

## TRANSPORT ON-DEMAND WHEN YOU NEED IT!

One of the regional government's priorities in Castilla y León is to guarantee various services which are of general interest based on public transport, ensuring safe and long-term mobility, offering a basic and essential service for access to other services as well as aiding the population to settle.

The most common transport policy involves regular transport in which routes, stops and schedules are fixed. As a complement to this, individually tailored transport is offered, where services are only provided upon request, enabling the best use to be made of resources in areas with special needs.

The Council for Public Works at the Regional Government of Castilla y León is committed to implementing transport networks designed to meet demand in those rural areas which have special needs. The system comprises several elements. This on-demand transport system is controlled by a central booking office, which handles users' reservations via a free-phone service. The central office is also in charge of planning the journeys as bookings are made and of handling communications between the control centre and the staff so as to inform the driver of which services are required. The central control office is also in touch with the various terminals which provide travellers with information at the various stops. The vehicle is equipped with a positioning system allowing the central office to locate its position when it arrives at a stop on the route, as well as enabling the driver to send messages back to the central office, and receive information and enquiries. A terminal is also available for users at the various stops, providing information on the vehicle's position and the availability of places as the service is in operation, as well as bookings and expected availability of seats together with any incidents occurring on the way.

To request use of the service, users phone the booking office to make a reservation, which is immediately confirmed. To request information, users press the button on the panel. The panel shows when a vehicle arrives at one of the stops. The central booking office also sends the list of reservations for that day or the following day, as requested as well as informing users of any occurrences along the route.

In short, the on-demand transport service enables users' bookings to be handled in real time and to be processed using the latest technology, linking transport companies and administration, optimising organisation of routes and resources. A system which is easy to use and one which allows direct real time communication with travellers.

The system offers travellers several advantages, such as the availability of a transport service where previously none was available as well as enhancing the existing service through a free-phone booking service. The service is also speeded up as only the stops actually required are made. Users have arrivals information in real time through the information panel. A free-

phone booking service is available 900 20 40 20 (nine double 0, two 0, four 0, two 0), every day from eight in the morning to eight in the evening.

The operator also benefits from a reduction in operating costs through better routing of on-demand services or an increase in passenger numbers as a result of improved service.

The system is also of great benefit to the administration, offering among other things a direct link to users as well as the optimisation of resources.

A pilot project was initially set up in the Barco de Ávila area, which proved the efficiency of the on-demand transport system designed. Throughout October and November 2004 (two thousand and four), new areas have been set up in Riaño (León), and Alta Sanabria together with Aliste in Zamora.

2005 (two thousand and five), is witnessing the large scale introduction of the service in many areas of all the provinces in the Region, such as Cervera de Pisuerga (Palencia), La Alberca and Vitigudino (Salamanca), Cuellar and Carbonero el Mayor (Segovia), Medina de Pomar (Burgos), Astorga (León), as well as extending the area of Barco de Ávila (Ávila), Ágreda, Almazán and Arcos de Jalón (Soria) and Medina del Campo and Mota del Marqués in Valladolid.

The Regional Government of Castilla y León, building the future.