

[From Spring 2003]

New CNHA Tour Bus

Based on the success of last year's pilot project with a marginally acceptable vehicle, the CNHA Board authorized the negotiation of a long-term service contract to provide a vehicle which would meet our original criteria. On February 18, 2003, I completed negotiations and signed a three-year contract with The CUBE Corp. of Sterling, VA, to furnish a vehicle and driver to conduct three refuge tours daily, seven days per week beginning the Friday before Memorial Day and continuing through Labor Day.

The contract provides a brand new vehicle, which is currently being built by Glaval Bus Inc. to meet our requirements. In addition to being equipped with an ADA lift and space for two wheelchairs, the new bus will accommodate 29 passengers plus two wheelchairs, or 33 passengers without wheelchairs. It will also be equipped with a 98,000 BTU air conditioner (the largest one provided by the bus manufacturer), heavy duty alternator, PA system, etc. - in other words, configured for our environment and intended use.

Besides getting a new vehicle designed to better meet our needs than last year's "last minute," short-term lease vehicle, we are paying \$5,000 less per year and have use of it for 12 months each year, not just for three months. In addition to meeting the established schedule of tours during the peak visitation season, the contract has provisions for CNHA to order additional tours or make other uses of the vehicle at a nominal "per tour" or "per hour" rate. This will allow us to provide special VIP tours, tours on weekends during the "off -season," and transportation for local groups to visit the refuges.



The contract also includes a provision for CNHA to purchase the vehicle at the completion of the contract after the contractor has converted the vehicle from gasoline-powered to propane-fueled. We're all looking forward to having a new -"cool" vehicle - especially the bus drivers and interpreters.

Frank V. Moore
CNHA Treasurer