

NEW PRODUCTS

Product and system innovation has continued to be a big theme this year, with a range of new products unveiled in all areas of the light rail industry from ticketing systems, to 4G wireless capability for passengers to innovative passenger information technology. As always however, the most glamorous and high-profile launches were inevitably the new tram designs.

When Bombardier's *Flexity 2* was unveiled in Blackpool (UK) in September, it was an eagerly-awaited moment, marking the latest evolution of the *Flexity* platform with the latest technology from one of the world's key players in the market. But the new vehicles are also just one of a number of new products to hit the rails in the year...

BOMBARDIER: FLEXITY 2

Just over 32m long, and 2.65m wide, Bombardier's latest new LRV is 100% low-floor and incorporates features such as touchscreen driver displays. Maximum operating speed is 80km/h (50mph).

The 'empty space' interior concept allows customers to fit the cars out however they wish – the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project in Australia, for example, is the second customer for the *Flexity 2*; its cars will be supplied with space for surfboards.

The first of 16 of the trams was unveiled at the Blackpool Tramway (UK) on 8 September; 'Ghost running' trials are being undertaken and are expected to carry on until the modernised tramway (re)opens at Easter 2012.

Shortly after the Blackpool unveiling, Bombardier showed off its version for the North American market: the *Flexity Freedom* has been developed in parallel with the *Flexity 2*, but has been designed to fit the different crashworthiness and fire safety rules in place; the vehicles will be built in



either the USA or Canada. The first production vehicles are destined for Toronto (see news, page 460).

Production *Flexity Berlin* tram 8002 was shown off to the public in the German capital on 10 September.

However passenger campaigners in the city are still pushing for more of the new Bombardier trams to be delivered in the 'long' versions, rather than smaller ones that have lower capacity than the Tattras they are replacing.

Above: Blackpool's first *Flexity 2*, the first from an order of 16 placed in 2009, carried invited guests from around the world on the Promenade on 8 September, showcasing Bombardier's latest technologies to the industry.
Tony Stevenson

HEITERBLICK: VAMOS HF

Sunday 3 July was a big day for a fairly small name in the light rail vehicle market: around 20 000 people came to see the new *Vamos HF* vehicle made by HeiterBlick of Germany.

Construction of the 16 *Stadtbahn* vehicles for Bielefeld is to take until September 2012, when the last is to be displayed at Berlin's InnoTrans trade exhibition.

The *Vamos HF* for Bielefeld are 34m long, with capacity for 230 passengers, and a design operational speed of 80km/h (50mph).

In the year, HeiterBlick also delivered the 50th *Leoliner* to Leipzig, and was part of the winning consortium that's now to build Hannover's new vehicles.



Above: Bielefeld's new *Vamos HF* vehicles are significant as the bulging bodies above the waistline allow 2.65m-wide car bodies to operate on infrastructure currently designed around a 2.3m-wide fleet. HeiterBlick

Sustainable depots take shape

Residents visited the first depot built to the guidelines developed by TramStore21 in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) on 15 August.

Co-funded by the EU, TramStore21 is developing a new generation of sustainable tram depots in European cities. The other depots are at Starr Gate on the UK's Blackpool Tramway, as well as in Brussels (Belgium) and Dijon (France).

UITP: 'The world must take heed'

Leading speakers at UITP's 59th World Congress in Dubai presented figures that show that 60% of the world's population will live in urban areas within the next 15 years.

They argue that failure to invest wisely in sustainable urban transport now will stifle global economic recovery and ultimately gridlock the world's biggest cities. "Cities will be stuck if we do nothing," said UITP President Alain Flausch.