

March 21, 2011 - SporTran Unveils 5 Compressed Natural Gas Buses

SporTran on Thursday (March 24th) takes a major step toward converting its fleet to natural gas when it puts five Compressed Natural Gas buses into operation as part of a multimillion dollar project that was fueled by federal funds.

Mayor Cedric B. Glover will host local officials **Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Riverview Theater** to showcase the buses. Mayor Glover decided in 2009 to convert SporTran to CNG. The decision was made in an effort to support the industries, capital investments, and jobs that are being created locally to recover natural gas.

Also in 2009, the Shreveport City Council approved a federal grant application that paid \$2.2 million for the buses, \$1.2 million for the fuel station and \$335,000 for SporTran facility changes needed to operate CNG vehicles.

The new buses feature low floors that make it easier for riders to board and exit, comfortable seats, quieter operation and longer engine life. The natural gas they'll use is produced locally, burns cleaner than diesel fuel and costs less. Based on February 2011 prices, an all CNG fleet would save \$640,000 per year.

A partnership between the City and Chesapeake Energy resulted in the buses being wrapped with a message that promotes natural gas. The contract calls for Chesapeake to pay \$50,000 to buy advertising space for one year. These funds will provide the local 20 percent share required for two small CNG buses to be used in Lift Line service. Lift Line is SporTran's specialized service for passengers with disabilities.

“We at Chesapeake are proud of this partnership between the City of Shreveport and SporTran,” said Paul Pratt, Chesapeake's Director of Corporate Development. “They have taken a key role in leading the City of Shreveport toward transitioning our transportation system to carbon-light natural gas.”

SporTran has nine more buses ordered. Those vehicles are expected to arrive in August.

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