

Los Angeles Unified School District
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA RELATIONS
333 S. Beaudry Ave., 24th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 241-6766
FAX: (213) 241-8952
www.lausd.net



News Release

Contact: Ellen Morgan (213)241-6766

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LAUSD OPENS GREEN FUELING STATION IN GARDENA

District Awarded National Honor for its Efforts to Green its School Bus Fleet with Natural Gas

Los Angeles – Start your engines! At the Transportation Services Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), school bus yellow has gone green. LAUSD officials and dignitaries from the Natural Gas Vehicles for America (NGVAmerica), Trillium USA, South Coast Air Quality Management District and Sempra Energy gathered today for a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the LAUSD’s new upgraded Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling facility, located in the City of Gardena.

“Alternative fueled buses improve air quality, reduce global warming gas emissions and are investments that safeguard our students from breathing toxic diesel exhaust,” said LAUSD Superintendent Ramon C. Cortines. “We are excited to support those technologies that help to provide our students and our community with a healthy environment.”

The District was also honored by the natural gas vehicle industry for its efforts to advance the development of natural gas vehicles in the United States. The school district has the largest natural gas school bus fleet in the nation. The District received a 2010 NGV Achievement Award for its efforts to green its school bus fleet with natural gas. The 2010 National NGV Achievement Award was presented by NGVAmerica and the Clean Vehicle Education Foundation, two organizations dedicated to increasing the use of natural gas vehicles to improve air quality, lessen dependence on foreign oil and reduce fleet operator costs.

“By operating their buses on natural gas, the Los Angeles Unified School District is playing a critical leadership role in the greening of America’s school bus fleet,” says Richard Kolodziej, President of NGVAmerica, the trade association that represents the natural gas vehicle industry. “Natural gas buses produce less urban pollution and greenhouse gases than diesel buses, and, because we have a huge natural gas resource base right here in America, natural gas buses help reduce our dependence on foreign oil. That’s good for the students, it’s good for Los Angeles and it’s good for the country.”

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The new fueling facility supports 317 CNG school buses. The first fueling station was established in 2001 and supported 97 CNG buses. LAUSD has another CNG site in the Valley capable of fueling another 100 CNG school buses. The LAUSD has always been driven by an effort to ensure safe transportation for its students, and has incorporated a comprehensive alternative fuel program to this effort. Recently, LAUSD was recognized with the national Government Green Fleet™ Award, the only school district included among the top 40 government fleets in the country.

It began in 2003, when the Los Angeles Board of Education adopted the Healthy Breathing Initiative, mandating that the school district accept bids to purchase or contract buses that meet strict emission standards. Such actions have had a far-reaching impact throughout the nation's school systems, as more districts continue to follow their lead and adopt comprehensive alternative fuel programs.

“Environmental sustainability is one of LAUSD’s highest priorities,” said LAUSD Board Vice President Dr. Richard Vladovic. “We are thrilled to expand the CNG Bus Fueling Facility. The District is actively addressing not only a local issue but also a national issue when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

In addition to CNG school buses, the District is pursuing cleaner higher mile per gallon vehicles, while moving away from its dependence on diesel fuel including; alternative fueled vehicles such as bio-diesel, propane and higher mileage hybrid vehicles.

“As we replace our aging buses with new safe, energy-efficient, and lower-emission school buses, we will also continue to build infrastructures that support our greening efforts,” said Transportation Branch Director Enrique Boull’t. “All new school buses come equipped with improved safety features including 3-point lap and pelvic seat restraints, fire suppression systems, additional emergency exit capability, anti-lock braking systems, automatic parking brakes, flame-retardant seats, raised fully padded seatbacks and methane leak detectors on natural gas buses. The green bus program propels the District’s continued efforts to protect the health of students.”

About the LAUSD Transportation Branch:

The LAUSD Transportation Branch provides home-to-school transportation for special programs including student integration, special education and students in other designated categories. The District transports approximately 50,000 students daily, with over 1,740 bus routes on the traditional school year calendar and more than 17,000 students during the summer for intersession, intervention, and multi-track schools. Among its other responsibilities, the Transportation Branch also processes requests, schedules buses, and tracks expenditures for 70,000 auxiliary bus trips; operates five major garage facilities required to service approximately 3,000 District-owned buses, trucks, autos, vans and 700 specialized power equipment such as forklift and ride-on mowers and sweepers; and responds to District emergencies. For more information on the Transportation Branch, call 800-LABUSES/1-800-522-8737 or go to <http://transportation.lausd.net>.