

National Bus Trader

The Magazine of Bus Equipment for the United States and Canada

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April, 2022

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Reviewing UMA Expo 202216
For those who missed attending UMA Expo in Long Beach, here is a review of the day-to-day activities and many of the buses on display as reported by the exhibitors and manufacturers.



Trailways Transportation Readies a New Path for 2022 and Beyond (by Pat Plodzeen)24
Scheduled just prior to the ABA Marketplace in Grapevine, Texas, Trailways operators held their annual event that included meetings, a look at new programs plus supplier displays and exhibits.



Insurance and the Bus Industry (by Dave Millhouser)28
When times get tough, it is always a good idea to stay close to your insurance company and develop a partnership. Here are several thoughts and ideas on how you can accomplish this.



Inviting Bus Tours (by Larry Plachno)30
Following up on requests from readers, here is a basic guide on bus tours and how to invite them to your front door to spend money.

Cover Photo

Prevost and Lancer Insurance Company sponsored the International Driver Competition on day three of the UMA Expo in Long Beach, California. One of the competing drivers is going through the course driving a Prevost H3-45 coach. More details on the event can be found in an article starting on page 16. UMA

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Equipment News

FlixBus Supports Ukraine

FlixBus has been operating in Ukraine since 2019, serving 29 Ukrainian and 70 international destinations in eight countries. The Ukraine FlixBus, located in Kyiv and Kharkiv, count 32 employees who FlixBus is in continuous close contact with, helping them and their close ones in any way possible.

FlixBus is monitoring the situation in Ukraine and on the Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Romanian borders with the utmost care. Since February 25, FlixBus has already been offering additional connections from the Polish-Ukrainian border to provide people with even more travel options. The outreach team is on the ground to help people arriving from Ukraine in Przemyśl, Poland, before continuing on. FlixBus is also working closely with the relevant authorities. Upon request, FlixBus has also been organizing individual bus trips.

Starting from March 3, FlixBus also transported goods and relief supplies to the people in need. Their buses now also bring water and food to and, above all, across the border into Ukraine to supply those who have been waiting there for days. Furthermore, on March 9, Axel Springer and FlixBus

collaborated for a donation collection in Berlin. Twenty-five tons were compiled by the population and companies such as ALDI, Fressnapf, P&G. The supplies were transported to Przemyśl, close to the Ukrainian-Polish border on March 10 with a truck and a FlixBus. The bus returned on March 11 with 50 people – among them women, children and elderly who were taken to Leipzig and Berlin. The relief supplies, including food and bandages, reached the Caritas camp in Lviv on March 12.

FlixBus offers free rides for refugees from Suceava, Tulcea, Przemyśl and Rzeszów. One thousand free rides were collected within the first 15 hours through an employee initiative and doubled by the FlixBus management. This corresponds to around 40 buses. Now the number has already multiplied. The situation is being closely monitored and, if necessary, the number of tickets and journeys will be increased.

As of February 25, the Czech Bus company and FlixBus Partner “Umbrella Coach & Buses” has been working extremely hard to help Ukraine refugees by independently providing transportation from/to the Polish-Ukrainian and Slovakian-Ukrainian border. Pavel Steiner’s team is doing their utmost to

support working closely together with the international Red Cross and the Czech consulate to coordinate onwards transport and allocation of refugees in buses. Steiner has called for donations of relief supplies via social media and is collecting them centrally at its headquarters in Prague. In addition to these private donations, he also ensures necessities such as water, blankets and hygiene products are available where needed, which he provides at his own cost. FlixBus is very proud of the initiative taken by its longtime bus partner.

On March 4 and 5, upon the request of the United Nations, FlixBus together with its bus partners has provided humanitarian transport support for 500 children and their minders. The groups of children were brought to the Polish-Ukrainian border from orphanages located in high-risk areas in Ukraine, including Kharkiv and Odessa. In total, 12 FlixBus buses were provided to transport them from Dorohusk further to Poland. All of them are now in a safe place.

On March 9, a chartered Romanian plane with women and children from Ukraine arrived at the Munich airport. They were welcomed by FlixBus employees who provided them with food and drinks sponsored by EDEKA, as well as toys and soap bubble machines to give a warm welcome to the children. After being registered with authorities, they were transported to a temporary shelter by the State of Bavaria in Munich using FlixBuses of bus partner Grüner. Radio Gong ensured that everyone had a place to stay in the evening.

Spring Fling at the Museum in Hershey

This year’s Museum of Bus Transportation’s Spring Fling will be June 3 and 4 in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The theme for this year, *The Gang is All Here, A Bus Family Reunion*, will be very similar to pre-pandemic events, but will bring back some aspects that were changed and improved during last year’s successful event.

More than 400 bus enthusiasts and industry veterans gathered at last year’s Fling, the first post-covid bus gathering. Prior to the pandemic, attendance regularly topped 500. The hope is to handily surpass that in 2022, along with dozens of visiting buses to complement the museum’s historic fleet which has now grown to 53.

A Friday evening town meeting, with a State of the Museum presentation and the

People as well as governments will often ignore bus operators until we find out how valuable they are in an emergency. A case in point is that FlixBus has been working hard to help people in Ukraine by bringing in supplies, bringing out people and offering free transportation. This photo was taken in early March when FlixBus brought 500 children and their minders from orphanages in high-risk areas of Ukraine to the Polish border.





The traditional gathering of buses and bus people called the Spring Fling will take place on June 3 and 4, 2022. The location will be at the museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania and the theme this year is "The Gang is All Here, A Bus Family Reunion." In addition to museum and visiting buses on display, the event will include a flea market, a bus parade and several buses used recently in movies.

opportunity to ask questions along with recognition of the volunteers and supporters, will be followed by live entertainment. Saturday will include awards for a variety of categories of visiting buses, a parade of winning coaches, a big flea market and the chance to show off the museum's expanded fleet.

All signs point to a big turnout, and it appears that most of the Spring Fling discounted room block in adjacent hotels is spoken for, so save the date and make plans now to attend.

As a bonus, Spring Fling this year is your chance to mingle with some movie stars. Last year a number of the buses were in movies and TV productions. In fact, the Fullington Yellow Coach was in two (*The Walton's Homecoming* and *Heroes' Honey-moon*). While reluctant to sign autographs, they love being in photos and selfies – along with the original star, the Gump Bus.

As specific information on registration and the agenda firm up, it will be posted on www.buseum.org.

SEPTA Awards NFI a Contract for Up to 340 Hybrid Electric Buses

NFI Group Inc. (NFI), a leading independent bus and coach manufacturer and a leader in electric mass mobility solutions, recently announced that its subsidiary New Flyer of America Inc. (New Flyer) has received a new contract from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) for a firm order of 220 Xcelsior® 40-foot, heavy-duty, hybrid-electric transit buses. The order includes options to purchase up to 120 additional

Xcelsior 40-foot, hybrid-electric buses under a five-year contract.

SEPTA is America's sixth-largest transit agency, delivering 300 million annual rides across five counties surrounding Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"NFI has delivered over 2,070 buses to SEPTA since 1997, and today we continue to power the transition to sustainable mobility with our low-emission, quiet, efficient and fully accessible hybrid-electric buses," said Chris Stoddart, president, North American Bus and Coach. "With best-in-class features on board, including enhanced batteries and regenerative braking, our hybrid-electric buses are a proven transition strategy to zero-emission mobility through high operational performance, smooth acceleration, fuel savings and improved air quality."

The hybrid-electric buses feature BAE's HDS200 hybrid drive propulsion, including the latest MAPS2 accessory power system which will upgrade SEPTA's current fleet with engine-off features such as stop/start, arrive and go and onboard "Green Zone" technology, which enables the bus to switch to battery-electric power in specified zones. Together, these features provide emission and noise reduction in the community. The buses also advance SEPTA's Bus Revolution program, a key element of SEPTA Forward, its strategic plan to reshape bus transportation to achieve better connectivity and operational efficiency, while ensuring a resilient, prosperous and equitable community in the region.

New Flyer's hybrid-electric buses bridge the transition between traditional combustion

engines and zero-emission propulsion, reducing NO_x emissions up to 50 percent and particulate matter levels up to 100 percent while also lowering fuel consumption and maintenance costs. For more information, visit newflyer.com/hybrid.

NFI is a leader in zero-emission mobility with electric vehicles operating (or on order) in more than 80 cities in five countries. NFI offers the widest range of zero-emission battery and fuel cell-electric buses and coaches, and its vehicles have completed more than 50 million EV service miles.

Today, NFI supports growing North American cities and scalable, clean and sustainable mobility solutions through a four-pillar approach that includes buses and coaches, technology, infrastructure and workforce development. NFI also operates the Vehicle Innovation Center (VIC), the first and only innovation lab of its kind dedicated to advancing bus and coach technology and providing workforce development. Since opening late 2017 the VIC has hosted more than 300 interactive events, welcoming 4,000 industry professionals for EV and infrastructure training.

Leveraging 450 years of combined experience, NFI is leading the electrification of mass mobility around the world. With zero-emission buses and coaches, infrastructure and technology, NFI meets today's urban demands for scalable smart mobility solutions. Together, NFI is enabling more livable cities through connected, clean and sustainable transportation.

With 8,000 team members in nine countries, NFI is a leading global bus manufac-

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turner of mass mobility solutions under the brands New Flyer® (heavy-duty transit buses), MCI® (motorcoaches), Alexander Dennis Limited (single- and double-deck buses), Plaxton (motorcoaches), ARBOC® (low-floor cutaway and medium-duty buses) and NFI Parts™. NFI currently offers the widest range of sustainable drive systems available, including zero-emission electric (trolley, battery and fuel cell), natural gas, electric hybrid and clean diesel. In total, NFI supports its installed base of more than 105,000 buses and coaches around the world.

New Flyer is North America's heavy-duty transit bus leader and offers the most advanced product line under the Xcelsior® and Xcelsior CHARGE® brands. It also offers infrastructure development through NFI Infrastructure Solutions™, a service dedicated to providing safe, sustainable and reliable charging and mobility solutions. New Flyer actively supports more than 35,000 heavy-duty transit buses (New Flyer, NABI and Orion) currently in service, of which 8,600 are powered by electric motors and battery propulsion and 1,900 are zero-emission. Further information is available at www.newflyer.com.

ABC Companies Cross-Country Road Trip on Electric Double-Deck

ABC Companies, a leading provider of motorcoach, transit and specialty passenger transport vehicles in the U.S. and Canada, recently announced it has successfully completed a cross-country road trip aboard the

battery-electric Van Hool TDX25E double-decker motorcoach – demonstrating the vehicle range and strength of battery technology to meet the needs of motorcoach customers.

Beginning at ABC's Winter Garden, Florida headquarters and ending at ABC's Costa Mesa, California facility, the route included elevations in excess of 5,000 feet, passage through mountain crossings and a variety of road and climate conditions over a distance of 2,500 miles. This the company's longest EV road test demonstration to date, surpassing a recently conducted 1,700-mile road test through the northern California and Pacific Northwest region. The new EV double-deck model completed the 2,500-mile journey, over six days utilizing public charging stations along the route. Similar to the CX45E vehicles in commercial operation, the TDX25E performed as anticipated, readily meeting projections for range, commercial charging capability, energy recovery and more.

The TDX25E production vehicle used in the demo is the first of its kind in North America, developed with and brought to market by ABC Companies to meet customer demand for higher-capacity, zero emissions transport.

"Our 56-passenger CX45E, introduced in 2020, provided the inspiration and the impetus for fast-track development and deployment of the new double-deck TDX25E," said Roman Cornell, president

and CCO ABC Companies, "Demand for these vehicles is very strong in many markets, and our technology partners, Van Hool and Proterra, have clearly demonstrated their ability to translate those demands into real-world solutions that can quickly integrate into fleets and provide reliable, repeatable results."

The premium TDX25E double-deck passenger coach is the battery-electric version of the eco-friendly, high-capacity TDX series. With premium passenger accommodations and amenities for up to 69 passengers, the TDX25E increases passenger capacity to further reduce traffic congestion and emissions, while providing industry-leading range in an ADA-compliant model designed for exceptional comfort, functionality and style.

The 45-foot coach integrates the industry leading energy dense battery system from Proterra, with a Siemens ELFA II powertrain to provide a quiet, smooth zero-emissions ride and plenty of power for efficient, dependable operation. ABC Companies Fleet Electrification Services captured real time data for the duration of the trip. The new TDX25E averaged an impressive 2.08kWh/mile for highway travel. Capable of a 71 m.p.h. top speed, the TDX averaged 60 m.p.h. during the demonstration. Total projected range per charge averaged 206 miles during the trip, while temperatures varied from 40-80 degrees Fahrenheit. The charging rate of up to 147 kWh enabled relatively short charging times, averaging just 3.5 hours. With a total storage capacity of 676 kWh, the coach never fell below eight percent state of charge during the trip.

"Response to our electrified vehicle lineup has been quite enthusiastic," said Thom Peebles, vice president marketing ABC Companies. "Customers are very impressed with the ride quality, amenities and range of these vehicles, and as organizations commit to reducing their carbon footprint, high passenger capacity EV models like the TDX25E and CX45E are becoming an increasingly important option for fleet operators." Empire Coach Line provided the driver for the TDX25E cross-country demonstration. "Our drivers and staff have been amazed by the performance, comfort and smooth, quiet ride of these coaches, while being able to quickly acclimate to operating these vehicles. From the simple charging process to the familiar driver controls and support ABC offers, integrating these electric vehicles has been much smoother than we thought possible," stated Eddie Serrano, vice president and general manager – Empire Coach Line.

ABC's holistic approach to fleet electrification encompasses key aspects of exist-

ABC Companies proved that driving cross-country in an electric bus is not as difficult as you might think. They took a TDX25E battery-electric, double-deck Van Hool coach and drove it from the ABC facility in Winter Garden, Florida to the ABC facility in Costa Mesa, California. The 2,500-mile journey took six days and used public charging stations along the route.



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ing fleet management and operations to give owners a clear vision within their operations. Fleet integration, passenger capacity needs, available charging windows, EV infrastructure and more help ABC understand and guide owners to EV options that offer a right-fit for existing and future fleet operation. "We're having a great success with our approach to EV integration with public and private operators," said Cornell. He continued, "By understanding operational needs right now, but just as importantly future needs, we can help fleet owners optimize their EV investment, see immediate benefits in terms of EV equipment management and cost of operation and avoid unpredictable outlays. Road tests such as the recently completed 1,700- and 2,500-mile demonstrations, are an integral part of ABC's fleet electrification services for commercial passenger transport. These tests generate critical data that enable continuous program development and optimization for ABC Companies and its technology partners. Real time monitoring and data collection offers insights to improve energy consumption. Moreover, monitoring driver behavior and extensive use of the public charging ecosystem demonstrated during this test can help guide future training modules and regional route mapping for example."

ABC Companies offers an expansive portfolio of EV models and charging support for a wide range of user applications. In partnership with OEM category leaders and EV repower specialists, ABC offers EV choices including:

- OEM single- and double-deck 45-foot motorcoaches from global manufacturer Van Hool
- EV van and shuttles from Turtle Top and other leading manufacturers built on electric chassis
- Diesel to electric repowering of passenger vans to single- and double-deck motorcoaches
- Charging options from leading global manufacturers including ABB and ChargePoint.

Nova Bus Receives Business of the Year Award

Nova Bus, a member of the Volvo Group and a leading North American transit bus manufacturer, was awarded the Business of the Year prize at the annual dinner of the North Country Chamber of Commerce on March 4.

For the past 110 years, the North Country Chamber of Commerce has been hosting their annual gala that is an opportunity for the chamber's membership to come

together and celebrate the past year's achievements, networking and set their goals for the new year. At this event, the chamber awards Trailblazer of the Year, Businessperson of the Year, Small Business of the Year and Business of the Year, which are given to those in the community who have set themselves apart by their innovation, investment in the community and overall employee atmosphere.

"It is truly an honor to receive the Business of the Year award by our long-time partner, the North Country Chamber of Commerce. We're proud to contribute to their economic development strategies," said Patrick Kay, general manager of the Nova Bus facility in Plattsburgh.

"Nova Bus was already important to the North Country economy as a major component in our development of a world-class transportation equipment cluster," says Garry Douglas, president of the North Country Chamber of Commerce. "But its strategic importance to our economic future is expanding dramatically now as they are positioning us at the heart of the clean energy economy with the production of electric buses. We thank them for the continued investment and confidence, and for their active collaboration with our chamber in the

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pursuit of our key economic development strategies. Onward and upward!”

“I want to congratulate Nova Bus for receiving the North Country Chamber of Commerce’s 2022 Business of the Year award. Nova Bus is on the cutting edge of the electric vehicle industry and it’s great to have them in the North Country as part of our transportation manufacturing sector. Since they moved to our region in 2009, Nova Bus has created new job opportunities that boosted our regional economy and has helped elevate the North Country as a top destination for transportation manufacturing. This recognition is well-deserved and I look forward to what the future has in store for Nova Bus as New York continues to invest in electric vehicles,” says Billy Jones, Assemblyman, District 115.

Four Passenger Trends in 2022

Icomera offers four trends steering the passenger experience in 2022 from Gabriel J. Lopez-Bernal.

The North American motorcoach industry is experiencing a transformation, with new first-class services emerging across all markets. These luxury services offer point-to-point service along with an elevated passenger experience, including fewer seats, food and drinks, and onboard attendants.

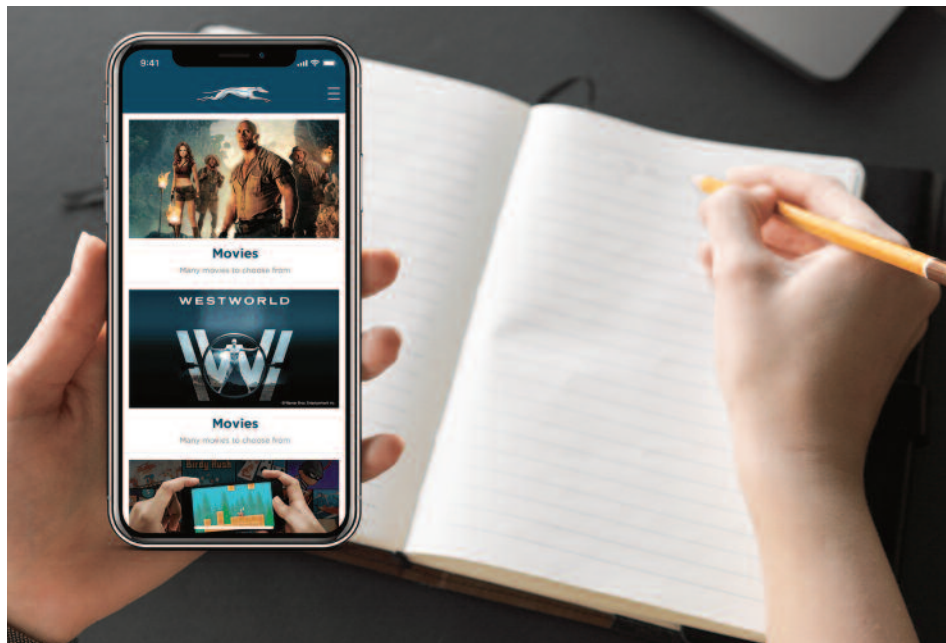
While some of the changes the industry is experiencing can be attributed to the consolidation that has occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology is playing a fundamental role in delivering enhanced consumer experiences.

Technology is serving as a disruptive force and helping create a more seamless travel experience by facilitating communication between passengers and the motorcoach operator before and during their trip.

By leveraging the latest technology trends, motorcoach operators can provide an enhanced passenger experience that sets them apart from the competition. By targeting choice consumers and implementing solutions aimed at disrupting the industry, these new innovators are paving the way for a more vibrant future.

Check out the top four trends steering the passenger experience through 2022:

1. Passenger Self-Service: New tech is being implemented to reduce entry barriers and support passenger self-service including mobile ticketing and real-time vehicle tracking services. These services allow passengers to skip long lines and make their travel experience more convenient while providing operators with a means to



Icomera offers Four Passenger Trends in 2022 from Gabriel J. Lopez-Bernal. On-board Wi-Fi and passenger entertainment systems, as shown here, are increasingly requested by passengers. Other items of interest include increased passenger self-service, passenger safety and passenger information.

empower and inform customers while reducing the cost of acquiring new consumers.

2. Passenger Safety: As 5G speeds become available, transport providers can utilize those speeds to deliver better safety, security and communications. Operators are using video surveillance systems to monitor staff and passenger behavior, as well as manage risk and claims. The ability to view events in real-time provides added accountability and peace of mind.

3. Passenger Information: The main objective of a passenger information system is to improve the flow of information that can help to improve the overall passenger experience. These solutions provide a range of benefits, including:

- Helping passengers to plan their journeys effectively
- Allowing passengers to make better decisions about their travel options
- Providing passengers with up-to-date information about delays and disruptions

4. Passenger Pacification: Many companies are now offering high-speed Wi-Fi and onboard entertainment systems, which allow passengers to stay connected or entertained during the trip. By providing passengers with the ability to stream movies, television shows, music and other content, operators can create an enjoyable experience that helps keep them occupied during the trip. In addition, Wi-Fi can also be used to provide access to important information such as travel update or itineraries.

Operators are using technology to provide amenities that passengers have come to expect, such as onboard Wi-Fi, charging stations and entertainment options. While the proliferation of mobile devices is enabling passengers to access information and entertainment options on the go, this is helping to keep them occupied and comfortable during their trip.

Rhode Island’s RIPTA Orders 14 NFI Zero-Emission Buses

NFI Group Inc (NFI) , a leading independent bus and coach manufacturer and a leader in electric mass mobility solutions, recently announced that its subsidiary New Flyer of America Inc. (New Flyer) has received a new contract from the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) for 14 battery-electric, zero-emission Xcelsior CHARGE™ 40-foot, heavy-duty transit buses. The order includes five ABB 50kWh depot chargers from NFI Infrastructure Solutions™ to support battery-electric bus deployment in the Rhode Island region.

Based in Providence, RIPTA provides public transportation in the State of Rhode Island and delivers more than 11.25 million annual bus rides on 55 bus routes.

The purchase was made through the Connecticut Department of Transportation contract and marks RIPTA’s first order of NFI zero-emission buses and infrastructure. Through the deployment, RIPTA will advance its green initiative to reduce transit operating costs and environmental



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impact, ultimately making the state more sustainable.

“RIPTA is counting on NFI’s advanced mobility and infrastructure solutions to enable the transition to zero-emission at scale,” said Chris Stoddart, president, North American Bus and Coach. “Our battery-electric buses deliver immediate emissions reduction which helps fulfil RIPTA’s commitment to sustainability. Together, we are reducing greenhouse gases, providing cleaner air and working to create healthier communities.”

Designed on the proven Xcelsior® platform, each battery-electric Xcelsior CHARGE™ bus can reduce up to 100-160 tons of greenhouse gas per year. For more information, visit newflyer.com/buses.

New Flyer’s zero-emission deployments are supported by NFI Infrastructure Solutions, providing safe and reliable infrastructure services for smart, sustainable mobility projects with more than 200 chargers installed to date. For more information, visit nfigroup.com/IS.

Envirotech Vehicles Announces Osceola, Arkansas Site

Envirotech Vehicles Inc., a provider of new zero-emission, purpose-built electric vehicles (the company), has announced Osceola, Arkansas as the site of its previously announced state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. The company has purchased an approximately 580,000-square-foot facility, located at 1425 Ohlendorf Road, and hiring for the facility will commence immediately. The manufacturing facility is expected to create more than 800 jobs as well as indirect jobs in Mississippi County.

Phillip Oldridge, CEO of Envirotech Vehicles, commented, “We are thrilled to announce that we have chosen Osceola as the home of our first U.S.-based manufacturing facility, backed with the support of the Great River Economic Development Foundation and the state of Arkansas. We are confident that Osceola has the perfect business climate and local workforce to allow us to see growth and success in the region as the state’s first commercial electric vehicle manufacturer. This, and the plant’s location near the Mississippi River with access to the port of Osceola, will be vital as we position EVT to bring new innovation and technology advancements to the state.”

Envirotech Vehicles purchased the facility from the city of Osceola and intends to initially utilize the plant to handle the final outfitting and shipment of its imported vehicles while simultaneously converting the plant into a full manufacturing operation. The total cost of the project is an estimated invest-



Phillip Oldridge, who has prior experience selling buses, is the new CEO of Envirotech Vehicles that is opening a new manufacturing facility in Osceola, Arkansas for purpose-built electric vehicles.

ment of more than \$80 million within five years, which includes the cost of the building, equipment and other costs.

When asked about the impact Envirotech Vehicles will have on sustainable manufacturing in the state, David B. Burritt, U.S. Steel president and chief executive officer, said, “As the only LEED-certified steel mill in America, U.S. Steel’s Big River Steel enthusiastically welcomes Envirotech Vehicles to Arkansas. With forward-thinking enterprises such as EVT, Arkansas is becoming a center for advanced, sustainable manufacturing in the United States. We are pleased to be partnering with Envirotech Vehicles in producing a future that is best for all.”

Clif Chitwood, president of the Great River Economic Development Foundation, commented, “We have been intently focused on diversifying the economic profile of Mississippi County by attracting companies from new industries. Envirotech has a long history of producing purpose-built electric trucks and vans, and we believe the company will be a valuable addition to the area, bringing a combination of employment opportunities, including technology, manufacturing and engineering.”

Sally Wilson, mayor of Osceola, said, “We’re pleased to welcome Envirotech Vehicles to our city and believe that their selection of Osceola for the establishment of their U.S. manufacturing operations demonstrates their confidence in our workforce and the economic strength in our area.”

The Envirotech Vehicles’ team brings more than 30 years of industry expertise, as well as access to an innovative, growing customer-ready product line of vehicles, systems and green technology that serves last-mile fleets, school districts, public and private transportation service companies and colleges and universities to meet the increasing demand for heavy-duty electric vehicles. The company is currently manufacturing and delivering three products to customers: electric urban trucks, electric logistics vans and electric cutaway vans.

Volvo Group Pledges to “Drive to Zero” Program

CALSTART’s Global Commercial Vehicle Drive to Zero program and campaign (Drive to Zero™) welcomes the Volvo Group, one of the world’s largest manufacturers of heavy-duty trucks, buses, construction equipment and engines, as its newest pledge partner.

By signing the Drive to Zero pledge, the Volvo Group joins Drive to Zero’s current network of 130+ manufacturers, fleets, governments, infrastructure providers and other market leaders committed to accelerating zero-emission commercial vehicles. Pledge partners agree to work strategically and collaboratively to support and grow mechanisms to speed the early market for zero-emission commercial trucks and buses. Drive to Zero’s goal is to drive market viability for zero-emission commercial vehicles across key segments in urban communities by 2025 and achieve full market penetration by 2040.

“As leaders in transport and infrastructure solutions driving sustainable transformation in our industry, the Volvo Group is proud to pledge our support for Drive to Zero and its ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040,” said Volvo Group North America Chairman and Mack Trucks President Martin Weissburg. “The pledge to accelerate zero-emission vehicles aligns with our own commitment to environmental sustainability, including targeting global, net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, as well as 35 percent of our global vehicle sales to be fully electric by 2030.”

“As one of the world’s top commercial vehicle and equipment manufacturers, the importance of the Volvo Group joining our Drive to Zero network cannot be overstated. This will align with Volvo’s ambition towards 100 percent fossil-fuel free vehicles by 2040, help connect the company to a wider network of committed partners and help accelerate infrastructure development,” said Dr. Cristiano Façanha, CALSTART’s global director and Drive to Zero lead. “We are honored to welcome the Volvo Group to the Drive to Zero program and campaign.”

Equipment News

Drive to Zero and the Volvo Group recently participated in CALSTART's Virtual Policy Summit – Driving California Forward – emphasizing the importance of leveraging California's work to build an effective policy ecosystem of ambitious targets, strong regulations and targeted incentives to accelerate zero-emission commercial vehicles. California's strategic blueprint is summarized in a recent Drive to Zero publication.

Drive to Zero complements the Volvo Group's existing sustainability commitments, including being a founding member of the First Movers Coalition; launching cellcentric, a joint venture with Daimler Trucks, to further advance fuel-cell technology in the commercial sector; the establishment of sustainability targets in accordance with the Science Based Targets Initiative; providing a Green Finance Framework; and being leaders in the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Building, Better Plants Program.

The Volvo Group is a longtime CALSTART member and frequent collaborative partner. Dawn Fenton, vice president for government relations and public affairs at Volvo Group North America, is a member of the organization's board. In addition, Volvo and CALSTART worked collaboratively on Volvo LIGHTS (low impact green heavy transport solutions), a project focused on developing a blueprint to successfully introduce battery-electric Class 8 trucks and equipment into the market at scale.

Other Drive to Zero pledge partners include top manufacturers, commercial fleets, governments and infrastructure providers including Scania; BYD; New Flyer Industries; Arrival; IKEA's Ingka Group; Ryder; Black and Veatch; Siemens; the California Air Resources Board; the cities of New York, Los Angeles, Oslo and Vancouver; among several others. Additionally, Drive to Zero counts 19 countries as pledge partners. A full list of pledge partners may be found at the program Web site.

Drive to Zero is an official campaign of the Clean Energy Ministerial under the organization's Electric Vehicles Initiative (EVI). Drive to Zero also coordinates a "Global MOU" of nations that committed to 100 percent sales of new trucks and buses being zero emissions by 2040.

Van Hool Electric Buses for France

The Île-de-France region, known worldwide for its ambitious sustainable mobility initiatives, and the transport authority, Île-de-France Mobilités, have chosen the innovative and sustainable transport solution from the Van Hool-Kiepe Electric-Alstom consortium. This solution, which will be a world premier, is composed of 24 meter long, bi-articulated Van Hool electric buses, powered by Kiepe Electric's high-power, fast-charging batteries which will be charged by Alstom's conductive ground-based static charging system (SRS). The framework contract includes a minimum of 56 vehicles.

The solution from the Van Hool-Kiepe Electric-Alstom consortium is intended for the T Zen 4 and T Zen 5 high service bus lines in the south of Paris, as well as a third line in option. It will offer passengers a higher level of space, comfort, silence, accessibility and speed.

Filip Van Hool, CEO of Van Hool, commented on this announcement: "We are happy and proud that Van Hool, in close collaboration with partners Kiepe Electric and Alstom, has been selected by Île-de-France Mobilités for the realization of this unique mobility project in Île-de-France. The future of public transport is zero emission. This solution, a world first, fully meets the high expectations of the transport authority, the drivers and maintenance staff, and passengers, for quality public transport that is sustainable and economically responsible."

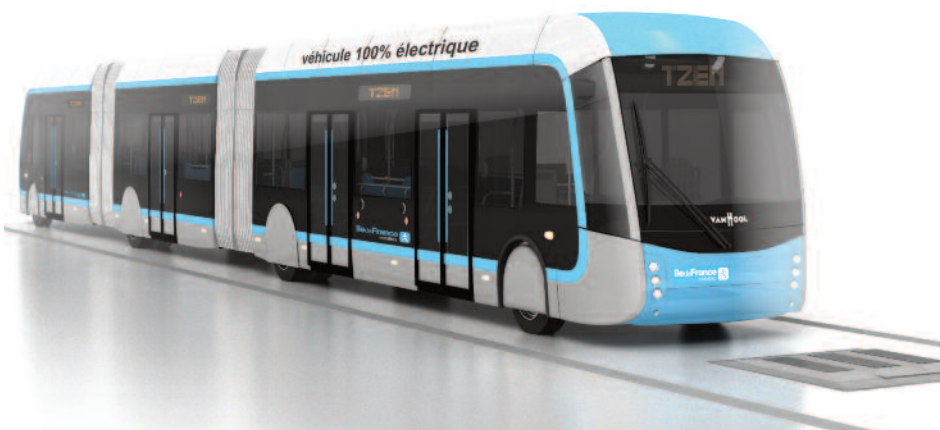
Dr. Peter Radina, member of the Management Board of Knorr-Bremse Rail Vehicle Systems and responsible for Kiepe Electric GmbH in the Knorr-Bremse Group, observes, "For this project, Île-de-France Mobilités has put its faith in our highly experience consortium and innovative High-Power Charging (HPC) concept for buses. For Kiepe Electric, this successful bid is a milestone, and heralds our entry into the mass transit market for e-BRT liens."

"Alstom's teams in France are proud to contribute to the realization of an innovative and sustainable mobility solution for Île-de-France Mobilités, alongside our partners, with our conductive ground-based static charging system, SRS. This solution will be a world first and will offer a high level of service with great ease of operation. It will also benefit from the experience of the Nice tramway, where SRS was deployed and put into service on 15 km and 34 trams," commented Jean-Baptiste Eyméoud, president of Alstom in France.

The 24-meter long, bi-articulated, 100 percent electric Exqui.City 24 vehicles built by Van Hool meet high expectations in terms of passenger comfort and ease of operation. The buses will be able to carry approximately 140 passengers each (compared to 70 for a conventional bus and 10 for an 18-meter articulated bus) in optimal conditions of comfort and modernity: space, lighting, air-conditioning, video surveillance, real-time visual and audio passenger information. The vehicles are fully accessible to people with reduced mobility (PRM), thanks to wide sliding doors and low floor, which will make it easier for passengers to get on and off the bus at the station and to move around inside the bus.

Operation is facilitated and optimized by very fast vehicle recharging thanks to

Van Hool will be building a minimum of 56 buses for use in the Île-de-France region south of Paris. The double-articulated tram buses will be 24 meters (nearly 79 feet) long and powered by electricity. What makes this operation interesting is that the buses will use Kiepe Electric's fast-charging batteries that will be charged by Alstom's conductive ground-based static charging system (SRS).



Alstom's conductive ground-based static charging systems (SRS) interfaced with an on-board energy system from Kiepe Electric.

Kiepe Electric is supplying the traction system for two driven axles in each vehicle. The scope of the order also includes traction batteries, auxiliary power converters and cooling systems, as well as power distribution units (high-voltage distribution). In addition, the company is providing the onboard software for energy management and traction drive control. Other Knorr-Bremse Group components will also be installed, including screw-type compressors from Knorr-Bremse and brake resistors from Heine Resistors. Kiepe Electric will ensure a very high level of operational reliability using a cloud-based data application that measures consumption, routing and performance parameters. This operating data will be collected by the company's artificial intelligence-based Smart Fleet Management (SFM) system for subsequent transfer to the operating company's base station via Kiepe Fleet Management (KFM).

Alstom is providing the conductive ground-based static charging system (SRS). It is an innovative and interoperable technology for electric transport, buses and trams, of all brands and sizes. As a compact solution, SRS blends invisibly into the cityscape. SRS ensures safe, automated and fast high-power charging at stops and line terminals. This solution is already in use on 15 kilometers of tramway tracks in Nice, where it allows automatic and cast-in-station

recharging with no additional constraints for operations and with ground-breaking availability (>99.9 percent). SRS is designed by Alstom in Vitrolles, a world center of excellence for ground power solutions. Alstom's catenary-free systems are reliable and proven with more than 15 years of commercial service in France and internationally. For the T Zen 4 and T Zen 5 project, Alstom will engineer the charging systems, as well as supply the equipment install, commission and provide warranty.; The framework agreement also includes a service level agreement on reliability and availability of the bus charging system.

The T Zen 4 and T Zen 5 lines are express bus lines running on dedicated bus lanes. The T Zen 4 BRT line will cover the 14.8-kilometer distance between Viry-Chatillon and Corbeil-Essonnes. The new line will replace the existing 402 line, which is the busiest line in the Paris metropolitan area, transporting nearly 26,000 passengers every day. The T Zen 5 line is a new 9.5-kilometer bus route connecting Paris-13 with Choisy-le-Roi via Ivry-sur-Seine and Vitry-sur-Seine.

Irizar Electric Tram Bus for Bilbobus

This new Irizar ie tram, a zero emissions electric bus in the style of a tram, is the first of the model to be added to the six electric buses already in the Bilbobus fleet.

The Irizar ie tram stands apart because of its futuristic modern design, making for a distinctive and unique vehicle that gives the city a special appeal while also max-

imizing passenger comfort, accessibility and experience. It is a new concept in electromobility that, because of its elegant and attractive design, zero emissions, low noise and vibration levels and safety characteristics, is especially well suited for using in Bilbao.

The new 12-meter-long Irizar ie tram has 43 seats, two wheelchair areas and four PRM seats. It can transport up to 75 passengers, which improves accessibility and makes for fluid circulation. Its comfortable interior and innovative hardware give a feeling of openness and light that assure a grand travel experience for passengers and drivers alike.

The bus is powered by latest generation 430 kWh on-board batteries made by the Irizar Group, which guarantees it has enough range to provide the required services all day. The bus will be charged at night in the garage.

The city of Bilbao has taken another step towards meeting its commitments under the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), which puts the well-being of residents at the center of urban development. The new bus will be used on the 62 line that provides daily service to the San Mamés Arabella San Mamés route, which has 12 stops.

"We're extremely satisfied with having the vehicle in the city. We think it's a value added proposition that brings a new concept of electromobility that unites the environmental benefits of more sustainable, efficient, intelligent, safe and connected urban public transport with the appeal of traveling in a vehicle that gives something to the city and produces an emotional impact that makes you want to take the bus," says Txema Otero, commercial manager for Spain.

BYD ADL Partnership Delivers 29 Electric Double-Deckers to London

Alexander Dennis Limited (ADL) and BYD UK jointly announced recently that their electric vehicle partnership, the UK's leading electric bus producer, has supplied 29 BYD ADL Enviro400EV to Abellio London for use on Transport for London (TfL) route 63 between King's Cross and Honor Oak. The zero-emission double-deckers have innovative features, aimed at making them an even more attractive, green alternative to the car as London recovers from the pandemic.

ADL is a subsidiary of leading independent global bus manufacturer NFI Group Inc. (NFI), while BYD is the world's leading manufacturer of new energy vehicles (NEV) and power batteries.

Bilbobus, operating in Bilbao, Spain on the Bay of Biscay, is adding an Irizar electric tram bus to its fleet. With a length of 12 meters (about 39 feet), the bus has 43 seats, two wheelchair areas and three doors. Bilbobus already has six electric buses in its fleet.



Equipment News

The new buses on route 63 have a more open feel thanks to a skylight on the upper deck and handles on the backs of seats rather than vertical poles for an unobstructed view. With high-back seats throughout, journeys will be more comfortable. USB chargers and mobile phone holders in the seats mean passengers can work or relax more easily, while also taking the time to watch the sights of London go by. A wood-effect floor adds to the cutting-edge design.

New covers for the priority seats, with a contrasting color scheme, help differentiate them from other seats for passenger who are less able to stand. The vehicles also have a larger wheelchair and buggy area, improving accessibility and helping parents getting around town. CCTV cameras have also been upgraded to provide higher-definition footage, acting as a greater deterrent and making travel even more safe and secure.

New digital signage on board the buses shares a wider range of real-time information, including the time to the next stop, disruptions, space on the next bus and service updates for Tube and Overground services.

Thanks to the ADL's extensive experience in tailoring buses' interior to customer requirements, the manufacturer was well placed to adapt the interior of the BYD ADL Enviro400EV electric double-deckers. They were built at ADL's factory in Scarborough, Yorkshire, supporting skilled green jobs and apprenticeships.

The electric buses are powered by BYD iron-phosphate battery technology providing a longer driving range and optimized battery life. They also benefit from BYD's innovative chassis, incorporating a "six in one controller" integrating the entire ecosystem of the bus for improved reliability.

Louise Cheeseman, TfL's director of buses, said: "We have made significant progress in developing zero-emission buses and with bus safety over the last few years, leading the way for the rest of the UK. Ultimately any evolution of the bus in the capital is focused on the customer. These brand new buses on route 63 show our ambition to enhance the customer offer, bringing together for the first time a suite of new features that improve everything from comfort to journey speeds, and make buses the obvious choice over the car.

"As we recover from the pandemic it's vital that our bus network stays relevant and remains an appealing option. Continuing our dependency on cars, especially for journeys that could easily be made by bus, would be catastrophic for our health and the environment. An ongoing investment pipeline into the capital's zero emission buses is not only essential to keep London moving in a sustainable way, it is crucial in supporting green jobs across the UK. With funding certainty, we can take our bus network from strength to strength and enable the rest of the UK to benefit from improved buses too."

Jon Eardley, managing director, Abellio London, said: "Our investment in route 63 is part of our wider commitment to improve the travel experience for customers by introducing state-of-the-art, best-in-class electric buses across London. At Abellio London we believe that continued and sustained investment in the capital's zero emission fleet is essential to attract more people to use public transport, which in turn promotes other modes of active travel. Encouraging more people to use the bus by improving the offer to our customers is a catalyst for the decarbonization of the network and helping to deliver the mayor's zero emission network and active travel targets."

Chris Gall, ADL Group engineering director, said: "We are delighted to continue to work with TfL and operators like Abellio to deliver innovation for London's buses with the customer-friendly features on these zero-emission buses. TfL's sustained investment in its bus network is hugely important as it underpins skilled jobs and apprenticeships at our factories in Yorkshire and Scotland, our aftermarket facilities across the country, as well as in our extensive domestic supply chain, supporting communities through re-investment in local economies."

Frank Thorpe, managing director, BYD UK, said: "TfL and Abellio are proactively setting a high benchmark for sustainable zero-emission bus transport in London, making the service both practical from an operational perspective and desirable to the public. We are very pleased to support them on their evolving journey as they continue to invest in clean, safe, eco-friendly pure electric solutions. Innovation and collaboration are integral to achieving ambitious net zero strategies. BYD strongly believes in the value of partnerships to help fast-track environmental goals for transport authorities and operators, such as TfL and Abellio. We are proud to bring our world-leading expertise in batteries and integrated powertrain technology to our successful eBus venture in the UK with ADL."

New VDL Buses for Oberhausen

STOAG Stadtwerke Oberhausen GmbH will provide VDL Bus & Coach with a German first: the first series of the new generation of Citeas, 15 electric city buses of type LF-122, are to enter into service in Oberhausen. The vehicles are based entirely on an electric power train and have trend-setting features.

STOAG currently provides environmentally-friendly mobility in Oberhausen with six trams and 131 buses. Four electric VDL Citeas are already running on line 979 between Oberhausen and Bottrop. Boris Höltermann of VDL Bus & Coach Deutschland GmbH: "In Germany, we are one of the

While London may still have red double-deck buses, today they are electrically powered. Alexander Dennis Limited recently announced that they have supplied 29 Enviro400EV buses to Abellio London for use on the Transport for London route 63 between King's Cross and Honor Oak. The new buses are powered by BYD iron phosphate battery technology.



Equipment News

market leaders in the field of electric public transport and our expertise is widely recognized. Of course, you always need partners who have vision and ambition to promote the sustainable design of public transport. The fact that we will be able to further expand our cooperation with STOAG in the future makes us genuinely proud.”

The new generation of Citeas has already been sold in several countries and will be deployed in a number of cities and areas starting this year: Netherlands (Eindhoven),

Finland (Kotka and Lahti), Belgium (all of Flanders) and France (Bordeaux).

Delivery of the new generation of Citeas is planned for December 2022. The e-buses have a 429 kWh battery pack and are ideally suited for both city and regional transport. The range of the new generation of Citeas has been considerably improved: With this battery, the LF-122 (low-floor) can travel 200 to 300 kilometers in all weather conditions on pure electric power, without any interim recharging. The vehicles have pantographs for greater operational flexibility.

“With the 15 new Citeas from VDL, we’re expanding our electromobility considerably,” says STOAG Managing Director Werner Overkamp happily. “In VDL Bus & Coach, we have a partner with whom we already have good experience in the field of electric public transport. We are very much looking forward to these newly designed vehicles.”

VDL Bus & Coach has become one of the leading players in Europe in the field of e-mobility. Since the introduction of the first Citea SLF-120 Electric in Geneva, during the UITP Mobility & City Transport exhibition in 2013, VDL Bus & Coach has focused strongly on electric mobility. In 2021, VDL Bus & Coach presented the new generation of electric Citeas. Based on the VDL vision, a bus concept has been developed that is entirely based on an electric drive train and that is ready for the future, with zero emission as a matter of course. Among other things, VDL Bus & Coach is introducing an innovative composite sidewall construction that is 15 percent lighter than a conventional sidewall. The battery pack is integrated into the floor as standard.

With more than 1,000 buses in 11 countries, delivered between 2015 and 2021, VDL Bus & Coach has a market share of 14 percent in Europe. The 100 million electric kilometers achieved in February 2021 represent a savings of more than 14.7 million kilograms of CO₂ emissions. In Germany, this concerns more than 100 electric buses, which together account for more than five million electric kilometers of experience in public transport.

Electric Autonomous Boat for Kiel, Germany

Torqueedo has been awarded a contract to supply a complete electric drive train for a groundbreaking autonomous boat in the Germany city of Kiel.

The electric vessel, designed “Wavelab,” will serve as a research platform for the Clean Autonomous Public Transport Network (CAPTN) initiative in Kiel. The program aims to create the infrastructure for an integrated inner-city mobility network based on multiple modes of transport on water and land.

“Wavelab” will be built by the Gebrüder Friedrich shipyard in Kiel and is scheduled to be delivered by the end of 2022. Torqeedo was selected to provide the fully integrated electric propulsion system. The package includes dual 50 kW Deep Blue steerable thrusters and six Deep Blue lithium-ion batteries with a total capacity of 240 kWh. Four Power 24-3500 batteries supply the 24V onboard grid. The system is completed by a 22kW fast charger, DC/DC converter and DC/AC converter.

Stadtwerke Oberhausen GmbH has ordered 15 VDL new Citea LF-122 electric city buses. The company currently operates six trams and 131 buses including four electric VDL Citeas. Delivery of the new buses is planned for December of 2022.



While not a bus, it is interesting that the city of Kiel, Germany is planning for an autonomous electric boat. It will operate on the Kiel Fjord and be part of an integrated inner-city mobility network that includes transport on water and land. The boat will be built at a shipyard in Kiel and is expected to be delivered by the end of 2022.



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The “Wavelab” will serve as an open platform for research and development of the required technologies for a planned clean autonomous public transportation network on the Kiel Fjord. It will follow a modular concept meaning that the vessel will be highly flexible to integrate new technology projects.

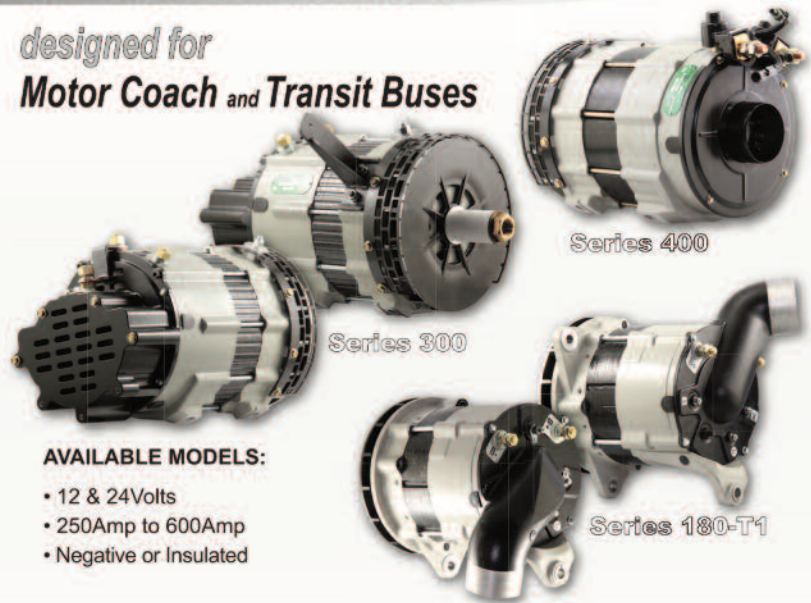
“The advantages of electric propulsion are obvious in terms of zero emissions and quiet operation,” said Sönke Stich, sales manager of Gebr. Friedrich. “Torqeedo is a clear leader in sustainable mobility technology and will be a solid partner in developing this first-of-its-kind vessel.”

“Electromobility and automation can help relieve urban congestion and reduce air pollution by shifting traffic from roadways to underutilized waterways,” said Dr. Michael Rummel, managing director of Torqeedo. “Torqeedo facilitates this transformation with modular, reliable and safe electric drive systems, all from a single supplier. We look forward to working with the Kiel CAPTN team to advance the state-of-the-art and help bring this modern, highly automated integrated transportation network to life.” □

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The theme of this year's Expo was "Reconnecting." Pleasant weather in Long Beach allowed some outdoor activity where attendees could meet and rekindle old friendships. On Friday, an outdoor lunch, sponsored by Motor Coach Industries, was catered by In-N-Out Burger. UMA.

Reviewing UMA Expo 2022

This year at the UMA Motorcoach EXPO in Long Beach, California from February 23-26, things seemed different, more energized. "The energy is really good this year," EXPO Committee Chair Scott Riccio, owner of Northeast Charter & Tour Co. in Lewiston, Maine, said during the event. "EXPO gives us the opportunity to show we're still alive and well."

"The industry has been completely changed by COVID," UMA's President and CEO Scott Michael said. The number of motorcoach operators has declined from nearly 3,000 in 2019 to fewer than 1,500 at the end of 2021, he said, so "you are the survivors." Michael said that a month before EXPO, there were concerns that attendance would be extremely low. "But in the last three weeks, we were flooded with registrations," he said. "We got hundreds more than last year, much more than we expected."

This year's attendance was up significantly over last year in Orlando when many were still concerned about travel and being

in large groups. From illuminating education to next-generation technology and equipment in action, UMA Motorcoach EXPO 2022 allowed registrants to see what is coming — and take advantage of what they learned for years to come. EXPO 2022 provided many opportunities to make new contacts, discover cutting-edge solutions and learn the latest trends to give operators a leg up on the competition.

The theme of this year's EXPO was "reconnecting," and people did just that. Operators, bus manufacturers and vendors from around the country and world got to catch up with each other face-to-face during education sessions, at the various social events and meals, and, of course, on the show floor.

"The attendance is great, almost double last year's," said David Moody, general manager of Holiday Companies in Randleman, North Carolina, who took over as chairman of the UMA Board of Directors after EXPO. "Everybody is on the cusp of returning to normal. I think we will be back

to normal next fall as long as we can get enough staff. It's a wait-and-see game."

Here is a brief overview day by day:

DAY 1 – Wednesday, February 23, 2022

Michael welcomes everyone to UMA Motorcoach EXPO. The first day began with registration and the UMA State Summit, sponsored by VB Marketing Group. The evening was capped off by the UMA Welcome Reception, sponsored by National Interstate Insurance. The gathering included a live version of "Buses and Beer," the once-weekly call that kept many in the industry connected and supported during the pandemic. Host Jeff Goldwasser asked his trademark "category" questions, but this time UMA operators were treated to prizes supplied by UMA vendors.

DAY 2 – Thursday, February 24, 2022

The second day focused on educational sessions to give attendees ideas for growing their business. The UMA EXPO Opening Session featured a legislative and regulatory update with Becky Weber of Prime Policy



Several connected activities took place during the UMA Expo. Friday saw the International Driver Competition sponsored by Prevost and Lancer Insurance Company. UMA.



Also scheduled on Friday was the Maintenance Competition sponsored by ABC Companies. This group of technicians was trying to locate various problems under the coach. UMA.

and UMA's Ken Presley, moderated by Alan Thrasher, chairman of the UMA Legislative and Regulator Committee and president of Thrasher Brothers Trailways. They spoke about the COVID relief programs. Later, in early March, UMA would learn that House Leadership in Congress jettisoned all proposed COVID relief programs including a small business package that included additional relief for motorcoach companies through a CERTS refill. "It is clear Congress is finished with COVID relief funding," said UMA's Presley. "Even President Biden's request for additional funding for vaccines and testing were rejected." We remain hopeful the CERTS tax exemption can pass later, he said.

The lunchtime event was sponsored by RLI Transportation. In the afternoon, the Maintenance Interchange was held as well as sessions on a variety of topics, from best

safety practices to DOT training. The day ended with UMA members attending the Exhibit Hall Sneak Preview sponsored by Monochem, and the Sneak Preview After-Party at the Museum of Latin American Art, hosted by Prevost.

DAY 3 – Friday, February 25, 2022

The day began with the UMA International Driver Competition, sponsored by Prevost and Lancer Insurance Co., followed by the Maintenance Competition, sponsored by ABC Companies. "Antarctic" Mike Pierce gave the keynote address during the UMA General Session.

Attendees gathered under the California sunshine for lunch catered by In-N-Out Burger, a California favorite, Catering Food Trucks and sponsored by Motor Coach Industries (MCI). The evening ended with a UMA Member Appreciation Dinner, spon-

sored by TEMSA, where the winners of both competitions were announced. Adriana M. Hemzack, of Icomera; UMA Chairman David Moody, of Holiday Tours Inc.; Temsa CEO Tolga Kaan Doğancıoğlu; and Richard Young, of Motor Coach Industries, shared their highlights.

DAY 4 – Saturday, February 26, 2022

The EXPO wrapped up with one last morning for UMA members to connect with vendors in the Exhibit Hall. UMA ended the conference by announcing next year's EXPO will be January 12-16 in Orlando, Florida. The UMA Board of Directors also held their annual meeting just after the UMA Motorcoach EXPO hall closed.

Following is some information on the buses that were on display.

MCI

Motor Coach Industries (MCI) showcased its latest clean-diesel Model J4500 top-selling luxury motorcoach at the UMA 2022 Motorcoach Expo in Long Beach, California, connecting with customers, suppliers and industry partners. The booth was staffed by representation from NFI and MCI senior management and its MCI customer support functions, including new and pre-owned coach sales, NFI Parts, financial solutions and customer care.

"We were pleased to attend Expo with our full team," said Brent Maitland, vice president, Private Sector Sales and Marketing. "With the Canadian border now open, we were able to introduce customers to New Flyer leadership Chris Stoddart, president, North America Bus & Coach, and Scott Halbesma, vice president of Customer Care."

"Expo was an optimal time to engage with our customers, highlight our newest J4500 coaches rolling off of the production line, as well as discuss MCI's relationship-driven team approach to aftermarket parts,

The MCI booth was staffed by representatives of NFI and MCI senior management as well as from customer support functions including new and pre-owned coach sales, NFI Parts, financial solutions and customer care. A reception was held for customers at the booth on Friday afternoon. UMA.



training and customer care. We all felt that the customer attendance and engagement on the show floor was excellent and having coaches back on the floor is a major sign of our industry's recovery."

MCI highlighted its customers throughout the show, starting with the clean-diesel luxury J4500 featured in its booth and sold to Village Charters. The show coach was equipped with top-tier features, including

the proven and highly effective Clean and Protect Proactive Air and Surface Purification (PASP) air purification technology from NFI Parts™ and MCI Connect™. This 5G capable and cyber secure telematics solution provides real-time oversight of fleets, ultimately improving coach uptime, driver safety and operational costs.

Additionally, MCI called upon customer Pacific Coachways to participate in the

highly-acclaimed Maintenance Competition held in the UMA demonstration booth, highlighting the company's own eye-catching luxury J4500 charter coach.

Customers and UMA attendees enjoyed an outdoor lunch break, sponsored by MCI, under a bright blue California sky and catered by regional fast-food chain In-N-Out Burger. Further, customers were treated to an intimate reception in the MCI booth Friday afternoon as an expression of MCI's gratitude for its customer loyalty, friendship and trusted business partnerships.

Prevost

At the recent United Motorcoach Association Expo show in Long Beach, in conjunction with the relaunch of its prevostcar.com Web site, Prevost announced an expansion on its brand promise and reaffirmed its dedication to providing customers with top-of-the-line coaches, backed by unwavering service and support to help customers' businesses thrive.

The Ultimate Experience is the long-standing commitment Prevost makes to every single customer, whether they are motor home owners, small tour and charter operators buying pre-owned coaches, or operators running large-scale fleets across North America. Delivering on that brand promise is what drives the Prevost team day in and day out, and it rests on three pillars: providing The Ultimate Ride, The Ultimate Pride and The Ultimate Peace of Mind.

"To me, The Ultimate Ride, Pride and Peace of Mind means providing our customers with the best quality and most premium product on the market to fuel pride of ownership," said François Tremblay, president of Prevost. "But it is also about the peace of mind that comes from delivering the best possible service experience and getting coaches back on the road quickly. It's all about uptime and making customers feel special!"

The Ultimate Ride refers to the products and services on which customers depend. Prevost has built an enviable reputation as industry leader, delivering proven performance, reliability and durability at every turn. Combined with the company's innovative approach and user consideration, operators, drivers, and passengers alike get to enjoy the safest and most comfortable coaches on the road today.

The Ultimate Pride is all about the intangibles – that feeling of riding like a rock star and getting the VIP treatment thanks to the most premium and recognized brand in the industry. Customers know that the most knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated team is by their side, no matter what.

The Ultimate Peace of Mind focuses on taking the worry out of coach ownership

On display at the MCI stand was a new clean diesel J4500 model lettered for Village Charters, its new owner. This coach was equipped with several special features including the Clean and Protect Proactive Air and Surface Purification (PASP) air purification technology from NFI Parts. In addition, it had the MCI Connect™ 5G capable and cyber secure telematic system. MCI.



On display in the Prevost booth was a new H3-45 coach. The staff explained about the new Prevost theme that includes: The Ultimate Ride, The Ultimate Pride and The Ultimate Peace of Mind. It was all about uptime and making customers feel special. PREVOST.





The Ultimate Ride

and protecting customers' investments and bottom line. Prevost provides vehicles designed with specific industry needs in mind and is there 24/7 with the largest service network and unparalleled aftermarket support. It builds the lowest total cost of ownership and top resale value into every one of its coaches. That gives operators the freedom to focus on what they do best.

To learn more about how Prevost delivers, visit prevostcar.com.

TEMSA

TEMSA, one of the world's leading electric bus manufacturers, unveiled the first electric version of its TS45 model vehicle, which is of great interest in North America, at the 2022 UMA Motorcoach EXPO in California.

The TS45E, the electric version of the TS45 family that has been on U.S. and Canadian roads since 2014 and is among the most preferred products in the market in the motorcoach (travel bus) segment, has been testing in Silicon Valley in California and different states of America, which has been one of the world's technology hubs for nearly two years.

The TS45E, which has successfully passed all the tests and provides a cost advantage over its conventionally fueled competitors, especially in long distances, will be one of the pioneers of the transfor-



The Ultimate Pride

mation in the motorcoach segment with its high driving comfort, maximum passenger safety, advanced technology and zero emission features.

In the introductory launch, TEMSA CEO Tolga Kaan Doğançioğlu stated that TEMSA is one of the leading manufacturers in the industry with its 54 years of experience, and that TEMSA branded vehicles, which have hit the roads in 66 countries around the world, have traveled 6 billion miles, which is equivalent to circumnavigating the world 240,000 times.

Doğançioğlu stated, "The TS45E is the fourth electric vehicle in TEMSA's global product range, while as a company that has put 'Smart mobility' solutions at the foundation of its growth strategy, we are very happy to add our fourth electric vehicle to our product range. North America is one of the strategically priority markets in TEMSA's growth plans. We have been a great success in this market for nearly 10 years and have become one of the strongest players in this segment, especially with our market share reaching 10 percent in the motorcoach segment. Now, together with our electric TS45E model and our revamped TS45 vehicle, we are bringing a whole new vibe to the market."

Doğançioğlu expressed that the world's largest technology companies and the most important operators of the market make



The Ultimate Peace of mind

them proud to use TEMSA branded vehicles, and added, "One of the top priorities for us is to perfect the customer experience with our sustainability approach, passion for innovation and technological know-how. The first condition for this is to be close to the market and to your customer. That's why we've been operating in the market with our own company, TEMSA North America, since 2019. We coordinate our sales and after-sales services based in the U.S. Apart from this, despite all the challenging conditions of the pandemic, to be together with our customers and business partners; we are trying to convey TEMSA's new era vision to them. With the strong synergy created by our partners Sabanci Holding and Skoda Transportation, our goal in the North American market is to become the leading player in the electric vehicle market."

Providing detailed information about the electric TS45E and the renewed TS45 model vehicles, TEMSA North America Country Director Fatih Kozan said, "Our TS45E model can travel 250 miles with a charge time of only four hours. The battery packaging of the vehicle was also specifically developed according to North American regulations by TEMSA engineers. We have integrated the one pedal drive technology, which we have also developed in-house. Connected to the battery, this pedal ensures both the acceleration and the deceleration of the vehicle, or even stopping of it, when drivers take their foot off the pedal. While this technology also increases the range of the vehicle by up to 15 percent, it also reduces the vehicles' brake maintenance costs and maintenance times. On the other hand, there is another very important design modeling in our vehicle that the passengers do not see. Service and maintenance processes have also been facilitated here compared to competing models, as all parts of the vehicle powered by electricity are positioned as close to each other as possible."

Expressing that the TS45 model will hit the roads in the U.S. with its new face, Kozan said, "We have made this vehicle, which we first introduced to the market in 2014 and of which we have sold approximately 250 units, much more aesthetically pleasing, while increasing passenger and driver comfort. We believe that the TS45 will also become one of the symbolic vehicles of intercity travel in North America."

Irizar

Two years into the pandemic, the Irizar USA booth saw the most traffic at the UMA

The excitement mounted and the crowd gathered in and around the Temsa booth as the time came for the grand unveiling. Temsa's major emphasis at this show was the introduction of a renewed and improved 45-foot TS45 model and the introduction of the related battery-electric version, the TS45E. UMA.





Here are the new coaches after the unveiling. On the right is the battery-electric TS45E while on the left is the renewed and improved diesel-powered TS45. TEMSA.



On hand in the Temsa booth to show off the new coaches were Temsa CEO Tolga Kaan Doğancıoğlu and North American Country Director Fatih Kozan. TEMSA.

Expo held in Long Beach, California. It was a very interesting event for the company, who had two new additions, President Daniel Scarpino and Senior Account Executive Randy Wilcox joining the team for their first Expo ever. With a well-positioned booth, the team met with a lot of interested current and potential customers and was able to make many heads turn with the product – the luxurious Irizar i6 coach. However, it was also a parting event for former president of the company Axier Etxezarreta, who is now transitioning into a different role within the Irizar Group. With new enthusiasm and energy, the team executed a very successful show at the Expo.

Talking about his first Expo event, Scarpino mentions that the organization of the Expo was very good, even with the contingencies around COVID-19. He feels positive about the turnaround and was assured that the event will be beneficial for the company as well as the for the customers in the short-term future. Wilcox feels the same; he mentioned that he received a lot of interest from the customers, especially the Northeast. The team was able to reconnect with the industry and share all the new developments of the company regarding sales, after sales and the focus of the company in helping their customers to get the business running.

Irizar USA is extremely thankful for everyone who showed up at the booth and met with the team to reconnect. For those who could not be there, Irizar USA always is committed to the customers; and is always eager to connect to them any way possible. As the company promises, they are always #ByYourSide.

ABC Companies

ABC Companies, a leading provider of motorcoach, transit, shuttle and electric passenger transport vehicles in the U.S. and Canada, promoted fleet diversification at UMA Expo 2022. Joining the company's flag-

ship Van Hool CX45 model, a new Turtle Top shuttle option, the Terra Transit medium-duty shuttle bus was featured on the show floor. "We are attuned to the changing demands of passenger transport and operator needs, especially in the current environment," said Roman Cornell/ABC president, chief commercial officer. "We think that versatility is today's game changer and we've added new OEM categories, like mini buses and more to the ABC portfolio to help owners be proactive in diversifying their business model. Knowing the needs of our customers means we focused on adding brands like Turtle Top and others, who provide superior products and support in their categories. Whether they need a full-size coach, smaller coach model, transit vehicles or shuttle cutaways, we're ready to help

them make any size passenger move," added Cornell.

Fleet diversification is key to ABC's growth strategy, and the company's current lineup reflects its commitment to mixed fleet utilization. With passenger configurations for 12-81 passengers, ABC's well-rounded offering from OEM category leaders offers choices that support large group moves, provide alternatives for smaller groups and address emerging trends for micro-transit and alternative mobility. "We're seeing a lot of creativity in how operators are running their fleets today," said Cornell "We've positioned our portfolio and moreover our entire platform of support services to help them be flexible and thrive. Though our expanded services, a broader equipment offering and decades of expertise we can help owners

The Irizar staff indicated that traffic in their booth was the highest since the pandemic started. On display was their i6 luxury coach for the American market. Built in Spain, the i6 has been a leading and popular tour and charter coach in Europe for years. IRIZAR.



capitalize on the changing face of ground transportation.”

The 2022 Van Hool CX45 exhibited at ABC Booth #937 featured driver and passenger amenities that make this model a proven market leader including:

- Soft touch and textured finishes throughout driver area and passenger cabin
- Modular passenger entry w/ downlit accent lighting and brushed metal finishes
- Low profile parcel rack end cap design
- Maximized footprint side entry restroom w/ inset design elements and frosted window
- Roomy driver’s area featuring inlaid driver’s dash cubby; anti-skid dash board material; integrated low profile ELD mounting point; cup holders, 12V outlet and USB
- Digital dash integrating high visibility driver alerts; output for speed, tach, pressure, temp readings and much more, plus touchscreen REI Entertainment System featuring HDMI-E A/V and Bluetooth connectivity

New to 2022 – IMMI V4S Smartwheel Tri-touch Steering Wheel

- Bringing dashboard controls to the driver’s fingertips the V4S Smartwheel adds a new level of functionality via integrated center control pod; 27-function driver facing buttons and four two-sided paddles; customer-specific graphics; LIN-based to work with CAN-based vehicles

The Turtle Top Terra Transit Shuttle is an economical option for a wide range of customer applications. This straight sidewall version of the Turtle Top Odyssey maintains the same safety standards that Turtle Top incorporates in all models and offers:

- Available on Ford or Chevy chassis



ABC Companies used this event to highlight their expanding product line. In addition to the traditional Van Hool coaches that have been sold for decades, ABC is now also offering smaller buses including a Terra Transit medium-duty shuttle bus. In keeping up with customer requests, ABC has also added battery-electric Van Hool coaches to its list of available buses. ABC.

- 29- or 36-inch front door entry
- Large A-pillar window
- Available in flat and lowered floor
- Flexible seating options up to 34 passengers
- Variety of floor plans integrating storage, seating preference and wheelchair accessibility (front or rear lift location)
- Quality construction and full roll cage with a five-year warranty
- * Five-sided steel roll cage w/ rust inhibitor

- * High-gloss one-piece composite exterior
- * Side panels w/UV protection

With each new market introduction from diesel to EV models, ABC’s parity with shifting customer needs is helping to shape the future of ground transportation. Options that support a wider array of service applications help operators expand service routes, extend their market footprint and serve more segments of private and public passengers are available and are supported by a parts and service network that spans the U.S. and Canada. 24/7 Customer Care and technical support, as well as warranty care and technician training, are readily available to keep fleets moving. ABC also offers a variety of financing options to fleet operators. Representatives from ABC Service, ABC Parts Source, ABC Customer Care and ABC Finance were on-hand to field questions and provide details on all available resources and services from ABC Companies.

Daimler

The premiere for the new Mercedes-Benz Tourrider, a motorcoach specifically designed for the North American market, took place at the Long Beach Convention Center from February 23-26, 2022. Daimler Coaches North America presented two versions at the United Motorcoach Association (UMA) Motorcoach Expo in Long Beach, California. The spotlight was on the upmarket Tourrider Business and the Tourrider Premium, a luxury motorcoach for the first-class segment.

At the official presentation at the UMA Expo in Long Beach, California, the new

Customers were able to meet with the expanding Irizar sales and support team at the show. Joining the team was the new president, Daniel Scarpino, and Senior Account Executive Randy Wilcox. Leaving the group was the former president, Axier Etxezarreta, who is transitioning to a new position in the Irizar Group. IRIZAR.



Mercedes-Benz motorcoach got off to a fantastic start very quickly impressing experts in the North American motorcoach industry. Boston-based A Yankee Line was quick to become the first customer to commit to a major multi-year order. In placing the order, Yankee Line management expressed confidence in the new product: "We are looking forward to providing our passengers with enhanced and sophisticated comfort along with new technology safety equipment that truly raises the bar. Additionally, the ability and opportunity to customize this completely new Mercedes-Benz product to our

exacting standards as a premium motorcoach operator allows us to continue our legacy of impressing every single passenger that boards one of our coaches."

All new Mercedes-Benz Tourrider coaches come equipped with a host of new technology safety features including ABA 5, Sideguard Assist, Attention Assist, Lane Departure Warning, Adaptive Cruise control and more. Yankee Line is also including the new Mercedes-Benz exclusive wheelchair lift solution above the rear axle on each coach.

Yankee Line has been a synonym for exclusive charter and tour solutions with luxuriously equipped motorcoaches up and down the U.S.'s Northeast corridor for more than 40 years. Yankee Line is now looking forward to this new "Mercedes-Benz driven" chapter as it continues its legacy of growth and success.

Designed specifically for the North American market, the 13.72-meter (45-foot) three-axle vehicles with a chrome-plated central star set new standards for design, comfort, technology and individuality in the U.S. and Canada. The motorcoaches are also top of the line in terms of efficiency. They feature an optimized aerodynamic shape and low fuel consumption.

The air-conditioning system from Eberspächer/Sütrak is also really cool. With an output of 35 kW, it cools the passenger area pleasantly at all times, even when it is hot outside. The drivers can also keep a cool head at all times with separate 9 kW air conditioning for the driver's cockpit.

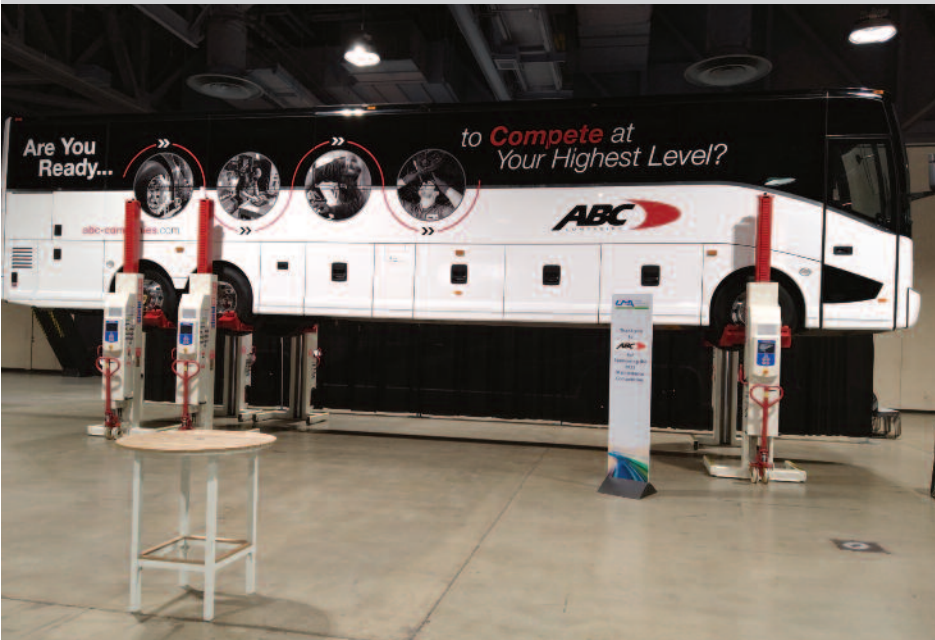
Speaking of the cockpit: The Tourrider Business offers the best conditions for pleasant and safe driving with the dynamic and functional Basic Plus cockpit. The Tourrider Premium impresses with the luxuriously functional Comfort Plus cockpit. Both cockpits are ergonomically designed and offer a wide range of practical and innovative functions.

The Mercedes-Benz Tourrider Premium is available with a panoramic TopSky glass roof and ambient lighting for night trips. LED strips along the luggage racks and underneath the window sills create a pleasant atmosphere and offer greater safety for passengers. The passengers can also enjoy a spacious interior, which is six centimeters (2.36 inches) higher in the Premium version than in the Tourrider Business. Both versions are also optionally available with two wheelchair spaces. The unique lift solution, installed above the drive axle, is easy to operate.

Safety also plays an important role. The Mercedes-Benz Tourrider is the first motorcoach to be equipped with the standard Active Brake Assist 5 (ABA 5) system with pedestrian detection. As the world's first system for buses and coaches, it will brake automatically to a full stop if stationary or moving obstacles, including people, are detected. A radar-assisted adaptive cruise control system also maintains a safe distance at cruise speed.

The new safety features of the Tourrider also include the optional Sideguard Assist with pedestrian detection. This system warns the driver if, for example, pedestrians or cyclists appear in the surveillance zone on the curb side of the coach.

ABC Companies sponsored the traditional Expo Maintenance Competition on Friday. The competing technicians were turned loose on a Van Hool coach on a lift to find problems. This event has become a regular feature of the UMA Expo. ABC.



Daimler used the UMA Expo to introduce their new Tourrider coach. It is available in two different styles: the upmarket Tourrider Business and the first-class Tourrider Premium. A Yankee Line was the first customer for this model that carries the Mercedes-Benz three-pointed star emblem. DAIMLER.



The optional Attention Assist (ATAS) keeps an eye on the driver at all times. It provides a visual and audible warning if it detects typical signs of fatigue or inattentiveness. As another safety feature, the Tourrider is to always stay in its lane. The lane departure warning system, a camera system behind the windshield, detects if the vehicle unintentionally strays from the marked lane and alerts the driver.

Passive safety was also a design focus. The Front Collision Guard (FCG) offers unique protection for drivers and tour escorts. The system consists of a cross-profile that serves as an underride guard in the event of an accident. The structure behind it consists of crash elements that will absorb energy in a targeted way in the event of an impact. The Mercedes-Benz Tourrider is also equipped with integrated energy absorbing bumpers in the front and the rear of the vehicle.

From the Daimler Truck global engine family the Mercedes-Benz OM 471 in-line six-cylinder engine provides dynamic drive power. The engine delivers 336 kW (450 hp) from a displacement of 12.8 l and achieves a maximum torque of 1,550 ft lb (2,102 Nm). It impresses with a powerful technology package consisting of common-rail direct injection with flexible X-Pulse high-pressure injection, charge air cooling, exhaust gas recirculation and SCR technology. The Allison WTB 500R torque converter automatic transmission, which has proven itself in North America over many years, is responsible for power transmission.

No touring coach is 100 percent free from breakdowns – not even the Mercedes-Benz Tourrider. But help will be on its way quickly when needed. Across the whole of the U.S. and Canada, Daimler Coaches North Amer-



The Daimler Tourrider was designed specially for the North American market. It comes with numerous new technology and safety features including ABA 5, Sideguard Assist, Lane Departure Warning and Adaptive Cruise Control. Interior options include special lighting and the panoramic TopSky glass roof. DAIMLER.

ica has an efficient and comprehensive service network. In alignment with Daimler Truck North America's service and parts distribution networks, operators can rely on more than 700 Detroit Diesel service locations and 18 full coach service centers.

Wait 'Till Next Year

Next year the UMA Expo will return to Orlando, Florida. The dates are January 12-

16, 2023. Mark your calendar so you can plan ahead to exhibit and attend.

Our special thanks to Tracey Simmons and the staff of UMA as well as to individuals at the various suppliers who took the time to provide information and photos for this review for our readers. □

No bus event is complete without a look back at previous years. The people from the nearby Pacific Bus Museum added some historical interest to the UMA Expo by bringing two buses and putting them on display. Included were a GM PD106 and what looks like a bus from the California manufacturer Crown. UMA.



Trailways Transportation Readies a New Path for 2022 and Beyond

Elects Amy Brooks first female Board Chair, spotlights digital ticket and charter sales growth, launches new customer service driver training and awards top driver talent during busy annual meeting

Article and photos courtesy of Pat Plodzeen

Trailways' January 2022 annual meeting ahead of the ABA Marketplace in Grapevine, Texas, Trailways marked several important milestones.

The leading travel brand elected its first female board chair in its 85-year history and showcased its latest innovations. Trailways will add a cloud-based charter lead-generation to its Trailways.com bus ticket web platform this year and has launched a new customer service training program for drivers.

New Board Chair Amy Brooks, vice president of sales for Susquehanna Trailways, Avis, Pennsylvania succeeds Patrick Dean, vice president of Dean Transportation, Lansing, Michigan. Dean remains on the board. Brooks, a Trailways board member since 2019, has a 40-year career with Susquehanna Trailways, a third generation, family-owned motorcoach company. She has built technology solutions at her company and knows how new digital solutions will help Trailways and stockholders' bus businesses grow.

Brooks first worked at Susquehanna after college where she answered phones for eight months before leaving to attend graduate school at Eastern Illinois University's College of Business and Technology. When she returned to her hometown and rejoined Susquehanna in 1981, she conceptualized the company's first digital tour reservation tracking system, which improved operations and customer satisfaction. She grew sales and rose through the ranks.

When she joined the Susquehanna team in 1981, they were a school bus operator with three charter coaches. "Today we have 30 coaches," said Brooks. "We became a Trailways member in 1982. My boss, Carl Kephart Jr., told me he was considering joining Trailways and asked me what I thought. Adding Trailways to the end of Susquehanna's name added instant familiarity, credibility and respectability in the travel marketplace."



Trailways held their 2022 annual meeting in Grapevine, Texas in January, scheduled ahead of the ABA Marketplace. As in the past it combined organizational business with seeing friends and meeting with industry suppliers. Noteworthy events included the election of their first female board chair, improved online systems and the traditional driver awards.

Trailways' future: digital closeness to customers

Trailways' future is mobile in more ways than one. On smartphone and desktop, Brooks says, "We want Trailways.com to become the one-stop-shop for anything travel, whether a customer wants to purchase a bus ticket to a city destination or book a charter for a group trip or tour." A more powerful Trailways.com "will lead to greater growth for current members and help attract operators who never thought of becoming Trailways members until now."

Trailways established a new marketing division in 2019 focused solely on the digital growth innovation for the Trailways brand, naming Alexander Berardi president, and launching its very own Trailways.com online ticket sales Web site for affiliated and other

carriers that same year. Berardi, who is from a well-known bus industry family, manages the day-to-day operations of the comprehensive Web site and is supported by a dedicated team responsible for 24/7 monitoring of Web site booking transactions, customer service and implementing cutting-edge digital marketing strategies targeting consumers both at the regional level and on a national scale.

"Our priority is to convert browsing visitors into paying customers," said Berardi. "I'm proud to say we now have the technology and a growing team in place to make that happen. By combining resources and leveraging the national brand, we have done for our stockholders what some carriers found difficult on their own: near instant advertising to customers that visit the Trail-



Amy Brooks was elected as the first female board chair for Trailways. She serves as vice president of sales for Susquehanna Trailways in Avis, Pennsylvania and has had a 40-year career with them.



Members were able to meet and discuss new business opportunities. One goal was to make Trailways a leader for all types of travel so as to foster growth for current and encourage new members.

ways.com Web site, across an array of media channels, with personalized imagery targeting the service they are likely to purchase."

Trailways' online ticket sales Web site connects with several software platforms and related inter-connected line-run carriers to support easier city-to-city online booking and offers first-of-its-kind digital features such as ticket rescheduling. The Web site also takes care of regulatory compliance for Trailway members' system bookings by meeting PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security) and ADA (American Disability Act) standards. The platform also connects to Driven Rewards by Trailways, a frequent traveler reward program heavily promoted via the site and in passenger e-mail correspondence.

New Busie business-building charter lead system coming to Trailways.com

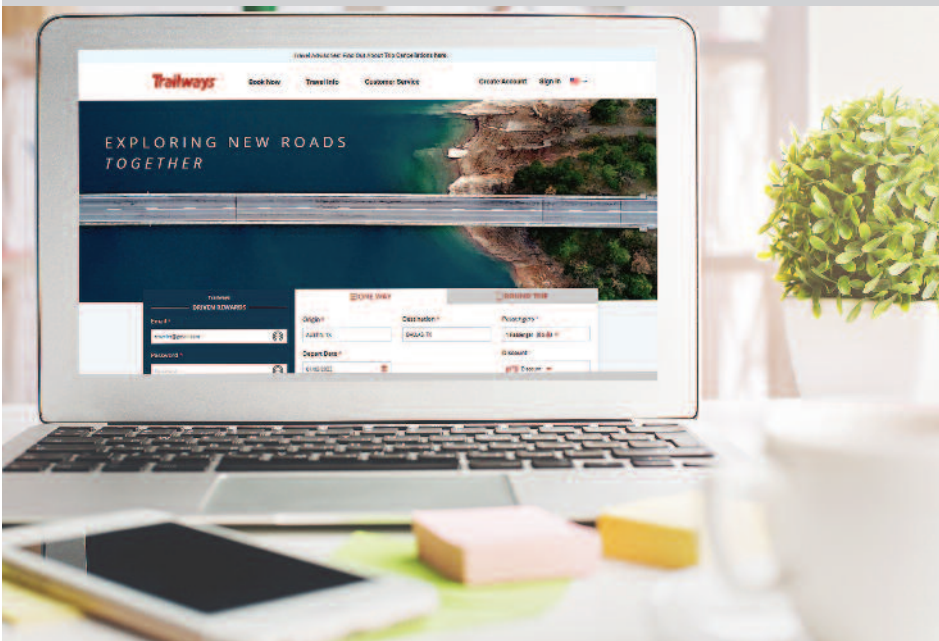
Trailways is doing beta-testing now on an exclusive, cloud-based charter lead-generation software platform by Busie to bring the quoting and booking process online and help stockholders grow and manage charters. "Charter is an important part of every operator's business – even for line-run carriers who need to keep their coaches out earning revenue at every chance they get," said Berardi. "And it makes sense for us to have the best technology for charter as we do for line-run."

A big frustration for most industry operators is the time it takes to bid on the charter business versus what really gets booked. Trailway's new Busie charter sales platform can change that by giving carriers a more

efficient system to increase charter sales and streamline the process. "Having one central Trailways system to track and capture charter opportunities lets individual member carriers spend more time selling, and less time calculating quotes," said Louis Bookoff, co-founder and CEO at Busie.

Now being tested with Trailways' seven largest carriers, the Busie system gives operators dynamic pricing capabilities that allow them to tweak pricing based on market conditions such as fuel prices, required seating capacities, fleet availability or other variables. "We've been working closely with Trailways' executive team for more than a year to create a system that accelerates charter bookings for members, acts as a revenue stream and keeps Trailways leading the future," said Bookoff. To learn more about Busie, contact trailways@getbusie.com.

A new marketing division was created in 2019 that has led to a comprehensive Web site and other Internet advances. Online ticket sales support booking on interconnected Trailways routes between different carriers. New in the testing stage is a cloud-based, charter lead-generation software platform.



New online course system on customer experience for Trailways drivers

The secret to Trailways' success is that it is made up of a community of hard-working, entrepreneurial family-owned businesses that drive and own the equipment. Even in this digital age, providing a personal touch to service, with an emphasis on passenger safety and comfort, remain cornerstones to the Trailways brand.

To further its # 1 quality-care brand image with current and prospective members passengers, Trailways has launched a new online LMS (Learning Management System) five-course program to help systemwide drivers deliver a superior customer service and safety experience. Modeled on the comprehensive training Disney offers its "cast members" employees, Trailways' new program incorporates key elements required to achieve a high rate of returning customers.

The courses cover how Trailways endeavors to make every interaction with customers polite, pleasant and stress-free, while explaining the system's longtime history, core brand



Trailways is grateful for Affiliated Partners sponsorships of awards and events, including the annual meeting's fun "Friday Night Lights" opening reception, sponsored by Prevost, where everyone enjoyed a buffet dinner and DJ dance music.



Exhibitors on this side of the aisle included Irizar, Temsa and Complete Coach Works. Many of the exhibitors would show off their buses during the following ABA Marketplace show.

values and company identity, and conflict resolution skills along with driver, passenger and vehicle safety protocols. The courses also standardize Trailways' customer service procedures assuring each passenger traveling with a Trailways operator will be treated in the same manner everywhere and at all times. "This training advances Trailways very own style of quality service," said Brooks, who worked with the Alliance Safety Council and a consultant expert in the renowned philosophies practiced at Disney theme parks, to develop the program now available to members at teamtrailways.com.

Trailways honors top driver talent, others with awards

Also at its annual meeting, Trailways acknowledged drivers' role in keeping equipment, passengers and trips safe. Trailways and Lancer Insurance, the sponsors of its Driver of the Year Awards, honored a full- and part-time driver professional this year.

With a stellar, accident-free driving record, no absences and a talent for gaining customer loyalty, Pablo Fajardo, a driver for Dean Trailways, Lansing, Michigan since 2014, was honored with the Full-Time Driver of the Year Award. Assigned as the driver for a Michigan Business Networking golf outing, Fajardo stepped in when a scheduled golfer could not play in the tournament. Fajardo played exceptionally well and that good deed earned him a loyal customer in the CEO, who continues to ask for Fajardo when booking travel. Representatives of Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan, also think Fajardo is deserving of the award because of the special attention and care he gives to their guests who travel with Dean. In fact, Dean Trailways now models its customer service training program after Fajardo and says he is the company's most requested driver.

The Part-Time Driver of the Year Award was presented to George Williams, a driver for Huskie Trailways, Festus, Missouri, since 2003. Prior to joining Huskie, Williams was fire chief for Lemay Fire Protection Service in St. Louis where he had a 32-year career. Williams is someone who understands transportation and caring for people. He has driven more than 58,000 miles as a part-time driver and is a mentor to other drivers on Huskie's team. A frequently requested driver for many of Missouri's college athletic teams, Williams is the assigned driver for SEMO Redhawks, the football team at Southeast Missouri State University. SEMO's director of football operations says Williams keeps players cool prior to the game: "He knows how to prepare the route and helps to keep everyone calm by driving safely and carefully, letting SEMO players stay focused on completing what's happening on the field that day."

Pablo Fajardo from Dean Trailways was honored as the Full Time Driver of the Year because of his driving record, lack of absences and pleasing customers.



The award for the Part Time Driver of the Year went to George Williams (second from left) who has driven buses for Huskie Trailways in Festus, Missouri since 2003.



To learn who else took center stage at Trailways' annual meeting awards ceremonies, sponsored by other valued industry suppliers, you can see the video at <https://vimeo.com/620930748>.

Trailways Transportation Systems has been recognized as a prestigious network of coach operators since 1936. Throughout its history, Trailways has provided a high level of operational, sales, marketing and network services to its stakeholders — while reinvesting in and growing its network. □

This shows some of the people gathered around the MCI booth during the event. Being able to meet with industry suppliers is one of the major reasons for attending the Trailways meeting.




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Insurance and the Bus Industry

by Dave Millhouser

The Insurers are leaving!" If William Dawes was a bus guy, he would be frantically roaring about the countryside bellowing, "The Insurers are leaving!"

Once described as the Rodney Dangerfield of the American Revolution, Dawes never got the respect he deserved for actually succeeding in paralleling Paul Revere's ride. Revere was captured, but Dawes managed to warn Minutemen of the Redcoats approach along a longer, and more difficult, route.

Those who follow this column (both of you) understand that my gift is identifying problems you already knew about, and offering stolen bits of advice. This time, like Dawes, I have a shot at immortality.

Insurers are abandoning bus coverage for several reasons, many beyond our control. As a seasonal industry we often have cash flow problems, resulting in many cancellations and reinstatements. We require a lot of hand-holding, creating a bit of paranoia in underwriters. Critics say that \$5 million liability coverage is not enough, but insurers see that as a **big** number. We are having trouble recruiting and retaining drivers, which may translate into lower hiring standards. That makes insurers nervous.

We carry people, so when there is an accident there is potential for multiple claims, compounded by a legal system that sometimes assigns blame gratuitously. This makes it prohibitively expensive and risky to defend a suit even when you are guiltless. Insurers specializing in our small, unique, market with high limits are extremely vulnerable, so we need to love the ones who have hung in there. With fewer, and necessarily more selective, insurers in the market, some operators are going to find it difficult to find insurance at affordable rates (if at all).

There are things you can do to improve your position and get ahead of this ugliness. If I am wrong about impending doom, they are still worthwhile.



It takes several different people, skills and things to successfully run a bus operation. Included would be drivers, maintenance technicians, office staff, management, buses, fuel and facilities. Among the most important of these is working with an insurance company to insure your fleet and operations. LAKEFRONT LINES.

Follow your rating; now is **not** the time to be "conditional" and those nasty triangle thingies scare the poop out of insurance companies. It does not matter whether those statistics realistically predict accidents, attorneys will use them against you following an accident, and insurers know it. Take remedial action and let your insurer know you are on it – waiting till renewal time may be too late.

Equip your coaches with as many of the new safety technologies as you can afford. I am a skeptic, and still think drivers should have a feel for their bus and the road, but insurers and juries trump my feelings. In addition, emerging data from areas where they have been in use for awhile indicates that they do have a measurable impact on accident reduction (just can not help those puns).

There is no reason we can not have well trained drivers and safety technology. The "bad stuff" is out there for all to see, so make an effort to let your insurer and customers know the proactive things you are doing.

Maintain a warm and fuzzy relationship with your insurer. If there is a shortage on the horizon, when insurers choose customers, they will "dance with them what bring them." If they offer training and other resources, grab them. We might learn something, and it shows them we are holding up our end of what really is a partnership. A wizened executive said, "If you are expecting the status quo, you may be in for a surprise."

When the *Titanic* messed up, it was not because lookouts failed to spot the iceberg. It was pitch black and flat calm – nothing to

see. What they missed was the absence of stars ahead, blotted out by the iceberg, nothing

where there should have been something. When renewing your insurance, con-

sider that. Are there more, or fewer, companies asking for your business? □

It is always an excellent idea to maintain a good relationship with your insurance company and representative. In many respects, this relationship is a partnership where both can work together. If an insurance shortage comes along, a good relationship will mean a lot.



Transportation Trails Has Transportation Books for You

Transportation Trails offers a wide range of books concentrating on transportation history. Many are hard bound and are already collector's items. Take a look at our list of available titles and see what interests you.

Traction

Days of the North Shore Line.....	\$42.00
Sunset Lines (CA&E) Volume I Trackage	65.00
Sunset Lines (CA&E) Volume 2 History.....	90.00
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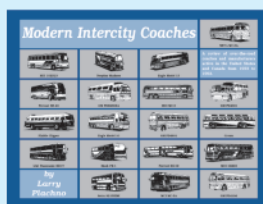
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Inviting Bus Tours

by Larry Plachno

As with most travelers, bus tours tend to spend the night at hotels and motels. For many places, inviting bus tours makes a big difference to their bottom line. Bus tours can also help replace the business lost because of increasing fuel prices. HAMPTON BLACK MOUNTAIN.

Due in part to staff changes because of the pandemic, we have received requests from people who have been given responsibility for bus tour sales and are looking for information. We have also heard from others who are thinking about inviting bus tours because of reduced business caused by increased fuel prices. Hence, we will try to provide some basic information on bus tours for those newer to the industry.

NATIONAL BUS TRADER and BUS TOURS MAGAZINE may be unique because of our past practical experience with bus operations. Our management worked for bus companies in the past and we have run three different bus operations out of our office. Hence, we are in a position to say: "Been there, done that." We are always willing to help our advertisers and customers.

Timing

A good place to start with bus tours is with timing. You cannot expect to invite bus tours on Monday and have the bus show up on Tuesday. You have to work months ahead. Bus tours are planned by individuals or companies known as bus tour planners or bus tour

operators, most of which charter rather than own buses. In addition, many bus companies also plan and run tours using their own buses. In most cases the longer tours are planned from six to 12 months in advance. It takes time to plan the tours, make reservations, prepare brochures or Web sites and sell the seats. Hence, when inviting bus tours you need to plan your marketing months ahead.

Another item worth noting is that while families with children generally travel when school is not in session, bus tours tend to run all year long. This means that bus tours can be invited to improve your sales during those periods when your traffic is the lowest. A hotel with open rooms on certain days or seasons can make a special offer to bus tours. An attraction looking for more business during the shoulder seasons can offer a special deal to bus tours at these times.

Lodging and Dining

Conventional bus tours will spend the night at a hotel or motel. The normal arrangement is booking two people to a room with two beds. In most cases, if a passenger does not want to share a room they

can pay what is known as a "single supplement" to obtain a private room. With student tours, putting four students in a room with two beds is typical.

Most bus tours will provide the time or opportunity for three meals a day, but they may not be included in the price of the tour. Bus tour planners may look for meals available at hotels or attractions to avoid the time needed to travel to a restaurant. Many bus tour planners like to stop at cafeterias because their flat fee allows them to be included in the price of the tour while having food ready speeds up the meal stop.

Types of Bus Tours

While most bus tours are geared to a general audience, there are numerous types of different or specialized tours. Student tours generally involve students from the same school. The stops will be more attuned to younger people. As the students get older, the tours can be longer. Grammar school students may visit the state capitol while high school students will go to Washington, D.C. College students may have tours that coincide with their education.

There are numerous types of specialized tours. The most popular are probably gaming tours that concentrate on one or more gaming locations. Faith-based tours stop at churches, shrines and other religious locations. There are also tours geared to photographers, historians and country or racial heritage. I have seen smaller groups on antiques tours, quilting tours as well as shopping expeditions. During the Civil War

anniversary, there were tours concentrating on battlefield sites and reenactments.

It should be noted that tours geared to general audiences will tend to exclude certain activities. Among these are golfing, fishing, scuba diving and hunting although some tours will make a stop at a beach for swimming. While most tour groups today can deal with some steps and walking,

longer hiking would not normally be included. A tour of New York City might include a major league baseball game, but attending a minor league game would be untypical. On the other hand, there are several attractions that are popular with bus tour groups. These would include shopping, boat rides, tourist railroads, specialized museums and other interesting attractions.

Many bus tour planners will also plan “fly-drive” tours where they put passengers on an airplane to another city or country. Upon arrival, the passengers then board a bus and the tour starts from there. There are also bus tours that use Amtrak or tourist railroads for part of their trip.

Bus tour coaches can carry people in wheelchairs or mobility devices if advance notice is given. The tour planner might ask whether your facility is accessible.

Typically an escorted bus tour will have a crew of two. One is obviously the driver who is responsible for driving the coach. The second crew member is a tour guide or tour escort who works with the passengers and handles arrangements at stops. In the past, the tour escort often planned activities while the coach was rolling down the road. Many of today’s modern coaches have Wi-Fi and electrical or USB outlets. This allows passengers to bring along iPhones and laptops for entertainment or for keeping contact with family or business.

It should be noted that in many or most cases, successful bus tours are repeated. I have actually seen the same tour run two or three times annually by the same company while others will repeat a good tour annually. They will return again and again to your location but will bring different people each time.

Requirements

What does it take to satisfy bus tours? The single biggest requirement is being able to accommodate a group. While there are tours with as few as 15 to 20 people, the typical tour coach will bring as many as 50 to 60 passengers. For hotels and motels this would translate into 35-40 rooms. Most major attractions and cafeterias should be able to handle a full bus load. There have been problems with historical homes with limited capacity. The House of the Seven Gables in Salem, Massachusetts solves this problem by splitting bus groups into smaller numbers for their tour while offering both a garden on the harbor as well as a gift shop for those waiting.

You must have an entrance, roads and parking suitable for a 45-foot coach. While the group can be dropped off and picked up at your front door, the bus does need a place to park. The ideal situation is a large parking lot with a designated bus area. Some major attractions and gaming locations provide a driver’s lounge for the drivers while they are waiting for the group. Things that can cause problems

Many if not most schools plan tours for their students. While the younger students stay closer to home, high school students may travel longer distances and even to Washington, D.C. Here we see a Peter Pan coach in our nation’s capital. PETER PAN BUS LINES.



There are several advantages to inviting bus tours. They provide many customers with one sale because modern tour coaches can seat more than 50 passengers. Since bus tours generally operate most of the year, they are ideal for filling in when you most need business. MAN.



for buses are tight turns on your entrance or road, overhead obstructions including trees as well as canopies or awnings over your front door. Since there are double-deck coaches on the road, you might want to keep obstructions 14 feet above the roadway.

What helps a great deal is having an information sheet available for bus tour planners. This would include the obvious contact information for your sales staff, options you offer for bus groups, group pricing, deposits if required and types of payments accepted. If appropriate you could include hours or days of operation. It would help to include information on where to drop off the group and where to park the bus. You could also provide information on other nearby attractions suitable for groups and nearby location(s) where the bus could be washed and the restroom dumped.

In most cases, places that invite bus groups will offer lower group rates. What is typical in the industry is that restaurants will provide complimentary meals for the driver and tour escort when the group stops. Likewise, the driver and tour escort are usually provided free admission at attractions. With lodging, the availability of a complimentary room will usually be based on the number of rooms booked.

Marketing

When inviting bus tours, you need to work months ahead. While a one-day tour might be put together and sold in two or three months, the longer tours are usually planned six to 12 months ahead. Hence, a good time to start your advertising is about a year before you want to see or increase bus tours.

One trick that has worked well when inviting bus tours is to offer something spe-



This shows a very good parking arrangement for buses with designated bus parking located at the left of the main parking lot adjacent to grass and trees while remaining close to the entrance. The photo was taken at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wisconsin. As the only approved Marian Apparition Site in the United States, it is becoming increasingly popular with bus tours. SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GOOD HELP.

cial when a caller mentions your advertisement. This can be a wine and cheese reception for their group, a gift card for the tour planner or a special facilities tour.

Bus tours need to be invited. The last thing a tour planner wants is for the bus to stop at a location where the group cannot be accommodated or is inappropriate for some reason. Hence, bus tours will not include stops on their itineraries unless they are sure that they are good for groups. This is why tour planners like to use magazines like BUS TOURS MAGAZINE and NATIONAL BUS TRADER as idea books. When looking for places to include in

their future tours, they can feel reasonably confident that the advertisers that are inviting bus tours can accommodate them.

Bus tours have been coming back nicely and many were running even when masks were required. Several of our advertisers have said that they have sold out their bus tour spots so the tour planners are looking for more locations to add to their itineraries. The magazine staff can answer your questions and help you with inviting bus tours including providing editorial, printing your photos and online options. You can reach both magazines by phoning (815) 946-2341. □



Double-deck coaches can bring a crowd to your location since they can seat as many as 80 passengers. You must have sufficient overhead clearance since these coaches are 13 feet tall. All buses require suitable roadways with gentle turns and a lack of obstructions. VENTURE TOURS.



Photographs

Readers and advertisers are encouraged to send in photographs or slides of buses or equipment that may be of special interest to our readers. Please, include a list explaining what makes the pictured item different, unusual or interesting.

Photos should be sent to NATIONAL BUS TRADER, 9698 West Judson Road, Polo, Illinois 61064. Please indicate if you would like your picture returned. Picture usage is dependent on the quality of the photo and space available.

At right: More and more tour buses are getting out on the road. Kat Gavornik of Starr Bus Charter and Tours sent us this photo of one of their Eyre buses on a Fall Foliage tour of Vermont. Passengers loved this stop visiting Morgan's Horse Farm in Weybridge, Vermont.

Below: The 15 new trambuses that Van Hool built for Malmö, Sweden are very impressive. They have battery-electric power, are 78 feet long and are operated by Nobia, the largest passenger transport company in Scandanavia. Van Hool has built more than 300 tram buses that are operating in 17 cities.



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While they last, the following back issues are available. Issues beginning with June, 1979 thru current are \$3 – US, \$4.50 – Canada and \$5 – International (US) each postpaid.

Several issues are already “out of print,” hence we suggest that you indicate second choices. We reserve the right to refund money if issues requested are no longer available.

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Survival and Prosperity_{by}

Ned Einstein



Part 3: The Gains of Winning, The Cost of Failure

In Part 1 of this series, (see <https://transalt.com/article/survival-and-prosperity-part-1-magic-corridors/>), I identified a gaping hole of opportunity for profitable motorcoach service – in countless corridors where intermediate-distance travel is provided only by commercial airlines. In earlier installments, I exposed the travesties of the commercial airline industry (Southwest Airlines excluded) which make travel of any distance by today's commercial airlines an expensive, inconvenient-at-best obstacle course (see <https://transalt.com/article/drivers-v-robots-part-2-the-nature-of-modern-travel/>). I explored this sector's corruption in great detail (see <https://transalt.com/article/expanding-the-mode-split-dividing-line-part-1-exponential-airline-industry-corruption/>). These factors render a mode-split from small- and medium-distance commercial airline flights to luxury motorcoach travel an extraordinary opportunity. All we need is the right vehicle, described in detail in Part 2 of this series (see "The Magic Coach" in NATIONAL BUS TRADER, March, 2022).

All we need is the right vehicle.

These opportunities are also available in corridors served by heavily-subsidized AMTRAK, also saturated with corruption (see <https://transalt.com/article/covid-19-shenanigans-and-liability-part-2-making-money-by-compromising-health/>) and safety compromises (see <https://safety-compromises.com>). A 2011 study of 20 AMTRAK lines found the subsidies on the least efficient cost \$422.39 per one-way passenger trip. In contrast, unsubsidized travel on the Magic Coach would generate tax revenue. Travel by AMTRAK is at least convenient for those residing by, and traveling to, somewhere near the stops in this monopoly's skeletal network of lines. This is true even if costs are several times greater, and occasionally a tad faster, than those for the same trip by motorcoach.

Part 1 also included a broad sample of airline-vacant corridors in which extraordi-

nary opportunities for motorcoach service (with a slightly-modified vehicle) exist for short-distance trips (up to 200 to 250 miles) and intermediate-distance trips (250 to 750 miles). You do not even need a consultant to identify the most-lucrative opportunities or conduct your preliminary planning. With these articles, NATIONAL BUS TRADER did the "heavy lifting" for you.

All that is needed is for one OEM to make one.

In Part 2 of this series, I outlined the basic characteristics of the vehicle that would lure the greatest percentage of current commercial airline passengers to "mode split" from short- and middle-distance trips onto motorcoaches. (See <https://transalt.com/article/survival-and-prosperity-part-2-the-magic-coach/>.) Were such a vehicle available, most passengers taking such trips by commercial airline would be stupid or ignorant – with the exception of those who lived or worked near an airport and whose destination was also close to one. Filling up 10 or 20 thousand motorcoaches from this mode split would hardly require the entire airline ridership to change its travel habits. Its success would only need a small percentage of this flying flock to do so. The fact that most of the changes needed to transform an existing motorcoach into The Magic Coach involve mostly "non-engineering changes" – most of them above the floor level. This reality makes the transformation at the OEM matter relatively easy – and increased costs of the vastly-improved vehicle modest. All that is needed is for one OEM to make one.

This endeavor should not be difficult to trigger with a smattering of interest expressed for such vehicles. Realistically, a few dozen "letters of interest" submitted to various OEMs (or more efficiently to NATIONAL BUS TRADER) would likely induce an OEM or two to at least cobble together a convincing prototype. Because the opportunities are there, so too are this vehicle's buyers.

The Magic Coach: Why and How

Both past installments (see NATIONAL BUS TRADER, February, March, 2022) included some arguments for passengers

mode-splitting from short- and medium-distance commercial airline flights to service provided by The Magic Coach. This third installment will consolidate all the arguments for buying and deploying such a vehicle – and re-structuring one's operations to take advantage of the opportunities. These opportunities were never realized because the vehicle to accommodate them was not available. As soon as some OEM makes one, all this will change.

The next installment will provide some design concepts for what the transit industry calls "route deviation" or "point deviation." Such concepts, and others, will expand coverage without greatly increasing travel time or cost. With a sound knowledge of the geography (with help, when necessary, from online maps), these concepts can be stretched, exploited and optimized for intercity motorcoach travel. The most imaginative of us are already doing this – even with vehicles not remotely optimized to tilt the competition our way. The vast, fat corridors unserved by commercial airlines, combined with the perfect vehicle, provide far more and greater opportunities.

Goodbye to the Past

COVID changed a lot of things, even as it appears to be waning. Many of these changes are permanent, even if some virus outsmarts Moderna and Pfizer, and a new variant returns with a vengeance. Many of those who can work remotely are not likely to return "to the office" – or at least not regularly.

The days of cheap gasoline are over.

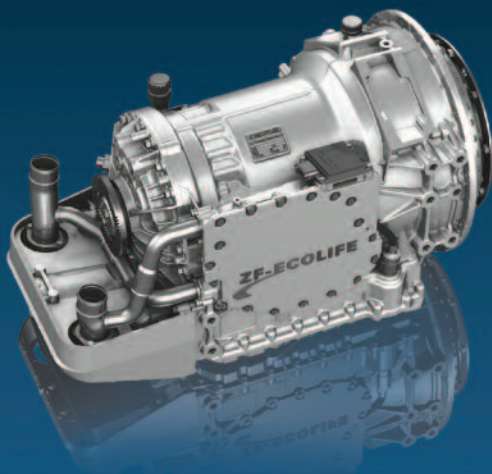
Other trends that stifled motorcoach business, and everything else, are finally becoming more apparent. Among the most important are the decreasing wealth of so many Americans, and the continued erosion of the Middle Class. More recently, gasoline prices have shot up. Even with over-extended gobs of Federal funds for charging stations and related electric vehicle infrastructure, the capital costs of electric vehicle ownership lies beyond the ability of many Americans to purchase them. The days of cheap gasoline are over.

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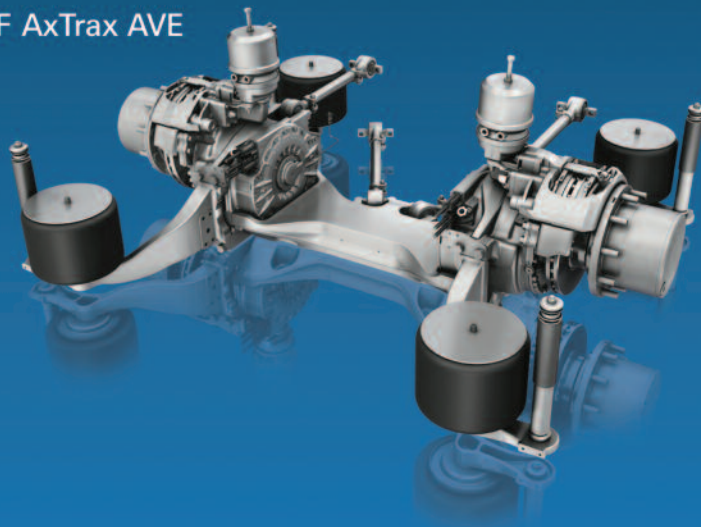
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Survival and Prosperity

While some of these trends suggest that some conventional tour and charter service will return, it is unlikely to ever return to its pre-COVID levels (see <https://transalt.com/article/motorcoach-survival-in-the-age-of-covid-19-part-3-the-end-of-charter-and-tour-service-for-now/>). For those who do not follow NATIONAL BUS TRADER regularly – a mistake for anyone in the bus business since NATIONAL BUS TRADER covers many critical trends in all public transportation modes – ridership on even fixed route transit had declined by roughly 10 percent nationwide during the two years before anyone ever heard the word ‘COVID-19.’ Plus transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft, which destroyed the often-reliable, rapidly-responding taxi industry, are siphoning off a significant amount of fixed route ridership (further increasing the burden on taxpayers). At least one large TNC had penetrated the schoolbus sector. A few have made small inroads into the motorcoach sector. These ruthless competitors whose profits are being enhanced by all type and manner of regulatory violations and illegal activity have been at it for less than a decade. Look how far they have come.

Where we do not find them, we must make them.

For reasons I will write about more in future installments, this trend will hurt the motorcoach industry deeply. In order to stay ahead of it – including overcoming driver shortages – we must keep a wide open mind. We must aggressively pursue new opportunities where we find them. Where we do not find them, we must make them. Deploying the Magic Coach in the Magic Corridors is the best chance to do both. As noted above, and in previous installments, a market for thousands, or perhaps tens of thousands of highly-profitable motorcoach vehicles is just waiting for us. We simply need the vehicle. Again, to get it, we must ask for it.

Pros and Pros

Unless someone with money to squander lives close to an airport, there are no long-range pros to taking intermediate-length trips by commercial airlines. There is a severe short- and medium-range pro for it: There are often no viable alternatives. The Magic Coach will put an end to this gaping hole in the U.S. public transportation network – or what USDOT and APTA spokespersons call a “seamless transportation system.” They seem to not notice the

gaping holes that TNCs recently widened in this exaggerated mythology.

Plugging one major gaping hole, the Magic Coach has countless pros. Among them:

- Far lower fares
- Easy access at a handful of inner-city pick-up/drop-off points, as well as a few other convenient stops along the way
- Fully-reclining seats
- Two restrooms
- Two showers
- The ability to heat and serve gourmet food, okay food and fast food, and hot and cold beverages – throughout the entire trip (from two or three microwaves and a small fridge or two)
- A first class and “coach” seating section
- Blankets, sheets, pillows, pillow cases, towels – and a way to keep them clean
- An on-board attendant
- Two clothes closets
- Light-and-sound curtains to surround every seat (for privacy, sleeping comfort and virus protection)
- Fold-down work trays
- Extra legroom (in the first-class section)
- Footrests and padded leg rests, which can be elevated
- TV, movies, music, Wi-Fi, electrical sockets – with real headphones
- An onboard washer/dryer
- A lower, ramp-equipped vestibule (ideally) that can be configured for multiple purposes

These pros do not even consider the elimination of time-draining hassles that accompany airline travel, including unexpected cancellations, unrequested flight changes and trip reservation obstacle courses. In contrast, a key Magic Coach amenity would be a company that actually answers its phone immediately, with a live earthling. Otherwise, with one’s sleep mask and shooting-range noise-deadening headphones, the coach’s natural lateral roll would rock the passengers to sleep. This would not be desirable for those who prefer turbulence, in seats that barely recline.

I suspect these are the same folks who like to remove and replace their shoes and belts, empty out their pockets and have their thighs and genitals patted down after waiting in a long line for these treats. The same folks who enjoy the choice of music that airlines play when one is on hold for hours to reach someone whose five-minute phone chat costs an extra \$25. I suspect even these passengers are not crazy about the 90-minutes-in-advance check-ins, the high percentage of departure delays, the consolidation and stranding, the lousy overpriced fast food

they must carry onboard and the limited flight and flight time choices – much less from a transportation mode that has no spare or backup vehicles.

Finally, were a creative, profit-driven OEM expanding on The Magic Coach, imagine what more could be done with a double-decker bus. Consequently, imagine how much lower the fares would be. What makes this possible is partly imagination. The key factors are geometry, geography, distance, varying densities, road conditions, roadway choices, speed limits and, of course, time. Great, decent and poor food lie everywhere for ground transportation modes. You can find delays, inconvenience, high fares, cookies, bad instant coffee, sodas, juice, turbulence and slightly-reclining, narrow seats with little legroom only on flights – although they may not go where you need to, even when you are not bumped to a different, much-longer, often-indirect flight with a long layover, that you did not even reserve.

Proof of Concept

Over my 22 years of monthly NATIONAL BUS TRADER columns on “Safety and Liability,” I have often footnoted concepts of dangerous and reckless with the concept of stupid. For those of you who recall a smidgeon of geography, or who have five seconds to glance at a map, think about how stupid it is to cover a two-dimensional space with a handful of rail lines spaced far apart that connects a handful of major and medium-size cities. Similarly, think how stupid it is to fill in the gaps by relying on absurdly-expensive, time-wasting, costly, energy-wasting, highly-polluting vehicles which must defy gravity to move anywhere from their extravagantly-expensive terminals surrounded by square miles of paved tarmac.

Regarding energy and pollution, I am hardly alone in my feelings about this comparison. The Swedes have actually added two words to their vocabulary: ‘Flygskam’ (which means “flight shame”) and ‘tagskyrt’ (which means “train brag” – the act of bragging, often on social media, about making more climate-friendly travel choices.) It takes little brainpower to understand the consequences of doing otherwise. One merely needs to skim through the extraordinary collage of climate change damage, in 193 countries, published in an article titled, “Postcards from a World on Fire” on January 1, 2022, by the *New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/13/opinion/climate-change-effects-countries.html>). Traveling when possible – much less when overwhelmingly beneficial to one’s self interest – by ground transportation makes a small contribution to limiting further climate

Survival and Prosperity

deterioration. It is only the failure, greed and corruption of the world's rich and famous that such choices have not become formal regulatory policy.

Now: Think about how even more stupid such alternatives are when we already have a saturation of roads and highways so thick that 60 percent of the landmasses of many cities is covered with asphalt. A single bus or motorcoach carries as many passengers as 40 cars. Why would public policy run counter to such innovation? Oops, I forgot: The airlines have far-larger lobbying groups. Plus, what Congressperson would be swayed by a free bus trip?

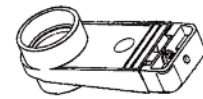
Good things do not come to those who wait. They come to those to act.

If you wish to whine about your crumbling motorcoach business, do not dare do so in my presence. Instead, you might think about sending a simple e-mail about your

interest in this concept to reception@bus-mag.com or even to einstein@transalt.com. You could post your interest on social media, or you could e-mail your Congressman or Congresswoman. Otherwise, counter to the cliché, good things do not come to those who wait. They come to those to act.

The opinions expressed in this article are that of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of NATIONAL BUS TRADER, Inc. or its staff and management. □

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Down The Road

Coming events of interest to readers of **NATIONAL BUS TRADER**. Submissions for the department should be directed to the editor. Unless otherwise indicated, events are not open to the general public.

June 3-4, 2022. **Museum of Bus Transportation's Spring Fling**. Hershey, Pennsylvania. For more information view busmuseum.org.

August 24-27, 2022. **FMCA's 105th International Convention and RV Expo**. Lincoln, Nebraska.

November 13-16, 2022. **Travel Exchange**. Reno Tahoe, Nevada.

January 12-16, 2023. **UMA Motorcoach Expo 2023**. Orlando, Florida. For more information view motorcoach-expo.com.

February 2-8, 2023. **American Bus Association Marketplace 2023**. Detroit, Michigan.



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