how passengers really want to use transit, and continuing to improve sustainable fuel sources are all very viable ways to attract more people to public transportation."

Macy Neshati, Vice President of Complete Coach Works and Blue Bird Coachworks, said he was very grateful for the opportunity to be a judge on such an ambitious and forward thinking project.

"For us to succeed in stemming the tide of global warming, cleaning up our environment and relieving congestion and gridlock," he said, "public transit needs to emerge as the preferred method for people to get around. Clearly Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, led by

their visionary director Ms. Negriff, understands that imperative and is moving decisively towards those goals.”

Neshati also emphasized the potential of the advanced technologies proposed in the designs as something we might get to see in the near future.

“The three finalist designs all showed great promise and were premised on technologies that are emerging or are only years away from commercial viability,” he said. “It was very exciting and gratifying to see these talented design students working to integrate these technologies into buses that hopefully are only a few years away from reality.”

Another judge, Nova Bus Marketing Administrator Caroline Phaneuf, said the concepts submitted by the Art Center designers were refreshing and inspiring. “These designs bring new ideas forward and help us see beyond current industry products,” she said. “I hope this competition sparks the interest of people and will bring new talent to the public transit industry.”

Some of the futuristic details on the designs include “gills” that clean the air by converting ozone into oxygen, chameleon panels that change color from absorptive to reflective depending on energy needs, self-cleaning paint that saves water by reducing the need for daily washings, social lounges to accommodate longer riding passengers, and roof-mounted solar cells that provide renewable energy.

Over a dozen transit and design experts independently judged the final three designs in four categories. The winners, announced at AltCar Expo on September 26, were:

- Rideability and branding – “Clear Volume” bus
- Sustainability – “Icon” bus
- Innovation – “Cougar” bus

Next up for Bus of the Future is the California Transit Association’s Public and Community Transportation Conference & Expo in Monterey in early November. The exhibit will then return to Santa Monica where it will be showcased at an American Public Transportation Association general managers meeting in early 2009.

“There is a fundamental and positive shift occurring with regards to attitudes about public transit,” said Negriff, “and this is great to see. Problems like high gas prices, time lost due to gridlock, global warming and other related issues all clearly point to the need for alternative transportation.”

“One of the things we hoped for with this project,” said Negriff, “was to capture peoples’ imaginations so that they might picture themselves riding one of these sleek and fun buses around town in the not too distant future. With all the attention Bus of the Future has generated, maybe we’ll begin to see some of these designers’ innovations start to roll off the assembly line.”

Geoff Wardle, director of advanced mobility research at Art Center College of Design and the Bus of the Future’s project team leader, said the majority of advanced vehicle design has been focused for far too long on the car industry.

“Certainly, the enthusiastic reaction that the Big Blue Bus of the Future project received from the public, bus operators and bus manufacturers, underlines our belief at Art Center that there is much to do to improve design in the realm of public transportation,” he said.

“Buses can and should play a significant role in the future of integrated transportation in our current and future cities. However to convince people of that, the experience of using them has to become as sophisticated and appealing as riding in, say, a Lexus, Audi or Lincoln,” said Wardle.

“For too long, all the passion and energy has been focused on designing cars. As the car industry morphs into a new and less certain era, my colleagues and I challenge our young designers to give equal attention to all forms of transportation. Why should car owners have exclusive rights to the best design in the world?”

To learn more about the Bus of the Future project or view the designs, visit [www.busofthefuture.com](http://www.busofthefuture.com). A short video highlighting the design process can also be viewed at [http://www.azbri.com/BBB/bus-of-the-future\\_fast\\_connection.mov](http://www.azbri.com/BBB/bus-of-the-future_fast_connection.mov). More information can also be obtained by calling 310-451-5444.

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### **Sampling of “Bus of the Future” Judges Comments**

#### **“Clear Volume” Bus**

- The high seating capacity, the attention given to special needs riders and the vertical seating concept create an attractive transportation experience solving many transit woes.
- The design is modern and attractive, yet familiar, making it very approachable for new transit users.
- The very efficient use of sunlight and natural elements will keep the costs of operation very low. Zero-emissions will keep the air clean and breathable.
- The Clear Volume design with center lowering section and vertical seating is very rider friendly and enhances the riders feeling of space while within an enclosed environment.

#### **“Cougar” Bus**

- When one passenger cell has worn beyond repair, it can be replaced with a new one, as opposed to replacing the entire bus. This will save money and resources across the board.
- The modular design of this bus is exciting and optimizes ridership comfort depending upon conditions present.
- With the varying cells that can be used to match the needs of the riders, this bus should increase ridership immensely and leave no one stranded.
- Powering the bus through a battery system and regenerative braking would work extremely well in a transit setting.

### "Icon" Bus

- By running clean and filtering the air while it is operating, this bus will prevent more damage while also reversing the damage from other vehicles nearby. If an entire fleet is introduced, the impact will be substantial.
- Hub mounted electric motors and solar cells are excellent ideas to power this bus.
- Going beyond energy-efficient at the motorization level is now an imperative and it will be even more important by 2050.
- Riders will love the ability to sit on the upper deck and enjoy the scenes of Santa Monica.

### Bus of the Future Judges

- **Cristin Lindsay** – Senior Director, Progressive Automotive X PRIZE
- **Christer Lindstrom** – Founder, Institute for Sustainable Transportation, CEO of Encitra, Inc. and development team member of the Podcar system
- **Dan Sturges** – President and founder of zero emission vehicle company Intrago LLC
- **Siel** – Environmental writer and creator of greenlagirl.com
- **Martha Welborne** – Managing Director, Grand Avenue Committee and President of the Los Angeles chapter of the American Institute of Architects
- **Lurae Stuart** – Senior Program Manager of Bus Technical Programs, American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
- **Dr. Adi Arieli** – Principal partner, Arieli Associates and former manager, Northrop Grumman Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB) program
- **George Delozier** – Contributing writer, Inventorspot.com
- **Caroline Phaneuf** – Business Development & Marketing, Nova Bus
- **Joe Gibson** – Sr. Vice President, North American Bus Industries, Inc.
- **Macy Neshati** – Vice President, Complete Coach Works & Blue Bird Coachworks
- **Don White** – Creative Bus Sales
- **Steve Chung** – Creative Bus Sales

### Art Center College of Design Team

- **Geoff Wardle**, Director of Advanced Mobility Research and Associate Chair of Graduate Industrial Design
- **Mike Peterson**, Environmental Design student
- **Gabriel Wartofsky**, Transportation Design student
- **Giuseppe Filippone**, Transportation Design student