

## MTA Mechanic Says "Out" To Articulated Buses

By ERIC RAPP

(Aug. 16, 2002) For Ike Allison of West Valley Division 8, a trip to France was just part of the job.

Allison, Deputy Executive Officer Richard Hunt and several other MTA representatives traveled to France in March to study new articulated buses. The buses, manufactured by a French firm, are currently in use throughout Europe.



MTA's Ike Allison, white shirt, inspects the undercarriage of a bus during his visit to a French manufacturing company.

MTA is considering the use of the extra-long buses for new Bus Rapid Transit projects as well as for existing bus lines. Because of their size – up to 60 feet long – the articulated buses can carry a greater number of passengers than a standard bus.

Allison, a lead mechanic who has been with MTA for 24 years, says he was impressed with French transit systems. "You don't need a car over there," he says. "Buses and trains go everywhere."

### Seeing buses in action

Allison's primary focus while in France, however, was to see articulated buses in operation and close-up in the shop. Several features of the buses particularly stood out for him.

A special computerized guidance system helps the operator come to an exact point at stops, ensuring that there will be no gap between the curb and the bus floor.

The mirrors, Allison says, "almost look like rabbit ears. They give the driver a good rear view without blocking his or her field of vision."

After visiting four cities in eleven days, working from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day, Allison was ready to come home. But despite the long days, he says he "really enjoyed the experience."

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Team USA - MTA visitors to the Hauliez bus manufacturing company in France included, from left, Deputy Executive Officer Richard Hunt, Supervisor Yvonne Burke's Deputy Mike Bohlen, MTA Director Frank Roberts, consultant Adi Arieli, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky's Deputy Samantha Bricker, and Division 8's Ike Allison.