A Customer Magazine from Volvo Bus Corporation #2 2010

ON THE MOVE

Presenting the Volvo 9500
– Versatility on the road

The new Volvo 8900
– the greener intercity bus

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4. The Volvo 8900 is a new lighter, more fuel efficient and more ergonomic intercity bus, combining steel and aluminium.

7. The Volvo 8900 is accompanied by a package featuring aftermarket services that help customers maintain low operating costs.

8. The new Volvo 9500 completes Volvo Buses' coach range as it is more suitable for shorter journeys and line-haul services.

11. Serial production of the Volvo 7700 Hybrid has started, the bus exceeding expectations of reduction in fuel consumption.

12. As a result of an advanced research project at Volvo Technology, the hybrid bus will know what will happen in the next 2-3 minutes. It can then use the stored energy to the maximum.

Efficient and environment-friendly transport solutions

Our customers face major challenges today and in the future. In city bus services, decision makers are subjecting operators to important but stringent environmental requirements while demanding more bus services for their money. Companies operating coach services are being pressured by high fuel costs and fierce competition, forcing them to constantly try to find more efficient answers.

For us at Volvo Bus, it is essential to support bus and coach operators by offering environmentally compatible and efficient solutions that attract more passengers through a high level of service.

This autumn at the IAA, the major bus exhibition in Germany, we are launching three significant products that perfectly match the increasingly tough demands placed on operators.

Our new Volvo 8900 intercity bus has a completely new chassis built with lightweight materials yielding weight savings of up 800 kg. Two new nine- and seven-liter engine options provide fuel savings of up to 10 percent in a three-axle configuration. A new driver's compartment increases safety.

Our customers are extremely satisfied with our Volvo 9700 and Volvo 9900 coaches, but they have been requesting a simpler and less expensive product for other kinds of operation. Since the product must naturally live up to the Volvo standard with respect to quality, safety, design and low lifecycle cost, we are launching the Volvo 9500 with Volvo's nine-litre engine in combination with I-shift.

We know that providing high-quality vehicles alone is not sufficient for creating efficiencies. Well-trained drivers and broad after-market support are also essential. Volvo Bus is now launching a telematics range comprising three products. One will support drivers with respect to safety and fuel saving, another will increase maintenance efficiency and the third will focus on passenger and traffic information.

With this turnkey offering, Volvo Bus gives customers all the foundations for conducting efficient and environment-friendly operations that attract passengers and the best drivers.

Håkan Karlsson
President & CEO
Volvo Bus Corporation

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A Greener Intercity Bus
– The Volvo 8900

The new Volvo 8900 combines the strength of steel with the lightness of aluminium, resulting in an intercity bus that is lighter, more fuel efficient and more ergonomic than its predecessors.

"There are increasing demands for more cost effective and environmentally friendly buses, and the Volvo 8900 is meeting these requirements in every way," says Stefan Guttman of Volvo Buses.

Text Håkan Hellström Photo Volvo

Across the globe, politicians are making decisions concerning measures to reduce emissions, which affects the bus sector to a great degree. Bus operators are required to choose vehicles with lower fuel consumption and lower emissions than before.

"Volvo Buses is very committed to finding new answers that reduce the environmental impact of our buses. The Volvo 8900 is a intercity bus that not only meets these demands but also reduces our customers' operating costs," says Stefan Guttman, Director of City Buses in Europe.

Low fuel consumption is the most important element in achieving a low life-cycle cost and this contributes to a reduced environmental impact. The latest generation of Volvo's engines is highly fuel-efficient and with the Volvo 8900, the company has managed to further lower fuel consumption as a result of the lower weight of the bus and its new gear shift program.

Entirely new body

Volvo Buses currently has two different intercity models in Europe: the Volvo 8700, with a steel body, and the Volvo 8500, with an aluminium body. They will be replaced by the new Volvo 8900, which has an entirely new body, built from a mix of materials, including steel, aluminium, glass fibre and plastic.

"By doing this, we are using materials that are best suited for every specific functions," says Stefan Guttman. "It reduces the bus' weight and makes maintenance and repair work both easier and less expensive."

The weight reduction for the 8900 compared to its predecessors is 200-300 kg for the base version ranging up to around 800 kg for one 3 axle variant.

The body structure consists of aluminium profiles that are bolted together. The major advantages of aluminium are that it is a lightweight and

non-corrosive material. The front and rear modules are made of steel, which features such advantages as being easy to mould into an attractive design.

Increased efficiency

The Volvo 8700 and the Volvo 8500 have two different bodies and are manufactured at two different European plants. The use of a single body structure increases Volvo Buses' efficiency, as the Volvo 8900 now can be manufactured in both plants and production can switch between them depending on demand.

"Our production will be more flexible," says Stefan Guttman. "But the big advantage in a single body construction is that it makes it easier for our customers in the aftermarket.

"Mechanics only have to be familiar with one version and the number of spare parts that must be kept in inventory is clearly reduced. The advantage will be amplified in the coming years since we will be using the same body structure on several of our city bus and intercity models."

Volvo Buses offers a package featuring aftermarket services with the Volvo 8900 that helps customers maintain low operating costs.

"This makes it easier for customers to purchase everything they need in one package together with the bus, in addition to which it is financially beneficial," says Stefan Guttman.

Great versatility

The Volvo 8900 will be available in different versions, providing a unique opportunity for operators who want a versatile bus fleet.

"For customers who need a bus with luggage space, a normal-floor height version is available at 12.2 meter and 13.0 meter lengths," says Stefan Guttman.

The 8900 is equipped with Volvo's D7E seven-litre 290-horsepower engine. The seven-litre engine is also available in the Volvo 8900 low-floor 4x2, which comes in 12.0 and 13.0-meter versions.

For those who need space for more passengers, a low-entry version is also available as a 6x2 in 13.7 and 14.7 metre lengths. In these versions, customers can choose between the seven-litre and a nine-litre engine rated at 380 horsepower.

"We have customers that are using our low-entry bogie bus exclusively as a city bus because of its high passenger capacity," says Stefan Guttman. "Thus far, we have only been able to offer our 12-liter engine, but now customers can choose our seven-litre engine instead, which results in significantly reduced fuel consumption."

Outstanding visibility

The Volvo 8900 will not be available as an articulated bus, although for customers requiring this type of intercity bus, the company still offers the Volvo 8500 articulated bus with a vertical nine-litre engine side-mounted between the two forward axles. The articulated bus model however does feature the new front and the exclusive driver's area.

Clear visibility is of the utmost important for a bus driver. The visibility in the Volvo 8900 is outstanding, with large window surfaces, three-part rear-view mirrors and an optional reversing camera. The driver's seat on the Volvo 8900 has a long list of adjustable settings for the seat and steering wheel to be universally adaptable regardless of whether the driver is tall or short. The adjustments are situated where the drivers want them.

The new construction provides a rigid body that contributes to improved drivability for the driver and a high level of comfort for the passengers. The new construction also facilitates the achievement of a very high level of precision and build quality.

Vital safety

To increase passenger safety, Volvo has developed an integrated surveillance camera that can be installed in all versions of the Volvo 8900. Volvo Buses has also developed an alcohol lock that is specifically designed for bus traffic. The engine can be started without a breathalyzer, but the brakes remain locked if the driver who takes the breathalyzer test is inebriated.

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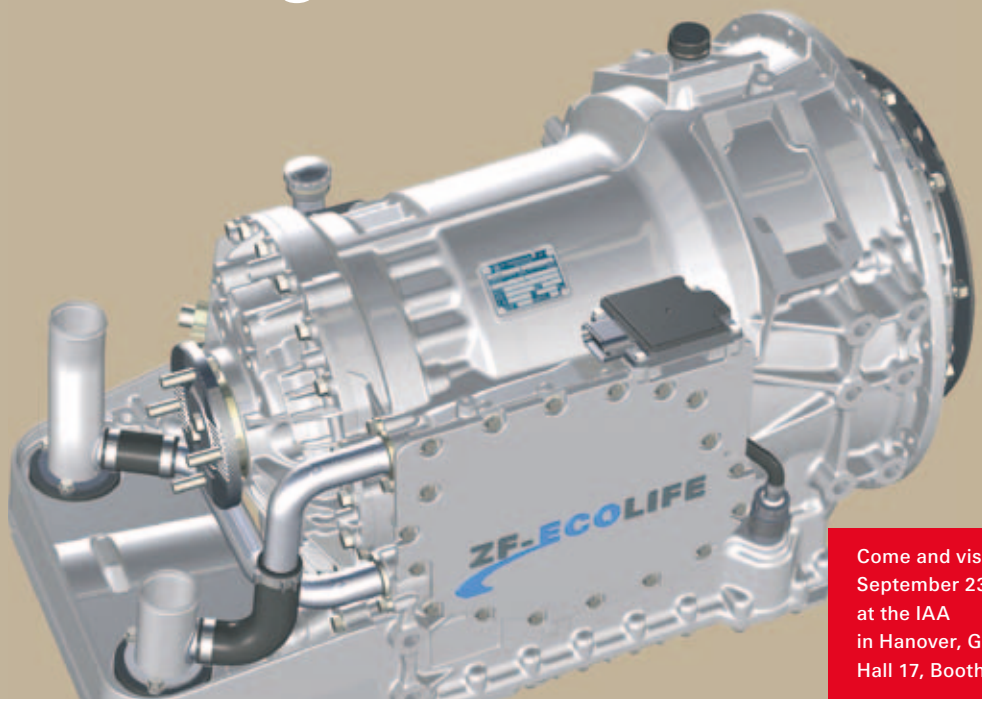

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Driveline and Chassis Technology

The new Volvo 8900 is accompanied by a package featuring aftermarket services that helps customers maintain low operating costs.

"This makes it easier for operators to purchase everything they need together with the bus, in addition to which it is financially beneficial," says Stefan Heuman of Volvo Buses.

Text Håkan Hellström Photo Volvo

Package for lowering operating costs

"We offer two versions of the package, one standard version including a Blue Service contract. But also an expanded version including Gold Service Contract & Financing for those customers preferring a reduced risk"," says Stefan Heuman, Director City Bus Office at Volvo Buses. "The standard version includes a Blue Service Contract in which Volvo Buses assumes responsibility for regular maintenance and the customer pays a fixed monthly fee. In the Gold Service Contract, Volvo Buses also is responsible for all repair work and associated spare parts."

"The service contracts provide a big advantage for the customers, as they at all times know the cost of maintenance in advance," adds Stefan Heuman. "It also means that Volvo ensures that the buses always are in the best condition, making the customer able to completely focus on operation."

The range of financing alternatives features the choice of a financial lease or an operational lease with buy back option.

Extended warranty and fuel management

The package also features an expanded body warranty, a course in eco-driving for bus drivers and a telematics system that enables the tracking of fuel consumption by the bus and driver. Drivers with unusually high fuel consumption can be monitored and trained to conserve fuel and the environment. The overall training package is tailor made to both reduce fuel consumption and environmental impact.

The extended body warranty includes areas such as corrosion, structure and floor.

"Volvo Buses will also perform a Life Cycle Cost (LCC) analysis and Green Public Procurement (GPP) analysis for each batch before delivery," says Stefan Heuman. "We will have a joint understanding of the expected LCC and GPP performance. This will then be followed up after approximately one year in operation. The GPP helps the operator to comply with new EU legislation."

"This package is designed exclusively for the Volvo 8900, providing an easy and care free ownership," says Stefan Heuman. "The focus on Life Cycle costs and fuel management are specifically aimed at maintaining low operating costs for the customer."

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The Volvo 9500 – A versatile coach for a demanding market

Last year, Volvo Buses introduced enhanced versions of their award-winning coach models Volvo 9700 and Volvo 9900. Now the time has come for a brand new coach model to hit the European market, the Volvo 9500.

"The 9500 will complete our range of coaches and definitely improve our offer in this expanding segment of the market," says Mike Ball of Volvo Buses.

Text Håkan Hellström Photo Volvo

The Volvo 9500 was first exhibited on the IAA Commercial Vehicle Trade Fair in Hannover in September 2010 and the first coaches will be available on the market at the beginning of 2011.

"There is without doubt a growing market demand for a medium coach like the Volvo 9500, and it will improve our complete coach model range," says Mike Ball, Vice President Coach Business Region Europe.

The Volvo 9500 is 12.3 metres long and will seat 49 to 55 passengers, depending on its layout.

"One of the main advantages of the Volvo 9500 is its integral design between body and chassis, which is paramount for the safety, durability and residual value of the coach," says Arne Sehlman, Director for Coach Support Office at Volvo Polska in Poland, where the coach will be assembled.

Full Volvo support

The Volvo 9700 and Volvo 9900 have been noted for their excellence for many years and are very successful in their market, combining low operational costs with both reliability and comfort.

"The Volvo 9500 will continue in this tradition, but is more suitable for shorter journeys and line-haul services," says Arne Sehlman.

"The Volvo 9500 will be accompanied by the same excellent aftermarket offer, including financing and service contracts," he says. "As a complete Volvo coach it will have the full support of the Volvo Service Network, which will no doubt maximize the residual value of the coach."

The basic design of the Volvo 9500 that was presented at the IAA Fair can be tailor made for the customer's specification.

"There are a number of comfort options to the Volvo 9500's basic design, such as audio/video, toilet and coffeemaker. Our customers will find a number of various specification combinations, in order to optimise the coach for their specific operation."

9-litre engine

"The Volvo 9500 shares many characteristics with the Volvo 9700 and Volvo 9900, but has at the same time some unique features, adopted for its versatility," says Arne Sehlman.

One example, while the Volvo 9500 upholds the Volvo trademark of low fuel consumption and low levels of emissions, instead of carrying a 13-litre engine like the two other coach models, it is equipped with a 9-litre six-cylinder diesel engine.

High torque

The 9-litre engine features an overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder, unit injectors and a single one-piece cylinder head. An efficient combustion process together with after treatment of the exhaust gases using SCR (Selective Catalytic Reduction) technology means the engine is environmentally optimised and approved according to the EU's Euro 5 emissions norms. The 9-litre engine develops high torque at low revs, giving the engine excellent low-rev pulling power. In combination with a wide rev range, this gives the engine good driveability and power that is always available.

As for the Volvo 9700 and Volvo 9900, the Volvo 9500 comes with Volvo's I-Shift, a 12-speed manual gearbox with an automated gear-changing system offering high driving and ride comfort and excellent fuel economy. The transmissions are carefully designed to allow the engine to deliver power under optimised conditions.

Matches our core values

Some details of the exterior of the Volvo 9500 differ from the two other coach models, for example the appearance of the headlights.

"But the visible differences is minor," says Arne Sehlman. "This is a 100 per cent Volvo product that matches our core values of Safety, Quality and Care for the Environment."

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Serial production started of the hybrid bus

Serial production of the Volvo 7700 Hybrid has begun, thereby meeting the market's increasing demand for a city bus with groundbreaking hybrid technology.

"The 7700 Hybrid has so far surpassed both our own and our customers' expectations in reduction of fuel consumption," says Edward Jobson, Environmental Manager of Volvo Buses.

The hybrid bus will reduce fuel consumption by up to 35 per cent and carbon emissions by an equal amount.

Text Håkan Hellström Photo Volvo

The serial production of the Volvo 7700 Hybrid and the double-decker Volvo B5L Hybrid has started following years of research and development. The 12-meter Volvo 7700 Hybrid bus is now being built in the company's plant in Wroclaw, Poland and the chassis for the double-decker Volvo B5L Hybrid will be built in Borås, Sweden. Wrightbus in Northern Ireland will build the bodies for the double-deckers.

"The market interest has been tremendous," says Edward Jobson. "So far, eleven European countries have ordered the 7700 Hybrid, and every hybrid bus that will be manufactured this year is sold. The only limitation today is our own production rate, but as serial production is getting on its way we will be able to increase the production rate significantly."

Commercially viable

"This shows that hybrid technology is commercially viable and that the 7700 Hybrid has met the demands of our customers. And that the passengers appreciate the emissions free and silent start," says Edward Jobson. "Reduced fuel consumption is the most obvious benefit but customers also report improved driving dynamics and low noise levels."

For over a year, Volvo Buses have conducted field tests with the buses in operation and the first customers have driven their hybrid buses in normal traffic for some time. Everyone has considerable experience of the buses, both with respect to fuel consumption and reliability.

Edward Jobson, Environment Director of Volvo Buses

High reliability

"The reliability of the 7700 Hybrid has been very high during the field tests and we have experienced very few problems," says Edward Jobson.

Customers' experience demonstrated savings from 25 per cent on lines with fewer stops and between 30 and 35 per cent in more congested city traffic. There are customers that report even larger savings.

Volvo's hybrid buses have a smaller diesel engine than normal and an electric motor that can operate the bus independently or together with diesel. When the bus brakes, the brake energy is captured and stored in a battery, which then drives the electric motor when the bus accelerates again.

A key advantage of Volvo's parallel technology is that the engine switches off automatically at bus stops. The bus then restarts under electric power only. The diesel engine does not restart until the bus reaches 15-20 km/hour. This gives a quiet and exhaust-free environment at bus stops. Another advantage is that the bus generates significant fuel savings regardless of where it is in operation. Many of the older hybrid solutions are only efficient in highly congested city traffic, but Volvo's technology functions equally well when there is a greater distance between bus stops. In addition, the passenger capacity has increased compared with the standard diesel bus.

World leading in innovative technology

The Volvo Group is one of the world's leading suppliers of new automotive and transport technologies. At the centre of this pioneering effort is Volvo Technology, a centre for innovation, research and development in the group.

Text Håkan Hellström Photo Volvo

Volvo Technology has performed research on e.g. hybrid technologies for many years.

Volvo Technology has been a part of Volvo's innovative and groundbreaking research for more than 40 years. Since 1997 it has been a separate business unit, primarily working with the companies within the Volvo Group but also with Volvo Cars and selected suppliers. Volvo Technology also participates in different national and international projects in certain strategic sectors, organized as joint research programs in collaboration with universities, research institutes, public organisations and other companies.

Malin Persson, CEO of Volvo Technology.

Unique environment

Research and technology development are extremely important issues for a high-tech company at the forefront of technology such as Volvo Buses. Volvo Technology provides a unique environment for the development of both hardware and software.

The work covers a range of core areas such as telematics, ergonomics, electronics, combustion, mechanics, and industrial processes. In addition, Volvo Technology offers specialist services in standardization, information retrieval and operational excellence.

One of the more prominent areas of Volvo Technology's work is safety.

"Volvo and Safety is a concept that emerged from the beginning of the company and we now are in a very special position in this area," says Malin Persson, CEO of Volvo Technology.

Dynamic environment

Malin Persson is currently responsible for a company with approximately 500 employees, working in key international locations. Most of the activity is concentrated at research units at Lindholmen and Chalmers Science Park in Gothenburg.

"We are like musicians from around the world gathering for a constant jam session in an extremely creative and stimulating environment," says Malin Persson, giving a vivid description of the creative process within the company.

"We have an extremely dynamic environment in which we interact with a variety of operators. There is a great openness between the different areas of knowledge that constantly create and implement new ideas and where we build on each other's experiences, often in close cooperation with our colleagues within the Volvo Group's Business Areas and Units," says Malin Persson, and concludes "Being part of the Volvo Group and its constant development is really exciting.

Join Volvo Buses on Facebook

Facebook is one of the fastest growing phenomena when it comes to social media. It is one of many places where people can meet and interact with each other.

Volvo Buses has now created a profile on Facebook where people from operators and public transport authorities, Volvo employees and everybody that has an interest in buses and the bus business can follow the development of Volvo Buses, share bus stories and give their comments.

Already, after only a few weeks, Volvo Buses has more than 700 friends at Facebook from all over the world.

If you want to have a look at our profile, please visit this address: www.facebook.com/volvobus

"we recover braking energy and utilise it as effectively as possible"

Maria Bruce, researcher and project manager at Volvo Technology

Tomorrow's hybrid bus can see into the future

Advanced technology means that this hybrid bus knows what will be happening over the next two to three minutes, and so it is able to utilise the energy stored as effectively as possible.

The technology is now being developed by Volvo Technology, and it may help to reduce the fuel consumption of this hybrid bus, already low, by a further 5-10 per cent.

Text Tomas Johansson Foto Volvo

Volvo Technology is making still more progress on reducing environmental impact. Software which calculates what traffic situations the bus will encounter over the next two to three minutes is being developed by a research project which forms part of the major EU project titled Highly Automated Vehicles for Intelligent Transport.

"With the help of this information, we can control the hybrid system so that we recover braking energy and utilise it as effectively as possible," says Maria Bruce, researcher and project manager at Volvo Technology.

Reads the traffic

The information is produced by means of GPS and map data, among other things. Fixed parameters are recorded here such as road incline, corners, speed limits, bus stops, traffic lights and suchlike.

The bus also comes equipped with two laser scanners and a colour camera.

"These scanners read data on vehicles ahead and measure their speed under current traffic conditions, which may differ from the speed limit for the road. Thus the information from the scanners corresponds to the dynamic traffic flow and complements the statistical information provided by GPS and mapping data," Maria Bruce points out.

The colour camera is used to tell what colours the traffic lights are ahead.

Differentiates driving styles

However, there are other components to be taken into account as well.

"The driving styles of drivers can differ widely. The new software also has to be able to work out how different drivers drive and take this into account in its calculations.

All information is then used to calculate the distribution of power between the diesel engine and the electric motor. The system also controls the gearbox as required so that the right gear is always selected.

"Our aim is always to make the best use of braking energy. Arriving at a bus stop, a red light or an obstacle in traffic with an almost fully charged battery is a waste. Instead, we can use more of the energy stored in the battery just beforehand and reduce the use of the diesel engine, thereby reducing fuel consumption," says Maria Bruce.

Major opportunities

From initially having carried out research work in an advanced simulation environment, the team has now switched to practical testing using one of the first hybrid buses manufactured by Volvo.

Both this and other parts of the extensive EU project will be ready to present at the Volvo Proving Ground in Hällered outside Gothenburg in the summer of 2011.

"Everything is going according to schedule, and things are looking good. But that said, I would not venture to say that these buses will be immediate commercial successes. A lot depends on the development of costs in respect of both components and fuel," says Maria Bruce.

"But I can see major opportunities for this bus in the future, not least on set routes in urban traffic."

The future is electric

An increasing urgency for greener modes of public transport has seen the electric bus take centre stage as a potential transport solution, and China is one of the strongest contenders in taking advantage of the technological progress.

This year's Shanghai World Expo has offered a perfect example of the versatility and capacity of electric buses.

Volvo Buses' joint-venture company, Sunwin Bus, has delivered 156 electric buses to the expo area.

Text Håkan Hellström Photo Sunwin

The City of Shanghai has made major investment in modernizing and streamlining its public transport prior to the World Expo. It involved raising the standard of the bus fleet by purchasing more Volvo buses and a strong investment in environmentally friendly buses from Sunwin Bus, a 50-50 joint venture between Volvo Buses and Shanghai Automotive Industry Co.

Of the framework agreement's 1,500 buses, about half was Volvo buses, Volvo B7RLE and Volvo B6R, and the reminder of the Sunwin brand.

156 electric buses

Sunwin Bus delivered 156 electric buses, 120 featuring motors powered by onboard batteries and 36 equipped with super capacitors that are rapidly charged when the buses halt at bus stops, as well as 150 hybrid buses. Sunwin Bus developed the technologies in cooperation with the other part owner in the company, Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation.

"The transport sector in China is really transforming rapidly at the moment, and electric vehicles play an important role in this revolution," says Lars-Olof Pekkari, Director Business Development Business Region International at Volvo Buses. "It is very important for Volvo Buses to be a part of this process. There is no doubt that electric buses are the future and thanks to our relationship to Sunwin Bus we have a fantastic opportunity to be involved."

"Sunwin has worked hard in developing new products in the last 8 years, and the success at the World Expo is proof that the electric buses have a future in the streets of Shanghai and anywhere else."

Technological progress

According to Zhou Huai, deputy director with the Urban Transport Management Bureau, there have been very few problems with any of the new-energy vehicles at the Expo since the test operations began in April. All buses at the Expo use clean energy technologies and the event is serving as a test before the buses are put to use outside after the event has ended.

"Limitations in battery technology have been one reason to why electric buses still aren't a common sight on our streets," says Lars-Olof Pekkari. "But that is changing, thanks to new technological progress and recent battery development decreasing battery weight."

The cost of purchasing a fleet of electric buses can also be very high compared to a diesel fleet. However the running costs have potential to be far lower and developers' sights are pointing in the right direction to evolve the electric bus still further for its role in the future.

"And for the time being, Volvo's hybrid buses offers a excellent way to use environmentally friendly technology," says Lars-Olof Pekkari.

Order for 1,000 Volvo buses to Panama City

Volvo Buses has received an order for 1,000 Volvo B7RLE bus chassis to Panama City. Low fuel consumption and a high level of availability were decisive factors in the customer's decision to purchase Volvo vehicles.

Panama City in Panama has more than one million inhabitants. A major program is currently under way to modernize the city's transportation system, and the 1,000 Volvo buses

will operate on routes in all city districts.

The customer is a consortium in Panama called Transmassivo and is led by the Colombian enterprise Fanalca Group, which owns bus operators in several Latin American countries and represents one of Volvo Buses' largest customers.

The order is for 1,000 city buses. The chassis will be built in Borås, Sweden, while the company Superpolo, a joint venture between Marcopolo and Fanalca, will manufacture the bodies in Colombia.

"This large contract is evidence of the superior quality of the brand's vehicles, and reinforces our leadership in organized urban mass-transit systems, known as Bus Rapid Transit," declares Luis Carlos Pimenta, President of Volvo Bus Latin America.

All vehicles will be equipped with an automated gearbox, ABS and EBS, air conditioning, disk brakes and electronic suspension – an advanced kneeling system that lowers the bus side to facilitate boarding and disembarking for passengers.

"Our vehicles' low fuel consumption and the high level of availability logged by the B7RLE fleet purchased by the Fanalca Group in previous years in other cities of Latin America were decisive in the company's decision to once again purchase Volvo chassis," says Luis Carlos Pimenta. "Another strong reason for us getting this order is the excellence of our After Sales Services"

Production of the chassis in Borås will commence this month and will be ongoing until the second half of 2011. The first complete buses will be ready for delivery to Panama City at the end of this year.

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Initial doubts turned into praise when US tour and charter operator TraveLynx invested in seven new Volvo 9700 coaches.

"We thought we would have problems, but our ownership of the Volvo 9700 has definitely changed our opinion," says Tim McGatha, Maintenance Manager at TraveLynx. "I would recommend this coach to other companies."

Text Håkan Hellström Photo TraveLynx

"I would recommend this coach to other companies"

TraveLynx has offered charter and airport shuttle services in Florida for more than 40 years. The company headquarters is in the city of Cocoa in central Florida and provides shuttle services to and from major airports such as Orlando, Melbourne, and Daytona International.

"We have a wide variety of customers, they range from schools going on field trips to sports teams; from Church outings to summer camp trips; from Senior citizens going to bingo to people coming off the cruise ships at the port going on excursions," says Tim McGatha. "We also provide shuttle services to crewmembers when the ships are docked."

"At the moment, our fleet consists of 37 motor coaches, 9 mini buses, and 10 vans," says Tim McGatha. "We have motor coaches from MCI, VanHool, Prevost, and Volvo Buses. "

With the launch in 2009 of the Volvo 9700 in USA and Canada, buses with the Volvo brand are being sold there for the first time in more than 20 years. Volvo Bus has been active on the market in the meantime through its Canadian subsidiaries, coaches under the Prevost brand and transit buses under the Nova Bus brand.

"Before purchasing the Volvo 9700, I had no real knowledge of that coach," says Tim McGatha. "I only knew it reminded me of a BCI (US luxury coach brand)."

"At first we were not sure of the coach, we thought we would have problems," he says. "But our ownership of the Volvo 9700 has changed our previous opinion. For me personally the Volvo 9700 drive train and chassis has so far turned out to be reliable and built pretty tough."

"The 9700 drives very nice – with a smooth ride," he says. "The fuel consumption is 2-3 miles per gallon better than the other coaches we have. Maintaining the 9700 is are fairly easy with unitized wheel ends. sealed components and long service intervals. I would no doubt recommend this coach to other companies."

The Volvo 9700 for USA and Canada is manufactured in Volvo Buses' plant in Mexico. The engine is completely assembled in Volvo's plant in Hagerstown, Maryland, USA.

The Volvo 9700 is sold through Prevost, which also handles the entire aftermarket through the company's extended network of certified service centres and spare parts inventories.

"The parts and service support we receive is by far the best in the business," says Tim McGatha. "Their regional service team is also by far the best, no other coach company offers this kind of response and knowledge. It also helps that the reliability of the Volvo 9700 has been good so far."

The relationship between Travelynx and Prevost was born as the result of the history between Groupo Plaza and Volvo Bus in Argentina. Groupo Plaza, that has a total bus fleet of 1,750 buses, began looking for a medium size successful bus operator in Florida and ultimately purchased Travelynx in Cocoa, Florida. Groupo Plaza, through International Plaza Group in the US, purchased the first two Volvo 9700 coaches under the Travelynx company in approximately July 2009, at which time 5 additional 9700 coaches were on order and being built in Mexico.

The Volvo 9700 was re-launched in an upgraded version in 2009, including a new, more powerful and fuel-efficient 13-litre engine, meeting the Euro 5 and US2010 standards. The new diesel engine offers improved power and driveability, but also consumes less fuel than the 12-litre engine. The new generation is based on the winning "Coach of the Year 2008" concept, but further developed and fine-tuned. The concept won this prestigious award because of the best total offer, especially for its outstanding driveline, the passenger and driver experience, and ownership benefits.

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Unique double-decker buses for Doigs

Doigs of Glasgow has taken delivery of a brand new Optare bodied Volvo B9TL double-decker bus. The unique vehicle offers the benefits traditionally associated with a Volvo coach, but on a bus chassis.

Specified with 100 coach standard seats, with three point safety belts, tinted windows, five flat screen TV monitors, soft finish roof and side walls and two internal tables, the bus is of extremely high specification. It also features a CD/DVD player; air conditioning and an integrated low bridge warning alert system.

Emblazoned with Doigs' instantly recognisable silver livery, the new double-decker is externally eye-catching and stylish, whilst the Optare bodywork provides sophistication and a high quality finish.

As a long-standing Volvo customer Doigs were confident they would get a vehicle that would prove to be reliable, fuel efficient and long lasting. "The seating capacity was the key for us with this vehicle purchase," explained Doigs Director Iain Forsyth. "Volvo was the only company who could provide us with the seating capacity we wanted, and with the Optare bodywork that we liked.

"We feel the bus is quite unique because it offers all the benefits that you would normally expect to find on a prestige coach. It also allows us the opportunity to accommodate larger groups, without compromising passenger comfort".

Doigs has specified Volvo since 2005 and Iain Forsyth explained that it was a case of supply and demand. "We always know exactly what type of vehicle we're looking for and if Volvo can meet those requirements, as they have with this latest purchase, then we're more than happy to keep coming back".

Order for 400 Volvo buses to Morocco

Volvo Buses has received an order for 400 city buses for Casablanca in Morocco. One core reason that Volvo secured the order is that the buses have low life cycle costs.

Morocco has been a key market for Volvo's various companies for many years and both Volvo Buses and Volvo Trucks are currently market leaders in Morocco.

Morocco is in a highly expansive phase, with major investments in infrastructure, tourism and industrial development. Expanding the public transport system is a key step in this development. An increasing number of cities in the country are choosing to allow private companies to take over the responsibility for public transport, to make it more efficient. In Casablanca, the company M'dina Bus has handled the city bus traffic for the past five years.

M'dina Bus has currently 500 buses in operation and is now investing heavily in increasing considerably their bus fleet with an additional 400 buses, which will be purchased from Volvo Buses.

The vehicle in question is the Volvo B7R with body by Hispano. The chassis will be assembled in Casablanca, as will the body as Hispano has manufacturing operations there. Delivery of the buses will commence in September this year and the delivery is scheduled to be completer during 2011.

"Volvo Buses' success was due largely to the fact that M'dina Bus attached great importance to the life cycle cost during the procurement process," says Jan Vandooren, Volvo Buses' Director for Africa and the Middle East region. "The purchase price is one thing, but more important for a bus operator is the total cost during the service life of the bus, and this is a strong point for Volvo's buses, with its operational reliability and low fuel consumption."

Maintenance of the buses will take place at M'dina's own workshops, but the agreement includes training of drivers and mechanics by Volvo Buses, thereby enhancing the processes in the workshops.

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