



University of the District of Columbia

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*"...a new day,
a new opportunity"*

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UDC's Small Business Development Center Launches "Upward Mobility Taxicab and Limousine Program"

Washington, D.C. — In a move to make transportation-for-hire more accessible to handicap residents, the University of the District of Columbia's Small Business Development Center will unveil a 2006 wheelchair-accessible Chevrolet mini-van on the UDC campus October 20, 2005. This Paratransit vehicle, nicknamed the "American PT," was developed by the Small Business Development Center in cooperation with Jerry's Chevrolet, a local auto dealership and El Dorado National, the vehicle conversion division of Thor Company, the nation's largest bus manufacturer. The ultimate goal of the joint effort is to make vehicles of this nature available for sale to District taxi cab and limousine companies, helping to narrow the handicap-accessible transportation gap. The UDC Small Business Development Center has also developed a supporting relationship with Branch, Banking & Trust Company (BB&T) to provide conventional or Small Business Administration (SBA) financing for the purchase of these vehicles.

The American PT will be unveiled at a special ceremony on the campus of the University of the District of Columbia at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, October 20, 2005. The ceremony will be held in Woodlin Place, just off Connecticut Ave, NW in front of the University's auditorium (Building 46 East). Leadership of the University, representatives of the vehicle manufacturer, lenders, and representatives of the taxicab industry will be present to describe details of the program, including financing options, and to unveil a newly constructed wheelchair accessible minivan of the type program organizers will make available to local taxicab and limousine operators.

The American PT offers all of the construction features that consumers have come to expect in a consumer version of this economical, commercial vehicle. The vehicle boasts a quick release removable front passenger seat, manual fold-out ramp with an easy swing out gate for quick and clear access for all passengers. The American PT meets or exceeds all applicable U.S. motor vehicle safety standards.

"There is a pressing need for this type of transportation service in the District," said Ronald Mitchell, Director of the University's Small Business Development Center. "This partnership demonstrates the University's commitment to serving all segments of our population in some very unique ways."

The University of the District of Columbia is the sole public source for accessible, inclusive, affordable, and comprehensive public higher education in the District of Columbia and provides additional life-long learning opportunities. The University delivers quality instruction and uses student-centered approaches to empower and benefit both individuals and its local communities. The University, an urban land grant institution, is a very diverse community, a gateway to the world, and a significant investment engine for the District of Columbia. The University is located at 4200 Connecticut Ave, NW Washington, and is conveniently located at the Van Ness/UDC stop on the Red Line of Metro. For more information on other University activities, contact Mike Andrews, Senior Director for Communications and University Spokesman at (202) 274-5685 or visit the University's web site at www.udc.edu.

NOTICE TO MEDIA: Media are welcome to cover the unveiling of the American PT Paratransit Vehicle, developed by University of the District of Columbia's Small Business Development Center, on the UDC, Woodlin Place and Connecticut Ave, NW on Thursday, October 20, 2005. If you plan to cover this event, please arrive not later than 9:45 a.m. to avoid disrupting the event. Parking for media may be arranged by prior notification of Melvin Witten, Office of the Vice President, University Relations at (202) 274-6657.

