

# NABI's CompoBus to support Phoenix's BRT initiative

At the 2002 International Public Transportation EXPO in Las Vegas, **North American Bus Industries** unveiled a 45-foot CompoBus that will be the linchpin of the **Phoenix Public Transit Department's** bus rapid transit (BRT) program.

**Ed Zuercher**, transit director for the Phoenix Public Transit Department, said he expects the 45-foot bus to attract strong ridership by providing peak-period commuter service along major travel corridors in Phoenix. The contemporary styling of the bus should also help to attract riders. "Image is important," he said. "It's the power of something new and different."

The Phoenix agency ordered 56 of the BRT vehicles and expected delivery of the first vehicle in mid-October. Zuercher said the entire complement of new buses should be received by May or June 2003.

Zuercher said the buses will be equipped with commuter-style appointments such as high-back, forward-facing seats with overhead storage racks and individual reading lights and air conditioning vents. To emphasize the distinctiveness of the buses and express service, the agency will use new designs for the bus shelters.

**Bill Coryell**, NABI's vice president of sales, said the company has also been awarded contracts for BRT vehicles from the city of Tempe and the **Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority**. The buses for Phoenix and Tempe will be powered by liquefied natural gas engines, while the Los Angeles buses will be powered by CNG.

Coryell said the 45-foot CompoBus offers an 18% increase in passenger capacity. He said the unique unitized body allowed NABI to extend the bus length



**Express service along busy Phoenix traffic corridors will be provided by 45-foot CompoBuses manufactured by North American Bus Industries.**

by five feet, which puts seven more seats on the vehicle without substantially affecting other operating costs.

Zuercher said the buses cost approximately \$339,000 each, about a \$30,000 premium over typical fixed-route buses. The fare for the BRT service will likely be \$1.75 per ride, compared to \$1.25 for fixed-route service.

## DaimlerChrysler optimistic about 2002 sales

Less than one year after consolidating its North American commercial brands into one corporate structure, **DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses North America** reports that it's on the way to a 50% increase in sales in 2002 compared to 2001.

**Andy Strecker**, president and CEO of DC Commercial Buses North America, said combined sales from its **Orion**, **Thomas Dennis** and **Setra** companies will exceed 1,150 units in 2002 with \$285 million in revenue. Employment at the North American commercial bus unit also expanded more than 50% to 1,300 people to meet increased sales, customer service and production demands.

"It looks like we're absolutely on the right track," Strecker said. Part of the credit, he added, is due to the company's restructured sales channel that saw the number of dealers reduced



**The SLF 232, available with a CNG engine, is helping to expand the product offerings of DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses North America.**

from 48 to 24. Sharing of leads among the three sister companies also helped to bolster sales, he said.

Strecker cited increased diversity in the product line for increased sales. "We continue to work on the product side to provide more variance for the customer," he said. As an example, he mentioned the **Mercedes** 906 engine, which can be spec'd into the SLF 232 and 235 models. "This is a big customer benefit," he said. "The Mercedes engine is an excellent addition to the marketplace."

Strecker added that the Mercedes engine will be serviced by **Detroit Diesel** dealers. "This is a good example of how fast DaimlerChrysler can reach everybody in the country," he said.

Strecker expects another 50% growth in sales in 2003. "We have built a tremendous foundation for long-term success in the North American commercial bus market," he said.