

It's SkyTrain

The Vancouver Regional Rapid Transit System (ALRT), which goes into service today in the Lower Mainland, takes off with a new name.

SkyTrain.

"A rapid transit system that is unique and technologically advanced by world standards, deserves a name that is different and reflects and enhances the service," said Grace McCarthy, Minister Responsible for BC Transit, in a recent statement.

The announcement concluded months of name-searching in which government, professional agencies and the public took part.

McCarthy first used the name SkyTrain during a Nov. 12 ceremony naming five trains in the "Spirit of B.C." series. These were *Spirit of Vancouver*, *Spirit of Burnaby*, *Spirit of New Westminster*, *Spirit of Canada* and *Spirit of Expo*. All 114 rapid transit cars will reflect the spirit of B.C. communities or regions.

McCarthy said the new name is being used in all rapid transit

advertising, publications and throughout the system generally. "I think it's most suitable as it does glide over traffic without delays for signals or traffic tie-ups," she said.

"SkyTrain is part of the total integrated transportation system, which carries over 100 million passengers annually.

In naming the cars, BC Transit is following in the tradition of great railroads the world over.

"They will represent the collective spirit of cities, towns and geographic regions throughout the entire province," said McCarthy. "The naming of the cars is designed to foster goodwill throughout B.C. towards our ALRT system — which is not merely a juggernaut of electronics and steel, but also a symbol of British Columbian excellence."

Just some of the other car names include *Spirit of Expo*, *Spirit of Canada*, *Spirit of Prince George*, *Spirit of the Gulf Islands* and *Spirit of Whistler*.

Plastics play part

Among the noteworthy applications of reinforced plastics in the transportation field this year was the FRP power rail covers on the ALRT system.

The power rail coverboards were made for Vancouver by Marine Plastics Ltd. of Port Coquitlam, using special panel forming techniques.

Marine Plastics Ltd. first made prototypes and then molded eight different configurations of coverboards.

They vary in shape from snap-on types to units that can be stepped on by maintenance personnel.

They were molded in FRP tooling using sheet or panel forming techniques with a vacuum assist in two integral colors (yellow for installation on the

top rail and grey for the bottom rail).

To date, Marine Plastics has supplied approximately 100 kilometres (62 miles) of the 2-metre-long (6.5-ft.) coverboards to Metro Canada Ltd., the prime contractor and consultant for the advanced rapid transit system.

As Marine Plastics' manager Don Hings explains, the function of the coverboard is to provide a visual warning (the safety yellow) as well as structural protection against electrical accidents, vandalism and extreme weather conditions.

Fire retardant resins were used in conjunction with a variety of FRP laminates to give flexibility for the snap-on feature of the coverboard, as well as structural strength for the load bear-

ing areas of the units.

"The moulding method offered the versatility of trouble-free laminate placement and entation, along with the advantage of low-cost, short-run capabilities, economical development and mid-production design changes," Hings said.

"The increased use of FRP in transit systems is apparent in the front end caps of the power rail insulators and coverboards which are all made of reinforced plastic.

"Those three items alone summed an estimated 300 kilograms (660,000 pounds) of FRP in the Vancouver system," he adds.

Other FRP parts in the system include cable trays, power splice joint insulator bars and power rail tension rods.

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