

High in the Andes, Cable Cars Help Ease Traffic Congestion



La Paz, October 23 (RHC-NNN) -- To overcome the acute road traffic congestion in this mountainous Andean nation, the Bolivian government is taking to the skies. It is building a series of cable car systems that will provide inexpensive transportation and supplement the service currently being provided by 40,000 minibuses.

La Paz was built by Spanish conquistadors along narrow winding roads that defy attempts to widen them to accommodate an increasing number of commuters.

A subway system has been ruled out because the landscape is too steep. So, the alternative is a cable car system, similar to those found in other South American cities of Medellín, Colombia; Caracas, Venezuela; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The first line, connecting downtown La Paz to the mountaintop city of El Alto, began operating in May. The trip costs about 40 cents and takes 10 minutes — compared with 35 cents and a half-hour by minibus.

A second line was recently inaugurated by President Evo Morales, who was re-elected by a landslide earlier this month.

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