

Public Transit Agencies Lower Emissions and Costs with Paratransit Propane Autogas Shuttles



Washington's Kitsap Transit and Whatcom Transportation Authority began looking for paratransit vehicles with cleaner emissions that would help lower their fuel cost; they found a solution with ROUSH CleanTech's Ford E-450 propane autogas paratransit shuttles.

Since 2015, Kitsap Transit has added 49 paratransit propane shuttles to its ACCESS fleet, replacing aging diesel models. Whatcom Transportation Authority has purchased 22 propane buses since 2019, replacing aging gasoline models. The Washington agencies are among dozens of transit agencies operating propane vehicles. Currently, there are more than 1,500 ROUSH CleanTech propane transit shuttles across the U.S.

When compared with gasoline or diesel vehicles, fleet vehicles that run on propane autogas, including the ROUSH CleanTech Ford E-450 cutaway chassis, emit fewer greenhouse gases, smog-producing hydrocarbons, and virtually eliminate particulate emissions.

"Propane has reduced our maintenance costs and wear and tear on the engine and components," said Dennis Griffey, maintenance director for Kitsap Transit. "We don't need to do as much serving for fluids, coolants and filters." He adds that the agency's propane autogas transit buses average 25 cents less per mile than its comparable diesel vehicles.

"Being in the Pacific Northwest, we endure some rough winter conditions. Whatcom Transportation Authority's propane shuttles don't have any cold-start issues and warm up quickly. That saves our team time and money," said Ron Mountain, fleet manager for Whatcom Transportation Authority.

The two agencies experience additional savings with their propane shuttles by locking in an annual per-gallon fuel cost for propane to ensure price and supply remain consistent. "Our employees fill up onsite. That, plus the facts that propane is produced domestically and has an abundant supply, allows us to budget better," said Mountain.

Drivers have noticed many improvements while operating the propane shuttles. Vehicles fueled by propane autogas reduce noise levels by about 50% compared to a diesel engine, allowing drivers to better focus on passengers and the road. "Our operators really appreciate

the power and the pep the propane vehicles have. They are quieter and don't have that diesel smell," said Griffey.

ROUSH CleanTech's Ford E-450 cutaway has completed the Federal Transit Administration's New Model Bus Testing Program ("Altoona Testing"), which allows transit agencies to access federal funds that cover 85% of an entire alternative fuel vehicle cost with a 15% local match. Completion of "Altoona Testing" means all compatible paratransit body configurations are eligible for FTA funding.



Both Kitsap Transit and Whatcom Transportation Authority plan to add more propane vehicles to their fleets. According to Mountain, every future paratransit order for Whatcom Transportation Authority will be propane-fueled. And, Griffey says that Kitsap Transit will replace all of its remaining 6.6-liter diesels with the 7.3-liter low nitrogen oxide Ford E-450 propane cutaway vehicles.

To learn more about ROUSH CleanTech's advanced clean transportation fleet solutions, visit ROUSHcleantech.com.