



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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NEWS

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The Nation's first modern steam-powered transit bus was demonstrated in Washington today as an operating example of efforts being made by the government to develop new low-pollution mass transit vehicles.

The demonstration was part of a day-long Steam Bus Symposium being sponsored in the Nation's Capital by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA).

Under Secretary of Transportation James M. Beggs, who was the keynote speaker at the symposium, rode the Steam Bus to the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill where the bus was inspected by members of Congress and by the public. Later in the day, Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe also rode the bus to the Hill.

Others taking part in the unique symposium were UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal, about 200 members of the bus and transit industry and representatives of the California State Assembly, which has an UMTA grant to produce three different operating steam buses. All three buses then will be demonstrated and tested by three separate California bus properties.

Today's demonstration steam bus is the first of the three to go into service. It is a GMC 51-passenger coach operated by AC Transit of Oakland, California and driven by Cecil Gross, an AC Transit training instructor. AC Transit is a publicly-owned bus system which operates in 11 cities on the east side of San Francisco Bay and across the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

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U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION EXPOSITION
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Although considered a pre-prototype, the bus already has bettered the California 1975 requirements for carbon monoxide emission by more than 12-to-1 and beats the standards for hydrocarbon and nitrogen dioxide emissions by slightly more than 2-to-1.

From the street, sound levels in the steam bus are considerably quieter than in a diesel-powered bus. Interior noises are comparative because of components mounted beneath the floor.

For additional experimental purposes, carpeting and other refinements--including music--have been added to make the bus more attractive to public transit riders.

The power system was developed by William M. Brobeck and Associates of Berkeley, California. Brobeck helped the late Ernest O. Lawrence build the first atom smasher at what later became the University of California Radiation Laboratory. He earlier worked for the Doble Brothers, the most progressive of the steam car makers of the 1930's.

The AC Transit-Brobeck bus is the first of its kind to be operated in the transit industry. The experimental steam bus project was set in motion by the California State Assembly in December 1968, to determine the modern application of steam power. The project was financed by a \$1.6 million grant from UMTA, the first such Federal grant to be made to a State legislative body.

Brobeck is teamed with AC Transit, while Lear Motors Corp., Reno, Nevada, is providing a bus and power plant for the San Francisco Municipal Railway. Steam Power Systems, Inc., of San Diego, is equipping a bus for the Southern California Rapid Transit District of Los Angeles.

The AC Transit bus was shipped by boxcar to Washington for today's demonstrations. After the demonstration, it will be shipped back to Oakland, California, for drivers to be trained. It then will go into experimental service on the AC Transit network in December.

During road tests, the steam bus traveled 56-miles-an-hour with the weight equivalent of a regular bus with 51 passengers. The amount of power generated matched that of the same bus, although the full capacity of the steam generator has seldom been exploited during periods of full throttle operation and the maximum potential road horsepower has not yet been demonstrated.

(For further information, contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043, or AC Transit at (415) 654-7878 in Oakland, California.)

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