

# Centre Area Transportation Authority

# CNG Program



Visit [www.catabus.com](http://www.catabus.com) to view an online video outlining CATA's CNG Program!

The Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA), a joint municipal authority of five Centre Region Municipalities (State College Borough and College, Ferguson, Harris and Patton Townships), is the chief provider of public mass transportation in Centre County, Pennsylvania, providing over seven million bus rides a year to Penn State students and staff, commuters, senior citizens and many others.

CATA is very accomplished and respected within the transit industry. It has been given recognition over the years for its strong ridership growth, its responsiveness to the community, transportation and land use planning, service quality, partnerships with the Pennsylvania State University and local organizations and staff's involvement in the transit industry.

CATA has distinguished itself in many areas, but nothing is more impressive than its full fleet conversion from buses running on diesel fuel to those powered by clean-burning compressed natural gas

(CNG), the product of a partnership between CATA and Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania.

## CATA CNG Program

### 1993-1994

Upon the recommendation of then General Manager Kevin Abbey, the CATA Board of Directors made the decision to begin replacing all of CATA's fleet with buses fueled by clean-burning CNG.

As the first step toward fulfilling this commitment, CATA ordered sixteen CNG-powered buses from Bus Industries of America (now Orion Bus Industries) in Oriskany, New York.

### 1995

CATA, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania joined in a cooperative effort to build a CNG compressing, storage and dispensing station at CATA's administrative facility. Altogether CATA's partners contributed in excess of \$1.0 million to the project.

## Why Natural Gas???

Traditional transportation fuels such as gasoline and diesel have been used in the United States for decades. So why switch to clean compressed natural gas?

**It's Locally-Produced** - CNG is produced in the northwestern corner of Centre County and throughout the United States.

**Energy Independence** - Using natural gas produced domestically allows CATA to play its part in reducing energy dependence on other countries.

**Cost Savings** - CATA's realized cost savings since converting its fleet to CNG from diesel during times like these when the cost of petroleum has risen drastically.

**It's the Right Thing to Do!** - CATA as an organization has a social responsibility to our community to use the most environmentally-friendly fuel possible.



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### 1996

CATA took delivery of its first sixteen Orion buses fueled by CNG. CATA also began working with the nearby Uni-Mart to provide compressed natural gas to the public.

### 1997, 1998, 2001

CATA purchased additional CNG-fueled low-floor New Flyer buses. These 28 35-foot and 40-foot buses have become the backbone of CATA's fleet.

### 1999

A second CNG dispenser, donated to CATA by Columbia Gas, was installed to provide additional fueling capacity.

### 2002

A canopy was placed over the fueling station at the CATA administrative facility so that CATA's Maintenance staff could fuel buses out of the rain and snow.

### 2003

A third CNG dispenser was placed on CATA's property and acts as a back up to the original.



CATA's CNG fueling station.

### 2004

CATA purchased four 30-foot CNG-fueled low-floor EIDorado buses, which have proven to be a perfect fit for use in residential neighborhoods.

### 2005

With the receipt of two new CNG-fueled Ford minibuses, CATA's CNG program reached completion. CATA became the first transit system on the East Coast to have converted its entire fixed-route fleet to alternative fuel.



CATA's natural gas compressors.



CATA CNG Program Completion Celebration, May 2005.

### 2006-2008

CATA continued its experimentation with alternative fuels by joining forces with Penn State and its Larson Transportation Institute on a broad research initiative aimed at researching the use of hydrogen in vehicles. As a result of the project, one of CATA's CNG buses was temporarily converted to operate on a CNG-Hydrogen blend.

### 2008

CATA completed a major overhaul of its on-site CNG fueling facility, which centered on replacing two of its three existing CNG compressors. The project was funded through a congressional earmark, obtained for CATA by former Representative John Peterson.

### 2009

CATA took ownership of ten CNG-powered New Flyer buses previously operated by LYNX of Orlando, FL. A subsequent trade with the transit system in Indiana, PA, brought to CATA two additional CNG buses that had begun their careers in Reading, PA.

### 2012

CATA made another vehicle purchase in 2012, this time for 28 new CNG-powered New Flyer Excelsior buses (the first of this model to be powered by natural gas), which have added a modern touch to the fleet. The arrival of these buses allowed for the retirement of CATA's oldest CNG buses - the sixteen original 1996 Orion buses and the 1997 New Flyers acquired used from Orlando. The purchase was funded with state capital funds, a congressional earmark, and a \$6.3 million Federal Transit Administration State of Good Repair Grant.

For additional information on CATA and its CNG program, or to view an online video outlining the program, please visit the CATA website at [www.catabus.com](http://www.catabus.com) or contact Jacqueline Sheader, CATA Marketing Manager, at (814) 238-CATA(2282) ext. 141.

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