

# Canada Reports

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Canadian computer companies are leaders in developing new software and hardware and they are rapidly expanding their international markets. This issue features articles on trade within the industry and related articles on recent computer technologies and applications.

- World's first interior bus elevator, 1
- Continued aid for Haiti, 2
- Southern Africa conference, 2
- Seeking more trade and investment with Britain, 3
- Peru's leaders visit, 3
- Hardware — software trade: trade fair, pact on tariffs, software projections, 4-5
- Microwaves for safer aircraft arrivals, 6
- Technology on tour, 6
- Fossil find in Nova Scotia, 7
- Mammoth mole burrows through mountains, 7
- Trade update, 8
- Funding for Olympians, 8
- News briefs, 8

## World's first interior bus elevator

Transport Canada has introduced the first intercity bus that is completely "accessible" to people in wheelchairs. Its main feature is an elevator, believed to be the first in the world to operate inside a bus, which enables wheelchair passengers to sit alongside other passengers.

With the hydraulic elevator down, wheelchair passengers can board or disembark from the bus almost at street level. The driver raises or lowers the computer-operated lift with hand controls. On board, the wheelchair is tied down by the driver and, for added safety, passengers wear seat belts.

### Co-operative effort

The design and fabrication of the inside elevator and structural changes to a regular intercity bus was completed by an Ottawa engineering firm, TES Limited. The adaptations were made to a new model built by Motor Coach Industries (MCI) of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Funding amounting to some \$800 000 was provided by Transport Canada.

To have a door on the elevator large enough for a person to walk through, the

designers used a bridge truss to take the load around the elevator that is normally carried along the side of a bus.

The major modification inside the bus was the removal of eight of the 47 regular passenger seats and the addition of two wheelchair seats, cutting the loss to six seats. A new version being built by MCI and TES will have up to eight permanent folding seats to accommodate passengers when the space is not required for disabled people.

Prior to the development of the new technology for the inside elevator, various types of existing elevators "folded out" on vehicles and lifted passengers to the floor level on the outside. From there the person would wheel into the vehicle.

For the wheelchair passengers, there are many disadvantages to this type of elevator. If something goes wrong, a disabled passenger risks sliding off the platform and possibly falling to the ground. In addition, they are needlessly exposed, perched helplessly in the air while the lift grinds away, and subject to all extremes in weather conditions including rain and snow.



Inside elevator on intercity bus allows easy access for disabled passengers.



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