



NICE will be rolling out Nassau's first "articulated" buses, which were bought for \$778,000 each. ■ Video: [newsday.com/nassau](https://www.newsday.com/nassau)

NICE to debut double buses

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Stepping to the rear of the bus is going to take a little longer for some Nassau transit riders this spring.

On the same week that NICE customers received the bad news that 10 routes are being eliminated in April, they also got a bit of good news with the unveiling of Nassau's first articulated buses.

The accordion-like double buses have been used for years by the MTA in New York City, and will be rolled out in April on Nassau's busiest bus route,

the N6, which travels between Hempstead and Jamaica.

"They will be full immediately," Nassau Inter-County Express, or NICE, chief executive officer Michael Setzer said. "They provide a little improvement in efficiency in that most of the cost of operating a bus is the professional driving the bus. When he or she has 60 seats behind them instead of 40 seats, it's just a more efficient operation."

Using its own funds, NICE's parent company, Transdev, purchased five of the XN60 model buses from the Winnipeg, Manitoba-based manufacturer, New

Flyer, at a cost of \$778,000 each. The buses are 60 feet long — 50 percent longer than a typical 40-foot bus, and can seat 59 riders and stand another 58. Standard, 40-foot buses seat 35 and can stand another 37.

A turntable-like articulated joint in the middle allows the bus to swivel, while handling turns with ease, NICE officials said. And a pair of seats at the rotating joint location tend to be popular with kids, Setzer said. The rear of the buses is slightly elevated, in part to accommodate the bus engine. NICE bus operators will be trained in the vehicles in the

coming weeks at the Nassau Coliseum parking lot.

Other improvements on the natural-gas-powered buses include 24 USB charging ports below seats and free Wi-Fi connectivity.

Livio "Tony" Rosario, a member of Nassau's Bus Transit Committee, which governs NICE, and a former MTA bus driver, commended NICE for working to make improvements despite their ongoing financial problems. NICE officials have said a reduction in funding from the county necessitated the \$6.8 million in service cuts approved by the committee Thursday.