

✓ Transportation 1980-89

# New-look bus here for a visit

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SANTA CRUZ — The Metropolitan Transit District will test a double-decker bus on the Santa Cruz beach shuttle this weekend.

The bus, built in England by the BRE-Leyland Co., arrived here Thursday for a two-week demonstration program. The Transit District is looking at the bus as a possible replacement for its shuttle fleet and for service on high-density routes, such as UCSC, Cabrillo College and San Lorenzo Valley.

The double-decker bus, used extensively in London, was brought to the U.S. by the Gillig Corp. of Hayward, a transit coach manufacturer and American distributor for the Leyland bus.

The bus was driven to Santa Cruz from Dallas, where it was used on test runs. It is painted in bright yellow and white colors of the Dallas transit system. The bus also has been used in Oakland and on commute routes from the East Bay to San Francisco.

The demonstration program here was negotiated by Transit District directors Joe Cucchiara and Bart Cavallaro at a transit convention last year in Washington, D.C.

The shuttle bus fleet here is 11 years old and will need replacing next year, Galloway said on a test run on the beach shuttle Thursday afternoon. Directors, he said, are looking at a number of possible replacements, including some unique vehicles such as the double-decker.

The bus drew stares and points from persons all along the beach shuttle route. Unusual vehicles draw

ridership, especially on shuttle or tourist routes, Galloway said. Double-decker buses have proved popular in Palm Springs, he said, where they have been in use for several years.

The Leyland bus carries 67 seated passengers, compared to 25 for the buses currently used on the beach shuttle and 38 for the buses on regular routes in the district. With standees, the bus could hold up to 100 people, Galloway said.

The seating capacity, he said, makes the bus attractive both for

shuttle service and for high-capacity runs, such as the UCSC route, where the district operates service every five minutes to keep up with the demand. Cost of the double-decker bus is \$175,000, about \$25,000 more than a conventional bus, Galloway said.

The bus will be used the next two weekends on the Santa Cruz shuttle. It is scheduled to be used on the Capitola shuttle on Aug. 29 and 30 and also will be put on the San Lorenzo and Watsonville runs during the two-week demonstration period.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

## Double-decker bus goes for a spin in Santa Cruz Thursday