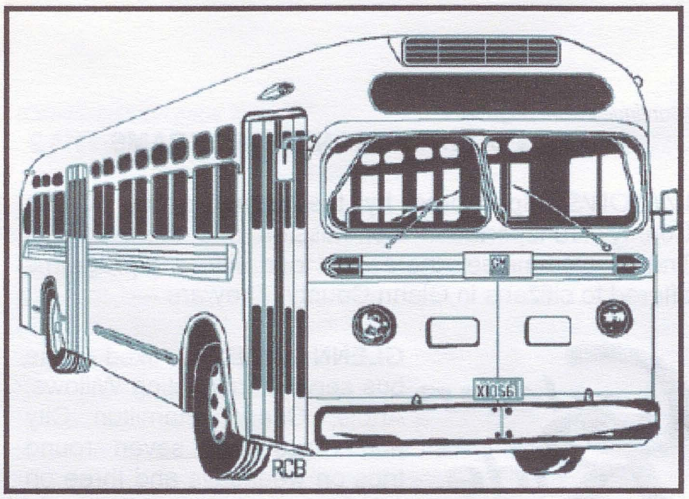


Western Transit

ONE GATEWAY PLAZA
15TH FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

11112 Ivanhoe St, Garden Grove, CA 92840-1133
www.western-transit.com

VOL. 43, NO. 9 **September 2005**

BUTTE REGIONAL TRANSIT (B - LINE)

CHICO: July 5th brought the merger of three fixed route and three paratransit systems into the new **BUTTE REGIONAL TRANSIT (B – LINE).**

The formerly independent systems, all operated by *ATC/VANCOM,* included **CHICO AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM, BUTTE COUNTY TRANSIT, OROVILLE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM, CHICO CLIPPER, PARADISE EXPRESS** and **OROVILLE EXPRESS.**

The **GRIDLEY GOLDEN FEATHER FLYER** remains independent, but is coordinated.

During the FY 04/05 fiscal year, the Butte County Association of Governments worked toward the consolidation of the county's transit operators and the BCAG Joint Powers Agreement was amended to officially consolidate all administrative and operating responsibilities for transit under the BCAG Board.

The major intent of the merger was to improve transit service with timed transfers, consistent headways and a uniform fare structure.

Regional Routes 20, 40 and 41 were streamlined and, in Oroville, service hours were extended with the last local bus leaving downtown at 530PM (was 400PM).

A county wide line numbering system and consolidated fare system were both implemented.

The **B-LINE** Fare system includes Local and Regional fares, each able to be paid with cash, ten-ride ticket books or monthly passes. The Local fare is $1 (students 75 cents and senior/disabled 50 cents). Regional fares are $1.25 (students $1 and s/d 60 cents).

Transfer forms are free, but transferring from a local to a regional bus requires a 25 cent equalizing fare.

Former **CATS** lines include current 1-10 — 1-LASSEN-ESPLANADE, 2-MANGROVE, 3-NORD/EAST, 4-FIRST-EAST, 5-EAST 8TH, 6-WHITMAN-PARK, 7-BRUCE-MANZANITA, 8-NORD, 9-WARNER-OAK and 10-ESPLANADE.

Former **BCT** lines include 20-CHICO-OROVILLE, 30-OROVILLE-BIGGS, 31-PARADISE-OROVILLE, 40-CHICO-PARADISE, 41-CHICO-PARADISE PINES and 46-FEATHER RIVER HOSPITAL. Lines 24-THERMALITO, 25-ORO DAN, 26–OLIVE HIGHWAY and 27–SOUTH OROVILLE were previously considered as a single **OATS** route.

B-LINE logos were added to all buses in addition to keeping their original colors and logos. The fixed route fleet includes CNG powered 40-foot Orion Vs and diesel powered 30-foot and 35-foot Gillig Phantoms. The paratransit fleet includes Econoline/Aerotechs and Econoline/Startrans units.

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"PAGES FROM THE PAST"

(Headline stories or other news items from past issues of WESTERN TRANSIT as we relive transit history)

SEPTEMBER 2000 – LADOT began two NEW lines, DASH/NORTHRIDGE and DASH/HOLLYWOOD-WILSHIRE along with reroutings/extensions to DASH/ SOUTHEAST and DASH/HOLLYWOOD. Ground was broken by the Port Of Los Angeles for a new Waterfront RED CAR Line, expected to replace portions of the SAN PEDRO ELECTRIC TROLLEY.

SEPTEMBER 1995 – Public transportation began in Lodi with the start up of **GRAPE LINE.** The **GL** system includes four routes Monday-Saturday and daily general public Dial-A-Ride.

SEPTEMBER 1990 – The second phase of **INLAND EMPIRE CONNECTION,** assumption of former **SCRTD** Line 496-LOS ANGELES-RIVERSIDE-SAN BERNARDINO, occurred on August 20 with creation of **IEC** Lines 110 and 496.

SEPTEMBER 1985 - YELLOW AND PINK BUS LINES began operating new service between San Diego and San Ysidro via National City and Chula Vista over an alignment similar to the original **SAN DIEGO TRANSIT CORP.** Line 32.

SEPTEMBER 1980 – ORANGE COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT established the seven route Employment Center Bus Service program (ECOBUS), along with five other NEW lines.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Edmund Buckley ebuckley@western-transit.com
Craig Barnes cabarnes@western-transit.com

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GLENN COUNTY TRANSIT PROGRAMS

WILLOWS: Sponsored by the efforts of the Glenn County Transportation Commission and the Regional Transit Committee, there are four different programs offered to citizens in Glenn County. They are —

GLENN RIDE — fixed route bus service connecting Willows, Artois, Orland, Hamilton City and Chico with seven round trips on weekdays and three on Saturday using a small fleet of ElDorado/National MST II buses.

Subsidized taxi — $1.75 value tickets available to buy down the cost of local transportation needs within Orland and Willows for those unable to use the **GLENN RIDE** bus system.

Volunteer Medical Transport — a program for those unable to provide for their own transportation to and from medical appointments outside of the fixed route system and subsidized taxi system areas.

Cal Works Ride To Work — a program sponsored by Glenn County Human Resources Agency that provides transportation to and from work opportunities for Cal Works clients that live in outlying county areas.

Last November 30th, the WILLOWS-ORLAND-CHICO fixed route was realigned in the vicinity of North Valley Plaza/Butte College/Enloe Medical Center area on the east side of Chico. Two stops were also added in Artois, at Road 27 & Highway 99 and at the Blue Gum Motel.

(Continued on page 3)

WT STAFF FOR THIS MONTH

EDITOR:	Edmund Buckley
ASSOCIATE EDITOR:	Craig Barnes
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT:	Jim Moore
SENIOR STAFF:	Alan Fong Bob Burrowes
REPORTERS & SOURCES:	John Andoh Bob Bach J. K. Drummond Russ Jones Alex Lock John McKane Andrew Novak Kirk Schneider

(Continued from page 2)

SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)

SANTA CRUZ: Following many months of intense labor negotiations, including strike threats and **METRO's** planned imposition of its "last, best and final" contract offer, the transit agency staff and its two unions, Service Employees International Union Local 415, representing the administrative staff and maintenance workers and United Transportation Union Local 23, representing bus operators, tentatively approved a new one-year contract for SEIU members and, basically, a nine month extension of the former UTU agreement in mid-September. **METRO** Board approval was needed.

SEIU members okayed a pact including a one percent raise, a $600 bonus and to pay five percent of the cost of the cheapest HMO health plan.

UTU members, poised to walk out September 9, agreed not to strike before next July and **METRO** agreed not to lock out employees. They would also reinstate provisions for general leave, a key sticking point in the talks. *(Ed. Note – this provision allows Operators to take an unpaid month off from work each year. They continue to accrue benefits during this time. The UTU position is that without general leave, the employees cannot get two weeks off at a time).*

The biggest issue for all parties was the method to be used to pay for the continually escalating costs of health care — who should pay and how much.

At its September 23rd meeting, the **METRO** Board did not ratify the proposals and UTU immediately said they would walk out — which they did on September 27th.

EL DORADO TRANSIT (EDT)

PLACERVILLE: Beginning July 1st, commuter fares on the SACRAMENTO routes increased to $4 cash or a $144 monthly pass. In addition to a general increase in operating costs, the California Air Resources Board directive to use only ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel in commuter buses was cited as a specific cost driver.

The **EDT** Board recently approved a $1.2 million contract with A-Z Bus Sales to acquire five 35-foot commuter buses (*Ed. Note – the Board Report did not specify brand, but based on other orders, they are presumed to be Bluebirds with suburban interiors*).

On July 12th a new Tuesday-only MT. AUKUM-SOMERSET-FAIRPLAY route was implemented as a two year demonstration project. Operating between 640AM and 529PM, the bus connects with Sac-Med Non-Emergency Transportation and several local fixed routes in Placerville.

ELK GROVE TRANSIT (EGT)

ELK GROVE: On June 19th **EGT** added two new Sacramento bound commuter routes, 53-POPPY RIDGE-FRANKLIN EXPRESS and 58-EAST ELK GROVE EXPRESS, each with two morning inbound and two afternoon outbound trips.

53 starts at Bruceville & Poppy Ridge and travels via Bruceville, Machado Ranch, Franklin High, Poppy Ridge, Bellaterra, Allessandria, Elk Grove, Franklin, Laguna, I-5 with one-way operations by time of day downtown to and from 16th Street LRT Station.

From Waterman & Elk Grove, Line 58 runs via Elk Grove, Bradshaw, Bond, Elk Grove/Florin, Sheldon, Power Inn, Calvine, Hwy 99, Hwy. 50, 16th, L, 8th, F, 7th, N and 16th to LRT Station.

August 28th brought another three new local lines plus changes to existing 156-BRUCEVILLE-ELK GROVE BLVD and 157-LAGUNA. 156 now serves Meadowview LRT Station only on weekdays 530-900AM and 200-700PM. Otherwise, the north terminal is Consumnes River College and a connection with **RT** Line 56. Line 157 was modified to operate between East Taron Drive & Riparian in Laguna West and CRC.

NEW Line 158-ELK GROVE FLORIN operates between CRC and Hampton and Iron Rock Way serving the area just east of Highway 99. 159 operates between CRC and Poppy Ridge Road serving the East Franklin and Laguna Creek areas. Line 160 operates between CRC and Mosher Road & Berens Park in East Elk Grove.

These lines operate hourly between 630AM and 730PM on weekdays, at this time.

In addition, four new Supplemental Service lines were started providing morning and afternoon trips to Toby Johnson Middle School and Franklin High School. They are – 301-STONELAKE, 302-STONELAKE-POPPY RIDGE, 303-LAGUNA WEST-POPPY RIDGE and 304-ELK GROVE BL-POPPY RIDGE. *(Ed. Note – typical of school services, there is a special Wednesday morning trip and early release schedules).*

EGT and **SOUTH COUNTY TRANSIT/LINK** started a program to provide coordinated service between Galt and Sacramento involving the **SCT/LINK** HIGHWAY 99 EXPRESS and **EGT** Line 52-BIG HORN EXPRESS.

Schedules have been designed to provide passengers, who need to transfer buses at Elk Grove & Emerald Vista in Elk Grove, with minimal wait times, Presently, passengers need to pay a separate fare on each bus, but the total price of a one-way ride is $2.25.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT (SAMTRANS)

SAN CARLOS: September 1st brought increased fares on **SAMTRANS** buses to help cover continually increasing costs. Adult, youth and senior/disabled fares all rose proportionately.

Adult fares are now — Local cash $1.50, Out of San Francisco $3, Express cash $4, Tokens – 10 for $12.50, Monthly Pass $48, Out of San Francisco Pass $72 and Express Pass $128.

Paratransit (REDI WHEELS), Football, Ano Nuevo and Bay to Breakers Specials also had fare increases.

SAMTRANS and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1574 continue to negotiate for a new contract, following an August 17th vote to reject a tentative agreement.

Sharing of medical cost premiums, part time bus operators and Bump bids are the three "hot" items.

LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (LADOT)

LOS ANGELES: DASH/VENICE was cancelled at the beginning of the summer because of continuing low patronage. *(Ed. Note – VENICE was on the **LADOT** web site until mid July, when it was removed).*

The new LARCHMONT SHUTTLE, technically not a DASH although resembling one, was inaugurated in mid August, primarily though the efforts of 4th District Council Member Tom La Bonge.

The line operates on a 12-minute headway weekdays between 1130AM and 230PM using one bus and charging regular DASH fares, except that Paramount Studios (the funding partner) employees ride for free. LS travels west on Melrose, south on Larchmont, east on Beverly, north on Van Ness and west on Melrose.

LS is funded entirely by Paramount for a one-year trial period and is operated by *FIRST TRANSIT, INC.* as a branch of DASH/HOLLYWOOD-WILSHIRE.

As of September 12, Line 423-THOUSAND OAKS-LOS ANGELES was extended west from Borchard Park & Ride to begin at Thousand Oaks Transportation Center.



Line 575-SIMI VALLEY-WARNER CENTER continues with five morning and five afternoon trips pending City Council action on a **LADOT** staff recommendation to reduce service levels.

Another poor performer, 430-PACIFIC PALISADES-LOS ANGELES, was recently rerouted to serve Loyola High School (Venice & Normandie) as part of efforts to increase ridership *(WT 2/03, 3/04, 8/04, 12/04).* Buses leave the Santa Monica Freeway at Normandie and travel to Venice to Figueroa (Flower outbound) and regular route to and from Gateway Transit Plaza.

LADOT staff has recommended awarding a 5-year, $26 million contract to *MV TRANSPORTATION, INC.* for DASH/Package Five, which includes CHESTERFIELD SQUARE, VERMONT/MAIN, WATTS, WILMINGTON and SAN PEDRO *(WT 2/05).*

These services are now operated under four separate contracts – *CONNEX TCT* for CHESTERFIELD and VERMONT/MAIN, *CONNEX* for SAN PEDRO under the COMMUTER EXPRESS contract, *FIRST TRANSIT, INC.* for WILMINGTON and *MV* for WATTS. The first of these will expire on October 31, 2005.

Seven proposals were received, *CONNEX, MV, FIRST TRANSIT, INC., LAIDLAW TRANSIT SERVICES, TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTS, INC., SMS TRANSPORTATION and NEW CENTURY, INC.*

The **LADOT** Selection Committee unanimously chose *MV* as the firm that demonstrated strong management, showed positive experience in its current contract and proposed significant staffing enhancements to the RFP.

This contract will cost $60.27 per service hour, in the first year, compared with a current average of $50.39. Higher labor, fuel and insurance costs are factors, but CHESTERFIELD SQUARE will have two more peak buses (and improved headways), an added bus on SAN PEDRO, and new Sunday hours on other routes.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MTA)

LOS ANGELES: The **MTA** Board recently approved the purchase of 200 additional new buses, to include 6 hybrid-electric buses *(WT 8/05),* 100 more 45-foot composite buses (expected to be similar to the current 8000-8099 series buses) and 94 additional NABI model 60-BRT 60-foot, 3-door articulated buses (similar to the yet-to-be-placed into service artics).

In addition, the FY 06 operating budget was increased to add 12,000 revenue service hours and 8 bus operator, 2 mechanic and 2 service attendant positions to allow for operation of new Line 577-LONG BEACH-NORWALK-EL MONTE EXPRESS this December.

(Continued on page 5)

As a part of a recent Special Master order concerning the Consent Decree Pilot Program, **MTA** must maintain the level of resources dedicated to the overall program, but can replace existing Pilot lines with new services if the current services are unproductive.

The result of changes approved in June to discontinue Line 58-ALAMEDA STREET this October and to reduce headways on 305-CITY CONNECTOR was a reduction of 7 buses and 24,000 annual service hours. These resources will be reinvested in new Line 577.

The ORANGE LINE (San Fernando Valley Busway) is now scheduled to open for business October 29 with a weekend of free rides and community events. The 14-mile long route will travel between North Hollywood and Warner Center in Woodland Hills along the roadbed of a former *SOUTHERN PACIFIC* right-of-way.

NORWALK TRANSIT SYSTEM (NTS)

NORWALK: September 6th brought NEW Line 8-WHITTIER-NORWALK, linking downtown Whittier and Santa Fe Springs with Norwalk **METROLINK** Station. Four round trips, timed to connect with specific trains, are offered each weekday in both the morning (530AM-930AM) and afternoon (300PM-600PM).

From the Whittier Depot, Line 8 travels via Greenleaf, Slauson, Painter/Carmenita, Leffingwell and Imperial Highway to the rail station. There are three stops – both terminals plus Carmenita & Telegraph.

NTS newest buses, New Flyer GE40LF gasoline/electric hybrids 7073 and 7074, are assigned to this service.

Regular **NTS** fares apply, although passengers with **METROLINK** passes and tickets ride the bus for free.

TORRANCE TRANSIT SYSTEM (TTS)

TORRANCE: The routes of Lines 7-SEPULVEDA BLVD and 8-HAWTHORNE BLVD were adjusted July 10th to move these buses from Carson Street to a new bus stop on Fashion Way. Line 9-LOMITA BLVD was also adjusted to operate along Sepulveda, Del Amo Circle East and Carson to Madrona.

PUBLIC RURAL RIDE (PRIDE)

CARSON CITY, NV: **PRIDE** increased its fares on August 26th, the first time since going into business. The one-way adult fare is now $3.25 with youth, senior, disabled and Citi Lift fares at $1.60.

Adults using a **CITIFARE** transfer on **PRIDE** buses receive a $1 credit off the cash fare while the other fare categories receive a 50-cent credit.

Former ten-ride ticket books ($30) were replaced by ten-ride passes and 7-day joint **PRIDE/CITIFARE** passes ($32.50).

Service on the RENO-CARSON CITY-DOUGLAS COUNTY route (hourly headway) continues to operate on weekdays only with extended peak hours.

JUMP AROUND CARSON (JAC)

CARSON CITY, NV: The NEW local transit system in the capital of the Silver State, **JAC,** begins operation on October 3rd with a month of Free Rides.

When fares are charged, it will cost adults $1 a ride and 50 cents for seniors and disabled. Paratransit fares will be $2 for those who are eligible for disability benefits and $2.50 for all other riders.

The three route, four bus system will operate hourly headways on weekdays between 630AM and 630PM and on Saturday between 800AM and 500PM.

MV TRANSPORTATION, INC., contractor for the **CCCT** paratransit system, was also selected as the fixed route contractor. The four, 14-passenger cutaway vehicles to be used will be painted green, blue, white and silver, have the **JAC** initials and a jack rabbit logo. *(Ed. Note – transit staff said that the logo signifies the efficiency of jumping from one point to another quickly).*

CITIFARE (CF)

RENO, NV: Virginia Street is the busiest **CF** route and the street has been designated a transit corridor by the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency. The city of Reno has re-zoned the area to increase the density of housing and businesses.

The next step is to define the future in transit and mobility improvements for Virginia Street between North McCarran Blvd and Mt. Rose Highway.

CF's parent, the REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, is presently assessing transportation needs, transportation alternatives and environmental issues which will lead to selection of a locally preferred alternative (LPA) including preliminary design by 2007.

A series of public meetings are now being held to obtain public input on a transit solution for the corridor.



(Continued from page 5)

NEOPLAN NEOMORE?

Neoplan in Lamar, Colorado, may be ceasing production. The following is taken from a Status Report of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (**MBTA)** in Boston:

"As described in a letter dated August 4, 2005, Neoplan USA's original production schedule was to build and deliver 45 of the vehicles by November 2005 with the remaining 40 vehicles to be delivered by May 2006. In the summer of 2005, however, Neoplan USA has informed the **MBTA** that due to sever financial difficulties the company would very likely to be unable to meet its contractual commitments to the Authority and that it was considering ceasing production before the end of 2005."

"Since the time of the letter, however, the **MBTA** and Neoplan have firmly concluded that Neoplan will be unable to manufacture and deliver any additional buses over and above the 18 out of the 85 buses that have been delivered to date."

The Lamar Daily News reported a Neoplan vice president as saying the company has no plans to shut down production by the end of the year.

That is not what Neoplan's chief told the **MBTA** two months ago.

Last year, the **MBTA** was aware that Neoplan was experiencing financial difficulties, but it was not until August of this year that the company's president informed the **MBTA** that its manufacturing operations would be coming to an end.

Neoplan officially opened the plant in Lamar, Colorado on May 22, 1981.

EXPO 2005 IN DALLAS

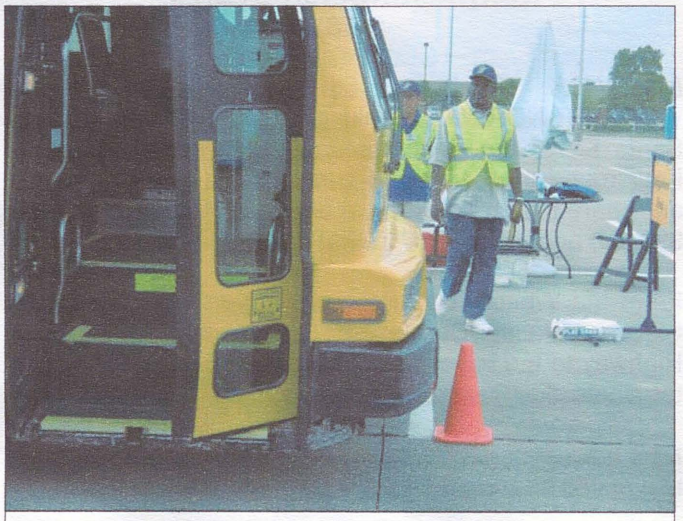
The EXPO was held at the Dallas Convention Center Monday, September 26 to Wednesday September 28. The International Roadeo was held on Saturday, September 24.

Twenty-eight operators competed in the 35' bus category and 70 operators competed in the 40' category. The 35' Opus buses were provided by Capital Metro and the 40' NovaBus RTS' were provided by DART.

The #1 champion this year was the San Francisco Municipal Railway. Kevin Grady was the operator.



Dallas 4818 was one of the NovaBus RTS' that were used in the competition. Craig Barnes photo.



Ron Dickey from Riverside Transit Agency at the final stop in DART 4800. Must be within 6" without touching the cone. Craig Barnes photo.



Raj Patel from OCTA going through the diminishing clearance of the barrels with DART 4800. Craig Barnes photo.



The Blue Bird Ultra LF 30'. Craig Barnes photo.



The MCI D4505 Commuter. Craig Barnes photo.



The Millennium RTS Extreme Low Floor. Craig Barnes photo.



A new Gillig trolley. This is built on the low floor chassis. Craig Barnes photo.



The Millennium RTS Extreme Low Floor. Craig Barnes photo.



One of the AC Transit Van Hool Hydrogen buses running outside. One was also on display inside. Craig Barnes photo.

EQUIPMENT REPORT

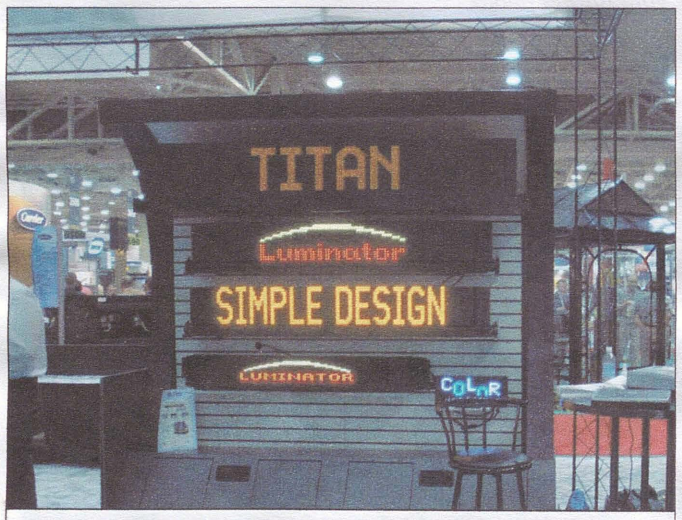
(All properties are located in California unless otherwise noted)

PROPERTY	FLEET #'S	BUILDER	MODEL/VIN #'S	DATE	NOTES
-NEW-					
Omnitrans	0175	New Flyer	GE40LF/5C028142	2005	Hybrid
	0176-0197	New Flyer	GE40LF/5C028202-223	2005	Hybrid
Norwalk Transit System	7073-7074	New Flyer	GE40LF/—	2005	Hybrid
Santa Barbara MTD	800-804	MCI	D4500/4P056374-378	2004	
Frontier Tours, Inc (NV)	65960	Van Hool	C2045L/32045676	2003	
	65961-65967	Van Hool	C2045L/—	2003	
-USED-					
Kings Area Rural Transit	G3002, G3006	Gillig	30102TB6V92TAC/L1083651, 655	1990	1
	G3008-G3010	Gillig	30102TB6V92TAC/L1083657-659	1990	1
	G3514	Gillig	35102TB6V92TAC/L1083648	1990	1
Benicia Transit System	3510	Gillig	35102TB6V92TAC/L1083644	1990	1
	3512-3513	Gillig	35102TB6V92TAC/L1083646-647	1990	1
Elk Grove Transit	401-410	TMC	T80206/Note 2	1991	2
LADOT (Connex)	II 92059-92060	Neoplan	AN340A/NL013019, 025	1992	3
-DISPOSITIONS-					
Omnitrans	1639-1683 (15)	TMC	T80206/Note 4	1992	4
	2697	TMC	T80206/PR829823	1994	4
Long Beach Transit	9201	TMC	T80206/NR828996	1992	5
	9202-9220	TMC	T80206/NR829047-065	1992	5

-NOTES-

1. Ex LAVTA, same numbers.
2. VINs MR828279, 283-285, 310-312, 320, 323, 331 — Ex GGT 1201, 1205-1207, 1209-1211, 1219, 1222, 1230.
3. Ex AVTA L-703, L-709. (L703 was one that was on lease to VVTA in October 2004).
4. OT Buses 1639-1643, 1647, 1660, 1664, 1670, 1673-1675, 1681-1683
   VINs NR828963, 883, 938-940, 944, 957, 961, 967, 970-972, 978-980
   For sale by Nationwide Auction Systems.
5. Sold by Ken Porter Auctioneers, Harbor City.

EXPO 2005 PHOTOS continued from Page 7



One of Luminator's displays. Top to bottom: Titan LED 24x200, GEN4 full-color LED, GEN4 amber LED, full-color



Long Beach Transit 2401 was one of the electric hybrid's on display. Craig Barnes photo.