

Industry in spotlight for sold-out show

Waiting list of exhibitors after surge in late enquiries

By Mel Holley

With just two weeks remaining until Coach & Bus Live 2009 at Birmingham's NEC on 7-8 October, Show Director Mark Griffin is delighted to announce that the show has completely sold out.

There will be 205 exhibitors taking part - including all the leading vehicle manufacturers, product, service and technology related suppliers. A late surge in stand enquiries has led to a waiting list as anxious would-be exhibitors wait to see whether or not they can be squeezed on to the floorplan somewhere.

Mr Griffin believes this resurgence of interest in Coach & Bus Live reflects a growing mood of cautious optimism among the industry and that for many businesses this exhibition marks a symbolic start on the path to economic recovery. He says: "Coach & Bus Live presents a crucial opportunity for the industry; acting like a weather gauge as to where new business is coming from rather than looking back in too much detail at what has been lost. We have many exhibitors participating in the show to see how they can fill orders for next year and beyond. The show is now a key date for everyone in the industry."

One of those companies that has chosen to use Coach and Bus Live as an opportunity to engage with the industry is the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LCVP). Appearing as an exhibitor and on the seminar platform this year will be Jonathan Murray, Deputy

Director of LCVP (Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership) who will be providing operators and councils keen to run greener bus fleets with important advice on how they should go about accessing their share of the Department of Transport £30m fund for low carbon buses.

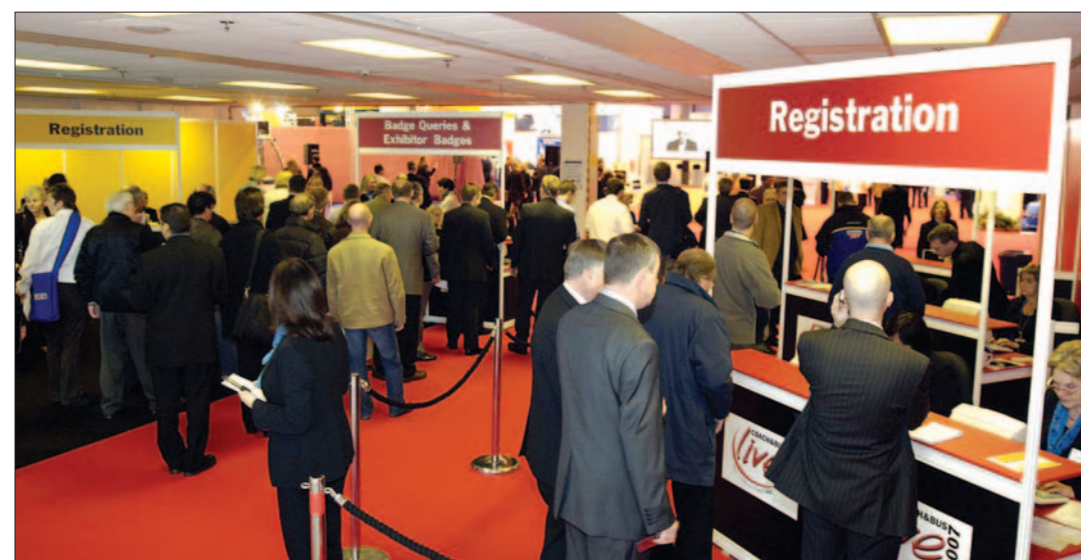
LCVP's participation at the show is all the more timely given the manufacturers' particularly big promotion of environmentally-friendly vehicles at this year's show. Visitors will be able to test drive a range of latest manufacturers' vehicles. For example, ADL Enviro200 single deck and Enviro 400 double deckers as well as Optare's fuel efficient Dual Fuel Solo SR, Olympus tri-axle and Soroco Coach will feature.

Judging by the programme of events for the 2009 show none of the 5,000 attendees expected to go through the doors over the two-day period will be disappointed. In addition to a packed show floor,



including 30 new exhibitors, there will be an impressive outdoor display showcasing around 60 vehicles plus a whole range of special show features.

A totally interactive experience from start to finish, the show will give visitors the opportunity to have their driving skills independently and impartially tested under the expert and watchful gaze of Coach Displays UK in the Volvo sponsored Skills Challenge. Those operators seeking to make their money and their vehicles go further as well as keep the right side of the law will have opportunity to do so in the all-new VOSA run Workshop Live. Running twice daily on both days, these 20-minute demonstrations will cover PSV Annual Test, PSV Walkround Checks and Driver



Still time to register to visit the show in two weeks time and gain fast-track free entry

Hours.

Coach and Bus Live will also be introducing two new feature areas for 2009: Technology Zone with an extensive showcase of the latest IT

and telecommunication developments and the GoSkills supported Training & Development Zone where visitors are invited to discover the very

latest in careers training and advice.

Visitors attending the 2009 seminar programme will have the opportunity to keep themselves

up-to-speed with the very latest industry issues under the overarching conference theme 'Working together: steering a course through recession and the opportunities that lies ahead'. With such well known and respected industry figures as Hugh Sumner from the ODA, Colin Robertson from ADL and Ian Morgan CPT President as well as Deputy Chairman of Trentbarton, it's certain to be a lively and thought-provoking couple of days.

● There's still time to join the anticipated 5,000 attendees. To pre-register for the show simply go to: www.coachandbuslive.com and click on the 'register here' button.

● For an up-to-date exhibitor listing and floorplan to help plan your visit, go to www.coachandbuslive.com

● See show preview this issue on pages 37-63

Llandrindod closure

VOSA has confirmed that Llandrindod Wells test station will close on 25 September as planned (route one, News, 9 July). VOSA has told operators about other facilities in the area, including its test stations at Hereford, Pontypool, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and Wrexham and a number of Designated Premises (DPs) with an additional DP expected to open at the beginning of October.

Third strike

First Manchester staff held a third 24-hour strike action on Monday (21 September) in a continuing dispute over a zero-per-cent pay offer.

The 833 members of Unite at Wigan, Bolton, and Bury depots took part in two 24-hour stoppages earlier this month (11/14 September). Unite rep Bobby Morton says: "despite repeated efforts by Unite and ACAS, First is still refusing to get round the table to negotiate a fair and decent offer. First is not struggling or failing; the company is mean and greedy."

Swansea 'ftmetro' officially starts

After more than two years of streetworks and three months of pre-service testing, FirstGroup Chief Executive Sir Moir Lockhead OBE joined senior figures from City and County of Swansea and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) at a special event outside the Civic Centre in Swansea last Wednesday (16 September) to name a vehicle as part of the official launch of the £14m ftmetro project (including £10m street works).

The vehicle is called 'City of Swansea' to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Swansea receiving its city status in 1969.

Swansea follows York and Leeds, which also have 'ft' systems; coincidentally all three are numbered route 4.

Supporting ftmetro are extensive road infrastructure and bus priority measures, which mean the 10 B7LAs-based Wright's StreetCars can now sail through the city, cutting previous cross-city journey times by up to 10 minutes.

The service also provides a

seamless interchange with Swansea Rail Station from the west side of the City Centre; meaning visitors can make the change between rail and bus with relative ease. PlusBus integrated ticketing makes the process even easier for rail customers.

The new link with the railway station also makes travelling to and from the Liberty Stadium for football matches and other big events, easier for visitors from outside the area.

Sir Moir Lockhead said: "Swansea in the 21st Century, like many other cities in the UK, is facing big challenges. It must constantly reinvent itself, finding new and innovative ways to tackle the twin threats of congestion and climate change.

"By developing a robust transport network, that encourages people to use buses instead of private cars, the city is tackling these problems head on.

"We are still in the early days, but ridership figures are in line with expectations, and are expected to grow further in the



Civic launch: Sir Moir Lockhead and Swansea Mayor Cllr Alan Lloyd name an ftmetro

coming months, as more and more people opt for travel by ftmetro, rather than car."

ftmetro offers air conditioned comfort, and the Euro 3 vehicles' seats have been re-trimmed with leather, compared with moquette in Leeds and York. Seventeen jobs have been created as a team of customer service hosts have been employed to assist customers and to collect fares.

The hosts have learnt basic Welsh language, Welsh history/folklore and they have developed a detailed knowledge of Swansea's facilities and amenities to ensure they are prepared to carry out the important customer-facing role.

PTEG launches 'manifesto' for transport

At a fringe meeting at the TUC conference in Liverpool, PTEG Chairman, Neil Scales, launched the lobby group's 'manifesto for transport in the cities'.

The 'manifesto' sets out PTEG's ideas for politicians and policymakers in what will be the last conference season before a General Election.

It will be up for debate at fringe meetings which will be held at the autumn Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative party conferences.

The eight themes of the 'manifesto' are:

- tackle the transport 'funding gap' between London and the next tier of major cities
- work with PTEG to deliver smartcards providing an Oyster-style offer
- bring commuter rail networks into the 21st century
- work with PTEG on transforming local bus services
- fair play for tram schemes
- transform our rail connectivity

● use transport to help take the pressure off low-income families and help people get back to work

● broaden, widen and deepen the devolution of decision making on local transport

Neil Scales told the fringe meeting: "The Local Transport Act 2008 gives Britain's largest urban areas more choices over how local bus services should be run and on how decision-making on transport as a whole should be made. PTEs are

working together to take advantage of these opportunities and all PTEs are setting out what kind of bus service they wish to see in their areas using the tools in the Local Transport Act to make sure it happens." PTEG represents the views of all the PTEs.

● Download the manifesto from www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/18DF1B89-C773-4D00-AFF7-17151F43A448/0/September2009final.pdf

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