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Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus Purchases 11 Articulated Buses for Rapid Blue Lines

- *Alternative fueled CNG buses to be purchased from North American Bus Industries, with an option to buy 10 additional buses in the future.*
- *Transit agency plans to use longer, higher capacity buses on popular Rapid 7 and Rapid 3 bus rapid transit (BRT) lines.*

SANTA MONICA, Calif.– October 19, 2009 – The Big Blue Bus has announced that 11 new flexible 60-foot articulated buses will be joining its fleet starting in 2011, allowing the transit agency to add a new level of expanded service to the public.

A provision in the contract allows for the option to purchase an additional 10 buses as funding becomes available in the future.



Three of the new buses are being purchased with funds from the federal government’s economic stimulus package.

The articulated buses will first be introduced on the popular Rapid 7 bus rapid transit (BRT) line, which is one of the agency’s busiest routes. The Rapid 3 line will also receive new buses after the initial deployment on Rapid 7 is complete. The new cleaner burning compressed natural gas buses will replace some of the older diesel buses in the fleet, in keeping with the city’s commitment to sustainability.

The new North American Bus Industries (NABI) articulated models include interior features for maximum comfort and convenience for all passengers, including seniors and those with disabilities. Each bus has 53 seats instead of the usual 40, and runs on clean compressed natural gas, which is 77 percent cleaner burning than diesel fuel.

"These new NABI articulated Rapid Blue buses will not only be quick, beautiful and comfortable, but they’re fueled by natural gas, which will reduce our carbon footprint and

help keep the air cleaner,” said Stephanie Negriff, director of transit services for the Big Blue Bus.

“We’re excited to add these to our busy Rapid lines because they have the latest features people want, and they’ll make riding more comfortable and less crowded, which will hopefully inspire people to take public transit more often,” she said.

According to NABI Senior Vice President Joe Gibson, BRT vehicles offer cities a less complicated and more affordable way to implement an efficient, more environmentally friendly transit system in their communities than other solutions.

“NABI’s 60-foot BRT vehicle is a rubber-tire solution to light rail,” said Gibson. “It offers many of the same amenities and features of rail, but with the flexibility afforded to bus route deployment,” he said.

“It also uses the latest in transit-signal technology, so it helps passengers get to their destinations quicker, oftentimes much faster than driving a car along the same stretch of road,” he said.

Negriff noted that using the new CNG powered buses will allow the Big Blue Bus to eliminate tons of emissions from entering the atmosphere throughout the operating life of the buses, while also lowering the transit agency’s operating costs.

The Big Blue Bus currently operates a fleet of over 200 alternative fueled vehicles, carrying over 20 million passengers a year around a 52-square mile service area of Los Angeles County. The agency, nationally known for its commitment to sustainable transit equipment and technologies, recently opened a new \$60 million eco-maintenance facility that includes three dedicated bays to service the new articulated models.

The Big Blue Bus contract with NABI contains provisions enabling the transit agency to purchase additional 60-foot BRT’s in subsequent years, in keeping with anticipated expansion of the transit agency’s Rapid Blue service.

About the Big Blue Bus

Nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to a cleaner environment, the Big Blue Bus fleet operates entirely on alternative fuels, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), which helps cut emissions by over 80 percent. Serving Santa Monica and the Los Angeles area since 1928, the Big Blue Bus transports more than 80,000 passengers a day and has an 86 percent on-time performance record. The Big Blue Bus has won numerous awards for customer service, safety and efficiency, and is the recipient of three national Outstanding Achievement Awards from the American Public Transportation Association. (www.bigbluebus.com)

About North American Bus Industries, Inc.

North American Bus Industries, Inc. produces a comprehensive line of innovative, heavy-duty transit buses from 31’ to 60’ (articulated) at its headquarters in Anniston, Alabama. North American Bus Industries prides itself on its environmentally responsible vehicles with CNG, hybrid-electric and clean diesel propulsion systems. North American Bus Industries is the market leader with its sleek and stylish BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) vehicles which offer cost-effective alternatives to expensive light rail. Also, North American Bus Industries

Financial Services offers a suite of customer focused financing alternatives to help its customers optimize their budgets. (www.NABusInd.com)

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