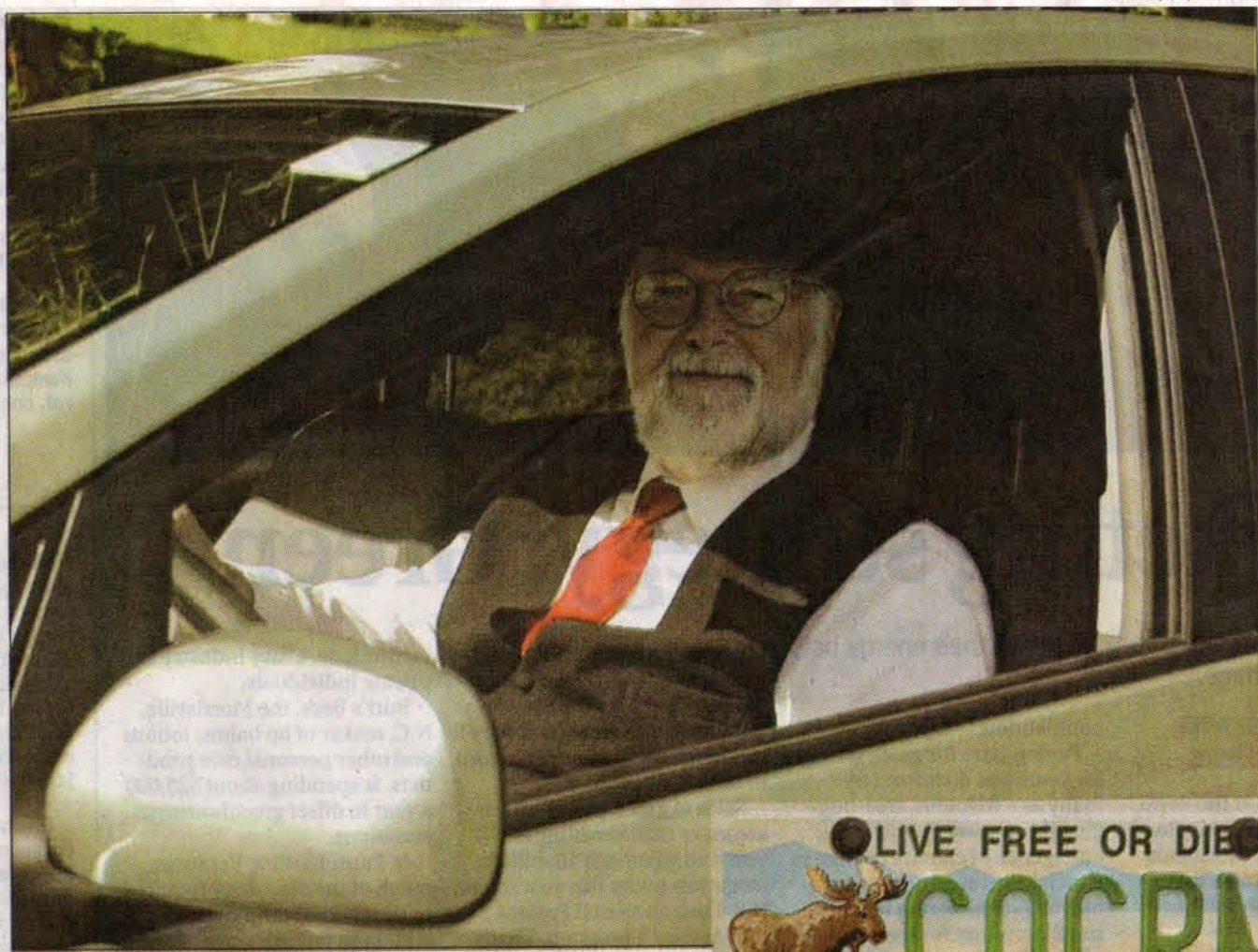


MONDAY'S BUSINESS



JIM DEVINE PHOTOS

Frank Flanagan's Go Green Airport Shuttle of Pelham offers low-emission Toyota Hybrid vehicles as a transport option for travelers to area airports, and both Go Green vehicles carry conservation license plates.



A cleaner way to go

◆ **Shuttle service touts green:** Carbon-conscious travelers can make it to the airport under a smaller cloud of emissions.

By **BENJAMIN KEPPLER**
New Hampshire Union Leader

For the environmentally friendly traveler, flying off to some faraway destination doesn't just come with a price tag in dollars and cents. It also means being responsible for the carbon-dioxide emissions, believed to contribute to global warming, that one's plane trip creates.

Per passenger, a round-trip flight between Manchester and Orlando results in an extra half ton of CO2 going into the atmosphere — about the same amount of CO2 released through driving a Ford Taurus for six weeks, according to the eco-site terrapass.com. But although you might have to fly, there's nothing keeping you from reducing the impact of how you get to the airport.

In Pelham, one local businessman has started an airport shuttle venture based on that very concept. Go Green Airport Shuttle's Toyota Prius hybrids provide door-to-door shuttle service to both Boston Logan International Airport and Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. The company pledges top-level, livery-car-like service — all while producing about a third of the CO2 typical drivers create by driving themselves.

"They like the idea that they are doing something to help with the carbon-dioxide problem," said Frank Flanagan, the company's owner, of his passengers. "To be honest, we feel pretty good about it, too."

Carving a niche

Flanagan, 63, runs the company along with his son, Frank Flanagan III, and their wives, Judith and Pam. He comes to the job after a long career in the computer industry and several years spent in a rather busy "retirement." Since he retired from his managerial job at 57, Flanagan has worked as a poker dealer, a stock day-trader, a school bus driver, an excavator operator — and an airport driver.

It was in that line of work that he noticed a hybrid car from PlanetTran LLC in Logan's livery parking area. Flanagan noted how successful PlanetTran has been in the field. The company started with a single car some years ago; it now has a fleet of the cars not only in Boston, but also in San Francisco.

"My son and I got to thinking about this," Flanagan recalled. "I had the resources to start something like this, and he had the gumption. This guy in Boston has proven it's a doable thing, and we could carve out a niche up here."

Plus, the initial risks to starting up were lower than one might expect. If things didn't work out, Flanagan figured he would still have their initial Prius, which he could sell for a good portion of its initial value. (The Prius was made the car of choice for Go Green not only for its environmental record, but also because of its capacity for

luggage in the trunk).

Market pricing

To attract customers, Go Green has embarked on what Flanagan described as an aggressively cheap pricing scheme.

Service between Pelham and Manchester or Logan is \$52 each way for one to four people; and varies by town. For example, transport between Hollis, N.H., and Logan is \$108 each way, while service between Hollis and Manchester is \$52.

That's roughly comparable to, and in some cases cheaper than, other private services out there. A private van booked from Salem-based Flight Line Inc., going between Hollis and Manchester's airport is \$74 each way for up to three people. Taking a shared van from Flight Line costs \$41 each way. A private van from Hollis to Logan is \$97 each way, while a shared van costs \$74, according to Flight Line's Web site.

While shared vans may sometimes be cheaper, they also include stops — potentially adding more time onto a traveler's journey. And those prices don't include added fees or fuel surcharges, which Flanagan said were common on many carriers.

Go Green, however, doesn't charge those, mostly because of lower overhead costs. The company's primary expenses are the cars and their insurance. The Toyota Prius cars don't cost much to run — their 11-gallon tanks cover about 600 miles of driving — and Go Green is run from Flanagan's house, keeping costs at a minimum.

"The operating costs of these cars are phenom-

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Go Green

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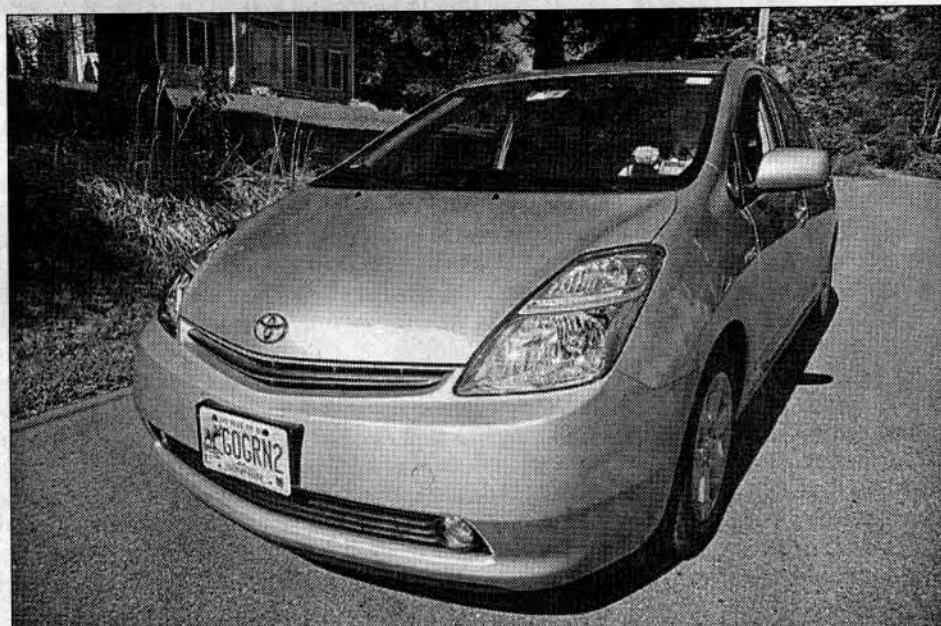
enally low," Flanagan said. "My infrastructure is incredibly inexpensive; I have no big building to rent, no office to rent."

Still, Flanagan has found that for many of his customers, particularly his corporate clients, the cost is less a concern than not having to worry about the job being done right.

So, Go Green caters to those clients to give them the service they expect. That goes from the little things — like dressing formal while driving — to the larger customer-service picture.

"We always try to get a customer's cell phone. We know the air transportation business

Go Green uses two Toyota Prius Hybrids to offer private traveling options to the airport.



JIM DEVINE

is in chaos right now," Flanagan said. "We don't abandon a customer (under) any circumstances. If we can't contact a customer, we keep trying until we can."

Since Go Green is still a small company — its fleet in total has two Priuses, and a rarely-used Chevy Equinox, used only in emergencies — it is essential for customers to make reservations.

To be sure, Flanagan realizes

there will be challenges ahead as he grows his business.

"I think the biggest challenge we have got is developing a steady customer base who deliver a steady stream of revenue, without it becoming a feast or famine type of thing," Flanagan said.

Along those lines, he plans to cater both to business and leisure travelers, who often travel at different times during the week.

So far, though, Go Green's performance has outpaced Flanagan's expectations, and the company just hired its first outside driver.

"It's gone unbelievably well

so far. I really thought long and hard about buying the second car because you have to buy these cars ahead of need," Flanagan said.

He had originally anticipated buying a second Prius in 2008, but bought one in August — a couple of weeks after Go Green started up in July. He hopes to soon buy a hybrid minivan when those become available early next year — although it may be customer demand will force his hand sooner.

"I could justify buying a third car right now," Flanagan said.

On the Net:
www.gogreenairportshuttle.com