

**V**ic Parra and the staff of the United Motorcoach Association received numerous compliments on their recent Motorcoach Expo in San Francisco. Long regarded as the most important trade show in the United States for big coaches, the event seemed to surpass itself this time.

Motorcoach Expo this year was held at the Moscone Center in downtown San Francisco from January 16-20, 2008. An interesting side note is that our buses were in the north exhibit hall of Moscone while the popular Macworld show occupied the south and west Moscone halls. Several of us Apple people took advantage of the proximity to visit the Mac show prior to the opening of the Motorcoach Expo. The big news on that side of the street was the new super-thin Mac laptop.

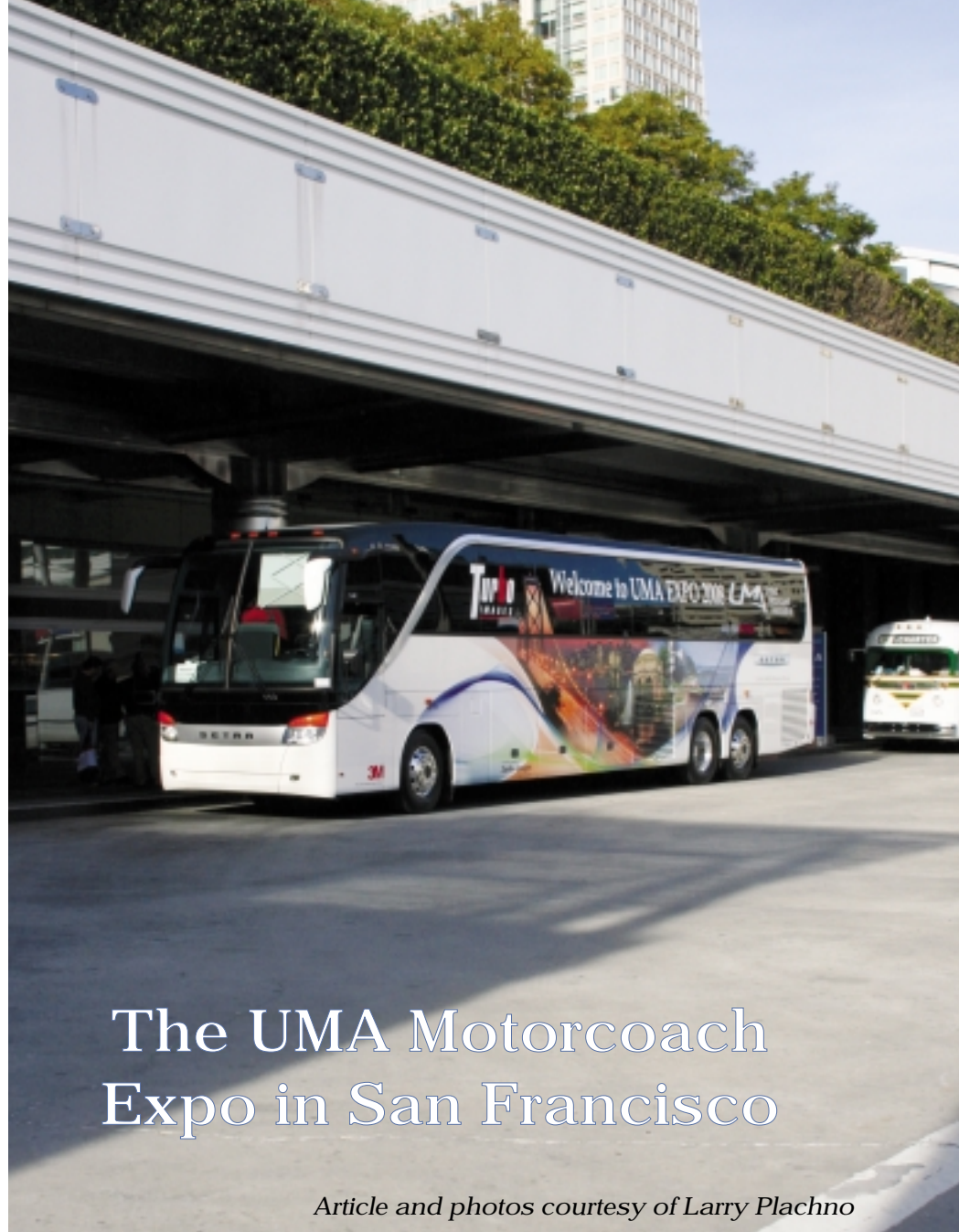
In spite of the Motorcoach Expo's location at the western end of the continental states, the attendance was great, the exhibits superb, and new developments and technology were beyond belief. Once again our mantra was "So many buses, so little time" as we found more news and things going on than we could possibly cover. Following are some of the highlights of the show.

**Daimler Buses North America** had three buses on display in their booth area. Included was a new S 417 Setra lettered for ProTran and a new S 417 Setra with for Arrow Stage Lines graphics. The third bus was a new Sprinter lettered for Amador Stage Lines. The Setra people pointed out that San Francisco is a special location for them since 12 Setra customers are headquartered in and around San Francisco with a total fleet of more than 80 Setra coaches.

It was noteworthy that both of the Setra coaches on display had the new EPA 2007 Detroit Diesel Series 60 engines as well as the automated 12-speed ZF AS Tronic transmissions. In 2008, Setra became the fourth integral intercity coach manufacturer to offer the ZF AS Tronic transmission on the American market. Deliveries of coaches with the AS Tronic transmission started in the fourth quarter and were relatively high. Actually, Setra sales in 2007 were reported as setting a new high record.

One of the two S 417 coaches on display was going to ProTran, a full-service charter and tour company based in Fort Washington, Maryland. Noteworthy special features of this coach were leather Ambiente seating, a full galley with wood veneer and a refrigerator, and satellite television. Additional features, included a rear window, Blaupunkt GPS satellite navigation, a tire monitoring system, a scenic view camera and four 19-inch monitors.

The second S 417 was going to Arrow Stage Lines of Omaha, Nebraska. This coach



## The UMA Motorcoach Expo in San Francisco

*Article and photos courtesy of Larry Plachno*

This new Setra S 417 demo coach was lettered with a welcome to the UMA Expo in San Francisco. It was photographed in front of Moscone Center's north exhibit hall, site of the UMA Motorcoach Expo. Visible to the rear is the TDH4512 operated by the Pacific Bus Museum in tourist service in the Niles section of Fremont, California.

had the optional TopSky® glass roof, a full galley in the rear, a Blaupunkt 10-disc CD changer and Blaupunkt multi-channel system, a Garmin GPS, a scenic view camera, a card table, airline style tray tables, and a lap-top connection. Additional safety features of the coach were a tire monitoring system and a fire suppression system.

Painted for Amador Stage Lines in Sacramento, California, the Sprinter was the same or similar to the one exhibited at the recent BusCon show in Chicago. It was the Tour and Charter model with a green and white exterior lettered for Amador Stage Lines. It had an upgraded interior including DVD monitors.

Four different coaches were on display at the Prevost exhibit booth. In front was an X3-45, the current version of the traditional LeMirage model. Behind it was an H3-45 with a converted interior by Amadas Coach. It seated 24 passengers in a mid-galley configuration with a couch, dinette and chairs in the front lounge and couches in a U-design at the rear. Across at the back of the area was an H3-45 with a seated passenger configuration showing off one of the new interior designs. The fourth coach was an H3-45 with a wheelchair lift and equipped with the new Volvo D13 engine.

Prevost introduced an amazing number of innovations and programs at this show; most of which were on display in the booth





On display in the Prevost area was this Volvo D13 engine. It is optionally available in Prevost coaches in 2008 and will be supported by Prevost Service Centers as well as Volvo Service Providers.



To assist customers in picking seat covers and matching interior decor materials, Prevost now offers the H-Series Collection. Several colors and finishes are available in three different trim levels.



Prevost's new steering wheel now incorporates buttons for the cruise control, shifting, engine brake, horn and electric sun visor. Groups of buttons are located on each side of the wheel just below the center.



This new H3-45 was one of four different new coaches on display in the Prevost booth area. It is powered by the new Volvo D13 engine and has a wheelchair lift just forward of the rear wheels.

area. I owe a debt of thanks to the Prevost staff, and particularly Michael Power, who

painstakingly took the time to provide us with information and answer questions.

One of the highlights of this show were historical buses provided by the Pacific Bus Museum. On display on the show floor was this PD4106 in Greyhound livery while immediately to the rear was a TDM4512 lettered for Peerless Stages. A TDH4512 was out in front of the convention hall offering free rides.



On display was one of the new Volvo D13 engines offered on Prevost coaches in 2008. This 13-liter, 435-horsepower engine uses EGR technology with a particulate filter. It can be mated with a lower rear end for greater fuel economy, and the matching Volvo I-shift automatic stick shift transmission (already in use in Volvo trucks) will soon be available in Prevost coaches. The Volvo D13 will be supported and serviced by Prevost Service Centers as well as Volvo Service Providers. Prevost continues their vertical installation of the particulate filter.

Prevost customers who specify the D13 engine will receive the new Prevost Liaison Sentry Package for two years. It monitors driver and vehicle performance and can run on any computer. The Liaison system uses wireless technology and the Internet to connect fleet operators with coaches and drivers any time, anywhere. The system provides coach location plus an extremely wide range of operational, performance and fuel data to the Prevost Action Service System (PASS), Prevost's round-the-clock 24/7 road-



Tiffany Coachworks from Corona, California displayed this large and impressive cutaway built on an F650 chassis. It had a limousine interior and seamless windows.



Although Wells Fargo today is best known for financial services, they displayed this stagecoach to remind attendees of their historical transportation background.

side assistance service, or directly to the fleet owner's office, PDA, or electronic device.

Picking attractive seat covers with harmonious and matching interior materials and appointments just became easier with the new H-Series Collection. Prevost designers have put together appropriate matching sets in three different trim levels. The Essential Line centers around exclusive Prevost fabrics while the Exclusive Line features leathers, synthetic suedes and decorative piping. Both of these lines are available in three different colorways called "Spicy," "Peaceful," and "Comforting." The Ultimate Line provides the finest materials including perforated leathers, aluminum finishes and real wood appointments in four decor choices: Boston, Wall Street, Dallas and Harvard.

Another interesting Prevost innovation is a new steering wheel that incorporates several controls. Buttons for the cruise control, shifting, engine brake, pneumatic or

electric horn, and electric sun visor are now incorporated right into the steering wheel. This new steering wheel can also be specified in three different trim versions: the standard urethane, optional leather or wood/leather.

Noteworthy also is the fact that Prevost is now offering a new Tire Pressure Monitoring System. The new system is manufactured by BERU, a German company and is currently used on race cars and luxury autos. Like other systems, the BERU Tire Pressure Monitoring System watches both tire pressure and temperature. Major advantages include being fully self-contained and offering more frequent readings than most other systems.

This was the second year for **Trident Industries** at the UMA Motorcoach Expo. Trident is marketing the Temsa TS-35 [see the November, 2007 NATIONAL BUS TRADER] on the U.S. market and had a Temsa TS-35 on display. What makes the TS-35 unique is

that it is the only 35 feet long but offers integral design and much the same features as the big charter and tour coaches.

The coach is currently going through Altoona testing and the first deliveries are expected to start in April of 2008. Coaches sold in the United States will be driven from the Temsa plant in Turkey to Belgium where they will be put on a boat. They will arrive in the U.S. in Brunswick, Georgia and then go to the Trident facility near Atlanta for customer pre-delivery inspection.

In late 2007, coinciding with the BusCon show in Chicago, the TS-35 was improved with a fifth step in the stepwell as well as senior-friendly hand rails. Other updates included an ISRI driver's seat, an improved instrument panel and a redesigned windshield. Both REI or Blaupunkt audio/video systems are offered and a tour guide seat is optional.

During the show, a brochure was offered providing information on the other Temsa models. Attendees were given a ballot to vote on other Temsa coaches they would like to see available in the United States.

**Built by Temsa, the 35-foot TS-35 is being offered in the United States by Trident Industries. What makes this coach interesting is that its integral construction provides longevity and big coach amenities and features in a shorter length. Deliveries are expected to start in April of 2008.**



Much of the excitement at the **Motor Coach Industries** display centered around the company's 75th Anniversary. Activities included awards for MCI staff as well as a drawing for gifts for MCI customers. Several attendees made use of the MCI Coach Driving Simulator located in the MCI booth. Three coaches were on display: a J4500LX going to Arrow Stage Lines, a "shorty" 40-foot D4005, and an appropriately-named J4500 Anniversary Edition.

Powered by a CAT engine and a ZF AS Tronic transmission, the J4500LX represents MCI's "off-the-floor" luxury coach concept. It offers 43 brown leather seats, burl wood trim, a galley, conference areas and satellite television on full-size flat-screen monitors





Recently updated, MCI's D4005 offers an interesting combination of tried-and-true technology with a modernized appearance. With a length of 40 feet, the coach seats 43 passengers and is ideal for mid-size groups.



On display in the MCI area was this J4500 LX lettered for Arrow Stage Lines. The luxury interior provides seating for 43 with brown leather seats with seat back video monitors, burled wood trim, a galley and satellite television.

as well as seat back video monitors. It is also Wi-Fi enabled.

This particular LX is somewhat of a celebrity since it was used in two environmental group tours across the United States. It is also the first coach to be certified as "green," an honor bestowed by the University of Vermont after the coach completed a Udall scholarship tour while running on a biodiesel fuel blend.

The D4005 demo coach is MCI's answer for smaller groups. A length of 40 feet allows seating for 43. Externally, the coach sports the updated curvy front and styling, Alcoa Durabright wheels and LED exterior marker and tail lamps. The dash incorporates a new speedometer as well as the Smart Wave tire-pressure monitoring sys-

tem. Inside, the cabin features plush burgundy leather Amaya Brazil seats and an optional Blaupunkt Pro-line audio system with four 10.4-inch video monitors. The optional Wi-Fi Internet system and 110-volt outlets make the coach very practical for business travelers.

A second J4500 on display represented MCI's Anniversary Edition, a Fast-Track model that will be available for purchase from stock in 2008. It is powered by a low-emissions Cummins ISM engine connected to a ZF AS Tronic 12-speed transmission. Fifty-passenger seating on custom Amaya Torino VIP seats offers extra legroom along with luxury. Several entertainment features are included such as an enhanced Blaupunkt Pro-line system with audiophile-level tweeters and subwoofers; individual

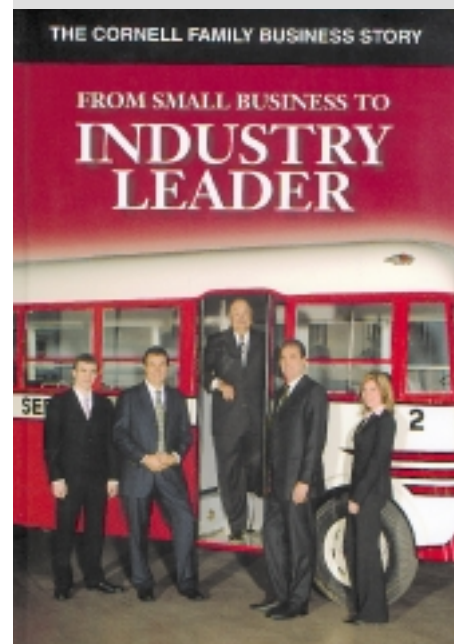
seat audio with XM radio and iPod compatibility plus 15-inch LCD monitors. In addition, the Anniversary Edition sports Wi-Fi-enabled Internet, satellite TV, a Saucun vehicle tracking system with remote SmarTire® diagnostics, a two-view back-up camera and 110-volt outlets throughout the cabin.

This year's theme at the **ABC Companies'** display was "008 - License to Thrill." In addition to appropriate graphics on the displayed coaches, ABC gave away CDs with James Bond themes. One of the major events at the ABC display area, and the entire UMA Expo, was the introduction of the new ABC book. Titled *From Small Business to Industry Leader*, the book tells the story behind how a small boy's fascination with buses spawned a company that grew to being a leader in the bus

Again making its appearance at the UMA show in San Francisco was MCI's driving simulator. Attendees were given the opportunity to show their bus handling skills in a computer-controlled environment. The computer can simulate numerous traffic situations and mechanical malfunctions to test the driver's reaction.



ABC Companies introduced their new book at this show. ABC founder Clancy Cornell was on hand to autograph copies.





The newest model offered by ABC Companies is the Van Hool TD925 double-deck coach. With a seating capacity of 83, it provides an economical and "green" solution to moving larger groups. Initial sales have exceeded expectations.



Built on a Freightliner chassis, ABC's new 3035RE offers big coach styling and features an economical 35-foot body-on-chassis bus. It is built in Michigan by Thor Industries for ABC and is at the top of its class in quality and amenities.

industry. ABC founder Clancy Cornell and the family were on hand to distribute and autograph the book.

Four buses were on display in the ABC booth. The tallest was obviously the new Van Hool TD925 double-deck coach. The most popular was the Van Hool C2045, this one an "EL" model with the enhanced features and a rear wheelchair lift. The top-of-the-line was the Van Hool T2145 45-foot luxury touring coach. The smallest was the new ABC 3035RE 35-foot bus built on a Freightliner Chassis.

Sales of the new TD925 double-deck coach have exceeded expectations. Seating 83 passengers, the coach maintains 2007 emission standards and offers a simple ramp

for ADA compliance. With its high capacity, the TD925 provides a "green" solution to moving larger groups. It will soon be available with a window in the roof to enhance passenger viewing.

The new ABC 3035RE was recently introduced at the BusCon show in Chicago in late 2007. Built on a special Freightliner chassis, it offers a rear engine and big coach styling in a 35-foot length for smaller groups. Standard passenger capacity is 39 with a restroom and the 3035RE offers a "big coach" underfloor luggage bay.

A major news item at ABC is the recent acquisition of Muncie-Baker Transit Supply. These well-respected companies have a long history of providing quality parts in

the transit field. When combined with ABC Parts Source, it expands ABC's parts coverage to virtually every replacement part brand for all types of coaches and transit vehicles.

A new exhibitor at this show was **LDV, Inc.** of Burlington, Wisconsin. They displayed a used Prevost H3-45 converted with an executive interior. The interior featured chairs, couches and dinettes finished in leather with some wood trim. LDV has prior experience with truck and other types of special interiors and is now offering executive interiors in used conversions. Considering the lack of conversion firms in the Midwest doing service, they may also offer service on converted coaches.

Another new advertiser at this show was **Caio North America, LLC.** from Georgia. Caio Induscar in Sao Paulo, Brazil has reportedly grown to be the largest producer of buses in the Western Hemisphere. This family-owned business has much of their past experience in the area of transit buses. In addition to manufacturing, the family also operates a large fleet of more than 4,500 transit buses.

On display was their G3400 model, a two-axle coach that is 36 feet and 7 inches long, 102 inches wide and carries 38 passengers with a restroom. It is powered by a Cummins 280 hp ISB engine and has a 6-speed Allison B300 transmission. Features include an independent front suspension with disc brakes, a 23,000-pound rear axle with drum brakes, a 24-volt electrical system and Carrier 353 rooftop air conditioning. According to a company representative, construction is sled integral using a modified Freightliner custom chassis.

Caio is currently establishing a dealer network in the United States. They already have five dealers on the East Coast and are looking for dealers in other states. In addition,

An interesting new exhibitor at this UMA Expo is Caio North America. They showed their G3400 model built by Caio Induscar in Brazil. With a length of 36 feet and seven inches, it provides seating for 38 passengers plus a restroom.







Located in the Prevost area was this H3-45 converted by Amadas Coach with an executive interior. A mid-galley and restroom floor plan allows seating for 24 passengers with a couch, dinette and chairs at the front and a U-shaped lounge at the rear.



LDV, Inc. of Burlington, Wisconsin displayed this executive conversion in a used H3-45 shell. With prior experience in other types of interiors, LDV is now offering executive interiors in used shells to provide an attractive coach at reasonable prices.

they are already making progress on parts support, training, service as well as warranty and sales.

The people from **Complete Coach Works** and **Blue Bird Coachworks** also had a booth. On display was an MCI 102DL3 with a lift. CCW recently acquired both the Wanderlodge and the large commercial bus segment of Blue Bird operations. Both of these remain in Fort Valley, Georgia and there is a new Wonderlodge model being introduced. Steve Richardson, who recently joined the Blue Bird sales team, was on hand to answer questions. NATIONAL BUS TRADER is planning to provide more details on this acquisition and current developments in a future issue.

**Glaval Bus** from Elkhart, Indiana, a division of Forest River, offers several mid-size buses appropriate for charter and tour service. They displayed their Synergy model which is very appropriate for this market. Built on a Freightliner raised rail chassis, the Synergy offers "big coach" flat front styling and passenger amenities. The Synergy has 280 cubic feet of underfloor luggage and cargo space, and has an impressive turning radius to get into spaces where other buses will not fit. A wide range of options are available including audio and video entertainment systems and a rear lounge option.

Another previous exhibitor at the UMA Expo was **Stallion Bus Industries, LLC**. They had two buses on display. The shorter one was a Sunliner SLC-830, a 29-foot, two-axle bus that can seat 30 passengers plus a tour guide. It is built on a Freightliner chassis. The bus on display was a prototype but it was expected that deliveries would start in the spring.

The longer coach on display was a Sunliner SLC-936LW. This two-axle bus was 35 feet long and was equipped with a wheel-

chair lift. It had an enhanced luggage capacity with full pass-through luggage compartments. A newer version soon to be delivered will have disc brakes. Both Stallion buses have flat fronts, seamless windows, and numerous passenger amenities like the big coaches.

Another company that had exhibited previously was **Bus & Coach International (BCI)** from Jennings, Kansas. They had two buses on display. One was their VIP model with a length of 45 feet and the other was a new, 35-foot model with two axles. Our notes indicate that these buses are built in China from Australian steel. They are flat front design with underfloor luggage compartments and many big coach amenities. BCI buses use ZF components a great deal and many of the parts can be locally sourced.

**Tiffany Coachworks** from Corona, California was a new exhibitor at this show. They had two fairly large and impressive cutaway buses on display with seamless windows and other nice features. The Opus Magna model on an F650 chassis was basically built for shuttle service but had an entertainment system with TV monitors. The Opus Luxus model had a limousine interior and featured a Bode plug door.

**El Dorado/National** had a cutaway bus on display. It was built on a C5500 chassis and was powered by a Duramax diesel. **Turtle Top** from Indiana had their Odyssey XL model cutaway on display. The gray external paint scheme and seamless windows gave it a professional appearance. **Krystal Enterprises** of Brea, California had two buses on display. The larger was a Krystal 38 Limo Bus painted black. It was on an

Built on a Freightliner raised rail chassis, the Synergy model is very appropriate for this market. It offers flat front styling, passenger amenities and underfloor luggage compartments like the big coaches. It is built by Glaval Bus from Elkhart, Indiana.



International chassis and had attractive seamless windows. The smaller bus, a Krystal 35, was also on an International chassis and was painted white.

In addition to the dealers and manufacturers, there were several other coaches on the show floor for other purposes. **ARI-Hetra** was using a Van Hool T2140 to demonstrate its above ground lift. **Seafac** also had a lift on the show floor. They had borrowed an MCI J4500 from Transportation Service of Modesto, California to demonstrate their product. **REI**, the radio people, had two different coaches in their booth area. One was a Van Hool C2045L while the other was an MCI E4500. Perhaps the most unusual vehicle on the show floor was a real antique wooden stagecoach displayed in the **Wells Fargo** booth.

This show also had two historical buses on display provided by the **Pacific Bus Museum**. One was a PD4106 in Greyhound livery while the second as an "old look" GM transit TDM4512 in the bright red and yellow colors of Peerless Stages. In addition, a TDH4512 belonging to the Pacific Bus Museum and regularly operated in the Niles district of Fremont, California, was out in front of Moscone Center offering free rides.

While time does not permit stopping in all of the booths on the show floor, we did make a point to take in the news conference

A delightful feature at this UMA Expo was an opportunity to ride in a historical bus. The Pacific Bus Museum offered short rides in this 1958 TDH4512 from the front of the convention center. Originally purchased by the Sacramento Transit Authority, the bus was acquired by the Pacific Bus Museum, restored in early 2006, and is now operating a vintage bus providing service between the historical Niles Canyon Railway and downtown Niles in Fremont, California.



at the Green Operator's Council booth. This newly-formed group of independent motorcoach business owners is not a new bus association. They have joined together to create a national campaign to promote the environmental benefits of motorcoach travel and to generate industry-wide gains in ridership, especially targeting those who do not presently use motorcoaches.

In 2009, the UMA Motorcoach Expo will move across to the other side of the United

States. It is scheduled for January 21-25 in Orlando, Florida. Details will be provided as we receive them. □

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**9698 W. Judson Road  
Polo, Illinois 61064  
(815) 946-2341  
[www.busmag.com](http://www.busmag.com)**

