



## **Weststart-Calstart Launches Million Dollar Bus Rapid Transit Assistance Program**

*Weststart-Calstart, a leading advanced transportation non-profit consortium located in Pasadena, Calif., announces the launch of million dollar bus rapid transit (BRT) assistance program. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, House minority leader, plays key role in securing support for program to build us BRT industry and reduce congestion by encouraging increased use of mass transit. The goals of the 2004 BRT program are to help communities better utilize BRT, and to assist U.S. bus manufacturers in their efforts to provide advanced BRT vehicles for U.S. transit properties.*

Pasadena, CA ([PRWEB](#)) April 8, 2004 - Congressman Pelosi plays key role in securing support for program to build us BRT industry and reduce congestion. WestStart-CALSTART, in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is launching a new one million dollar national Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) assistance program. This program will support the expansion of the BRT concept and facilitate the growth of a BRT industry in the United States.

BRT continues to show strong evidence of being one of the new tools that can help increase transit ridership in a cost effective way, in combination with and as a complement to light rail and other options. BRT can range from specially marked buses on high-speed routes, to customized "rail-like" vehicles operating on separate roadways.

The goals of the 2004 BRT program are to help communities better utilize BRT and to assist U.S. bus manufacturers in their efforts to provide advanced BRT vehicles for U.S. transit properties.

In particular, among other activities the new WestStart-CALSTART BRT initiative will help communities and transit agencies assess the cost-effectiveness of their BRT vehicles, will publish an analysis of fuels and propulsion system options for BRT vehicles, will provide a "compendium" of BRT vehicle offerings worldwide, and will complete a market demand forecast for BRT vehicles in the U.S.

WestStart-CALSTART's first forecast measured a demand for over five thousand new BRT vehicles over the next ten years with a strong preference for clean fuels and propulsion systems such as natural gas and hybrids. At least two U.S. bus manufacturers used that analysis to support an internal business decision to build advanced BRT vehicles.

"Fresh approaches that give people better overall transit solutions, from cleaner buses to new services, deserve our support," said Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco), minority leader of the House of Representatives and a strong transit supporter. "CALSTART continues to be a leader in advanced transit projects, taking concepts such as BRT and working with North American industry to bring these vehicles to market while creating American jobs at the same time."

Congresswoman Pelosi is a leading congressional supporter of programs that provide rider choice and options "part of the FTA's overall goal to bring more riders to transit through a combination of services, from light rail to bus.



"BRT is a major element of our strategy to increase transit ridership," said FTA Associate Administrator Barbara Sisson. "BRT can provide a better and faster level of transit bus service at an affordable price. We are pleased to be continuing our partnership with WestStart-CALSTART to help foster a BRT industry in the United States."

WestStart-CALSTART has already assisted several North American bus manufacturers by assessing the market and preferences for new BRT vehicles. The next phase of work will help communities assessing BRT service to find the most cost effective way to meet their goals. Over the past two years, the number of BRT communities has almost doubled from 28 to 48 and it's continuing to grow.

"We want to thank Congresswoman Pelosi for her visionary leadership and support, and showing statewide leadership by supporting this program," said John Boesel, WestStart-CALSTART president and CEO. "We look forward to continuing to work with the FTA to develop and expand BRT usage and manufacturing jobs in the U.S."

WestStart-CALSTART is North America's leading advanced transportation technologies industry catalyst organization. It is a fuel neutral, participant-supported organization of more than 115 companies and agencies, dedicated to expanding and supporting a high-tech transportation industry that cleans the air, creates jobs and improves energy efficiency. Its California operating division does business as CALSTART. Visit [www.weststart.org](http://www.weststart.org) for more information.

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