



NATIONAL MINISTER OF TRANSPORT CONGRATULATES GOLDEN ARROW BUS SERVICES FOR PRESTIGIOUS RTMS ACCREDITATION

Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS) was commended by the National Minister of Transport Dipuo Peters, at the recent Handover of the Company's Road Transport Management System (RTMS) official accreditation.

RTMS is an industry-led, government-supported, voluntary, self-regulation scheme that encourages road transport operators to implement a management system with outcomes that contribute to preserving road infrastructure, improving road safety and increasing productivity. It covers vehicle maintenance, speeding controls, accident and traffic violation analysis, driver wellness and skills development.

Golden Arrow has sought over the last century and a half to continuously improve and innovate and the RTMS sticker that will soon appear on every one of their buses affirms that GABS is a responsible operator that is serious about road safety and committed to sustainable operational practices.

In handing over the accreditation, Minister Peters urged Golden Arrow to continue to act as an example to other public transport operators. The Minister noted that self-regulation is an essential tool in counteracting the scourge of accidents on our roads and that RTMS accreditation gives passengers an assurance that Golden Arrow is pro-actively engaged in ensuring that they are safe.

The provision of safe and reliable passenger transport services is the focal point around which Golden Arrow's mission statement revolves. According to Chief Executive Officer Nic Cronjé, RTMS accreditation was therefore a natural progression and a symbol of the Company's willingness to support government's strategies as a signatory to the United Nations Decade of Road Safety 2011 – 2020.

GABS Corporate Affairs Executive John Dammert, master of ceremonies at the function, noted that the impetus on public transport operators exists by virtue of their valuable human cargo. "Just as unemployment, poverty and inequality are the ravages of our society, so too is irresponsible driver behaviour."

Golden Arrow joins 146 fleets countrywide representing some 8 000 trucks and buses. It is the third bus operator to have received accreditation after Buscor (404 buses) and Intercape (152 coaches).

Golden Arrow is however the single largest fleet (1 100 buses) owner accredited to date and RTMS auditor Oliver Naidoo, noted that the Company had a number of systems already in place to ensure best practices in terms of vehicle maintenance and driver performance, which in many cases are far more stringent than required by law.

The company had sent their buses for roadworthiness testing every six months long before it became mandatory, service their vehicles at 15 000 rather than 20 000km intervals and a progressive preventative maintenance strategy has seen a significant decrease in breakdowns.

Cronjé noted that the company has opted for a multi-pronged approach in terms of driver training, which seeks to sensitise and continuously educate drivers in a variety

of ways which together form a potent behaviour modification strategy. “We are profoundly aware that these measures mean very little if the human being behind the steering wheel is not proficient in defensive driving and does not fully understand that his decisions could have life-altering consequences for himself, his passengers and other road users. In 2012 we introduced a compulsory two-day safety refresher course that each driver must attend every two years, he says”. Feedback from this course has indicated that it is not only appealing to our drivers at an intellectual level but also taps into their empathetic side, which is essential for the learning process.

It is hoped that many more transport operators will follow Golden Arrow’s lead and favour self-regulation in order to ease the burden on traffic officials and to encourage a climate of safety consciousness.