



Oscar Benavente, Systems Shop leadman, demonstrates the fueling of a CNG bus. Note large tanks and pump control system in the background. In a real fueling operation, the mechanic would wear a face shield. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD



Before CNG buses are repaired at the RRC, they must be defueled. CNG extracted from a bus is fed back into the Gas Company system. The MTA receives a credit against the cost of fuel.

MTA Engineering Designs Nation's First 'Slow-Fill' CNG Pumping Station for RRC

By STEFANIE SPIKELL
(March 28) Mechanics at the Regional Rebuild Center no longer will have to tow CNG buses back and forth to Division 10 for fueling, thanks to an innovative, cost-efficient "slow-fill" gas pump designed by the MTA's Engineering Department.

The first such compressed natural gas station of its type in the United States, the slow-fill equipment allows RRC employees to pump only as much CNG as a newly repaired bus needs to be driven back to its home division. Ordinary CNG pumping stations fill tanks very rapidly and do not make allowance for small amounts of gas to be pumped into bus tanks.

"This achievement is remarkable in the industry and is a tremendous cost-saving measure for the

agency," says Percy de Zoysa, Engineering project leader for the assignment. The project, originally estimated at \$673,000, and was completed on time and on budget at \$530,000.

"We're anxious to begin using the equipment," says Mike Singer, the equipment maintenance manager currently responsible for RRC operations. "This is really going to help our productivity."

Before mechanics can begin using the equipment, they must be trained in its safe and proper use, Singer said. That training is expected to begin within a week or 10 days. The contractor, A.E. Schmidt Environmental of Van Nuys, will provide the training.

Above and beyond

"Every member of the team went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that this important and innovative project was successful," says de Zoysa. In particular, he credited Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Tai Lim of the RRC, who was "committed to always having a crew available to us whenever needed. He never missed a beat."

"Other bus facilities will be looking to us for guidance as they implement this idea for their bus repair centers," said Joel Sandberg, deputy executive officer, Engineering. "We're exceptionally pleased to have been the first agency to install this type of station."

"It is projects like this that are the mainstay of our Capital Improvement Plan and they give us great satisfaction," he added. "Our goal in Engineering is to achieve on-time, on-budget projects that truly serve our 'clients' and this is an excellent example."

The team also included Rudy Rey, Electrical Designer; Ben Mendoza, Contract Administrator; Michael Cummings, Configuration Management; Tom Lee, Resident Engineer.

The new slow-fill pumping system includes a 180 SCFM compressor with a 75-horsepower

motor, a single tower manual operated gas drier with a gas flow rate of 180 SCFM, two pressure vessels, each 68.3 cubic feet with design pressure of 4800 psig, de-fueling and refueling nozzles.

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