National Bus Trader

The Magazine of Bus Equipment for the United States and Canada

Volume XLV, No. 11 October, 2022

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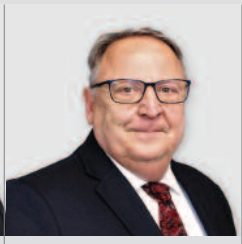

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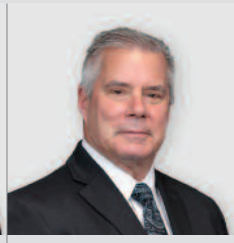

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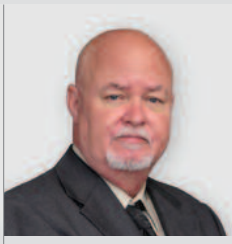

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Features

Cover Photo

This is our tribute to Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-reigning monarch of the United Kingdom, who passed away at Balmoral on September 8. The article starting on page 20 covers buses with very special graphics commemorating her 70th anniversary as the reigning monarch. STAGECOACH.

Departments

Advertiser's Index appears on page 40

Equipment News

MCI Celebrates Delivery of Its 10,000th J4500 Coach

Motor Coach Industries (MCI), a subsidiary of NFI Group Inc. (NFI) and North America's motorcoach leader backed by reliable in-field technical expertise, 24/7 roadside assistance and parts support, announced recently the delivery of 10 2023 model year MCI J4500 coaches to Cline Tours, one of the nation's leading operators in the Southeast, marking Cline Tours' 300th motorcoach and MCI's 10,000th J4500 built on its production line in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

MCI tailors Cline Tours' J-Series coaches to the company specifications. For its newest luxury J4500 coaches, Cline Tours selected the optional 360-degree cameras for a bird's eye view around the coach; the RGB variable lighting package, offering programmable, interior color options; and the optional next-generation Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) by Bendix Wingman Fusion, providing collision mitigation, lane departure and traffic sign recognition.

Cline Tours has been an MCI customer since 1996, when owner John McCommon acquired the Ridgeland, Mississippi-based tour and charter operator and purchased its first new MCI coach in 2004. Today, Cline Tours has a diverse fleet of 230 revenue-producing vehicles, including mini-buses, school buses, more than 100 45-foot MCI J4500 vehicles and six 35-foot MCI J3500 coaches that operate from nine locations in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee.

"We are very pleased to celebrate production of our 10,000th J4500, a big milestone, and to do so with customer Cline Tours," said Brent Maitland, vice president, Private Sector Sales and Marketing. "Cline Tours' consistent selection of MCI's J-Series speaks to the quality of the model, the relationship between our companies and MCI's responsiveness in providing reliable parts service and support. We appreciate the confidence Cline Tours has in MCI and we are committed to continuing our great relationship as Cline Tours continues to grow."

Cline Tours chooses the J-Series because of the models' reliable and fleet uniformity between its locations, according to John McCommon, president of Cline Tours.

"If you see one Cline Tours' coach, you've seen them all," McCommon said. "So many of our moves require multiple coaches. It's important to our customers. They like the same look."

Providing a young fleet with the newest safety features is another mainstay of Cline Tours' success. Before COVID-19, the company had a five-year fleet renewal replacement policy and it plans to get back to that as fast as it can, McCommon said. The new clean-diesel J4500 coaches are replacing the 2015 and 2016 models.

Having launched the MCI J4500 in 2001, the model has been the industry's best-selling model since 2004. Since then, the J4500 has undergone several redesigns, including a recent interior update that provides a more spacious cabin and industry-leading legroom. MCI also introduced a 35-foot version of the J-Series featuring all the styling and performance benefits of the 45-foot J4500. In 2019, Cline Tours was among the first operators to add six MCI J3500 coaches to its fleet.

"With regards to MCI, they are a totally first-class operation," McCommon said. "We don't have many issues with our J coaches and if we do, MCI jumps in to fix things. They supported us through COVID, and we've had a lot of other factors helping us to be in a substantially much better place today."

To celebrate the production and delivery milestones, MCI showcased its 10,000th J4500 coach at the International Motorcoach Coach Group (IMG) Strategic Annual Meeting on August 9-12, 2022, in Arlington, Texas. The meeting brought together IMG's tour and charter operator members throughout North America, including Cline Tours, for business, educational and networking sessions. IMG members are an elite group of 54 leading operators throughout North America that adhere to strict safety and operational standards to ensure the highest levels of service performance.

MCI is North America's public and private market motorcoach leader. Products include the luxury J-Series (an industry best-seller for more than a decade), the workhorse D-Series and the brand new zero-emission luxury and commuter coaches: the battery-electric J4500 CHARGE™ and MCI D45 CRT LE CHARGE™. MCI also provides maintenance, repair, 24-hour roadside assistance, parts and technician training through the industry's only Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) accredited and award-winning MCI Academy.

MCI recently completed the delivery of 10 2023 J4500 coaches to Cline Tours. This marks the 10,000th J4500 coach built on the MCI assembly line in Winnipeg, Manitoba as well as the 300th motorcoach for Cline. The coaches have several options including 360-degree cameras, the RGB lighting package and Advanced Driver Assistance. Originally launched in 2001, the J4500 model has been the most popular coach on the market since 2004.

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 7,500 team members in nine countries, NFI is a leading global bus manufacturer 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.

Megabus.com and Fullington Trailways Partner to Expand Bus Service Throughout Pennsylvania

Megabus.com, one of the largest bus companies in North America, has announced a new partnership with Fullington Trailways, a first-class transportation provider in the central Pennsylvania region.

This partnership will allow for expanded service options which will connect Philadelphia with 11 cities, Harrisburg with nine cities, New York City with 14 cities, Pittsburgh with 22 cities and State College with 18 cities.

"We're excited to have the opportunity to embark on this partnership to expand service throughout Pennsylvania," said Colin Emberson, VP Commercial for megabus.com. "As the demand for travel continues to grow, these new routes will offer many convenient new options for our customers and will be a great addition to our existing network."

"As we celebrate our 114th year of being in business, Fullington Trailways is delighted to be able to partner with megabus.com," said Jonathan Berzas, president and CEO for The Fullington Auto Bus Company. "We continue to provide affordable, reliable and convenient service in Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic region. This partnership offers our customers another avenue to purchase their bus tickets."

Schedules are now available, and tickets can be purchased for travel at us.megabus.com/.

Megabus and Fullington Trailways recently entered into a partnership with Fullington expanding service in the central Pennsylvania region. Included are routes connecting to Philadelphia, Harrisburg, New York City, Pittsburgh and State College. Fullington is a family-owned business that was originally founded in 1908.

Megabus offers city to city express bus service across North America with fares as low as $1. The safety of the customers is a top priority while also offering convenient, cost effective service. In an effort to increase transparency and provide customers with peace of mind, Megabus has recently introduced real time tracking on their buses. Customers can now monitor their buses with live departure and arrival times. Another key commitment is providing eco-friendly travel and reducing the carbon footprint whenever possible. Their buses emit the least carbon dioxide per mile when compared to other vehicles and are seven times more energy and fuel-efficient than single-occupancy automobiles. Megabus buses are three times more efficient in reducing carbon dioxide output when compared to commuter rail and six times more efficient than transit buses.

Fullington is a family-owned and operated transportation company that has been proudly serving the community since 1908. Fullington offers public line-run service and private transportation aboard deluxe motorcoaches, transit buses, limousines, vans, trolleys and school buses. Learn more at www.fullingtontours.com.

NFI Unveils Next Generation Hydrogen Fuel Cell-Electric Bus

NFI Group Inc. (NFI), a leading independent bus and coach manufacturer and a leader in electric mass mobility solutions, on September 8 announced that its subsidiary New Flyer of America Inc. and New Flyer Industries Canada ULC (together New Flyer) unveiled its next generation, zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell-electric Xcelsior CHARGE FC™ heavy-duty transit bus.

The Excelsior CHARGE FC uses environmentally-friendly hydrogen and fuel-cell technology to create electricity and to charge batteries for zero-emission extended-range, saving 85-175 tons of greenhouse gas per year from tailpipe emissions compared to a traditional diesel bus. With a range of more than 370 miles, the bus can be refueled in 6-20 minutes depending on the model and operating conditions and requires no overnight plug-in electrical recharging. The only tailpipe output is clean water vapor.

Built on proven Xcelsior® platform with more than 16,000 buses delivered to date, New Flyer's battery-electric and fuel cell-electric models have surpassed more than 15 million electric vehicle (EV) service miles. Drawing upon more than 20 years of experience producing fuel cell-electric buses for North American operators, New Flyer has applied the best of zero-emission design and innovative fuel cell technologies to develop its most advanced hydrogen fuel cell-electric bus yet.

New Flyer's Xcelsior CHARGE FC incorporates four distinct technology advancements to deliver a robust, long-range, high-performance hydrogen fuel cell-electric bus, including a lighter, simpler and more efficient heavy-duty fuel cell power module that is easer to service; recyclable, high-power batteries delivering a longer range of more than 370 miles of highway driving without refueling; a redesigned waterproof (IP 67

and IP 69 rated) battery enclosure providing improved serviceability; and a high-grade, electric drive traction system with up to 90 percent energy recovery.

"The Xcelsior CHARGE FC includes the latest technology innovations. The new streamlined design is easier to service and maintain, delivers longer range at highway speeds, improves energy recovery and is smart city-capable, making it the most advanced hydrogen fuel cell-electric bus available on the market," said Chris Stoddart, president, North American Bus and Coach, NFI. "With the Xcelsior CHARGE FC now added to NFI's market-leading EV and AV vehicle lineup, NFI is undeniably leading a new mobility era, delivering unmatched performance and sustainability benefits to transit operators."

The new FCmove™-HD+ fuel cell power module from Ballard Power Systems introduces a more compact and robust design with lifecycle cost reductions achieved through lower maintenance requirements, higher reliability and fewer parts. The integrated design houses all subcomponents in a single enclosure; it is smaller, lighter and uses 50 percent fewer parts, making it easier to service and maintain. It offers more than 97 percent fuel cell power availability while in service, and a wider operating range across a variety of climates.

New Flyer manufactures its energy storage system enclosures in its bus production facilities. The battery packaging, developed by New Flyer, utilizes a waterproof enclosure design that is lighter and easier to maintain, decreasing the number of parts by 90 percent. Its streamlined design enables technicians to simply "plug in" or "unplug" individual battery packs, significantly reducing bus downtime and allowing easy replacement.

High-power, rapid-charge batteries utilize an active liquid cooling system to maintain consistent temperatures and respond quickly to increases in power demand and environmental loads. The batteries are more efficient in demanding applications, offer 40 percent more energy and deliver 44 percent more range at highway speeds without compromising quality. The batteries are also appropriate for Li-Cycle's closed-loop, lithium-ion battery recycling program that facilitates full-circle sustainable mobility and material recapture through recovery of critical materials from lithium-ion batteries and reintroducing them into the supply chain.

Finally, the Siemens ELFA™ 3 traction system delivers up to 90 percent energy recovery through regenerative braking and weighs 69 percent less than ELFA™ 2, delivering a more efficient design through compact inverters and embedded drive controllers.

"More and more cities are making the commitment to 100 percent zero-emission fleets and Xcelsior CHARGE FC provides an ideal complement to battery-electric buses for agencies wanting to integrate the reliable long-range performance of hydrogen fuel cell-electric buses," said Jennifer McNeill, vice president of Public Sector Sales and Marketing, New Flyer and MCI. "The Xcelsior CHARGE FC also advances our effort to continue driving the adoption of zero-emission mobility with a safe, scalable and streamlined approach to the zero-emission manufacturing process. In turn, we simplify training for our production teams and those of transit agencies across North America to continue supporting reskilling, upskilling and workforce development to ensure successful zero-emission deployments."

The Xcelsior CHARGE FC is available in 40- and 60-foot lengths, and both models meet the Federal Transit Administration Model Bus Testing Program at Altoona, Pennsylvania. New Flyer remains the only North American manufacturer to offer both 40- and 60-foot fuel cell-electric models that qualify for federal funding.

To provide workforce development on Xcelsior CHARGE FC technologies, New Flyer will host a no-cost virtual training session on November 10, 2022, through the Vehicle Innovation Center (VIC). To register for the VIC session or to learn more about the Xcelsior CHARGE FC fuel cell-electric bus, visit newflyer.com/FC.

NFI is a leader in zero-emission mobility, with electric vehicles operating (or on order) in more than 110 cities in six countries. NFI offers the widest range of zero-emission battery and fuel cell-electric buses and coaches, and its vehicles have completed more than 70 million EV service miles.

Today, NFI supports growing North American cities with 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 VIC, the first and only innovation lab of its kind dedicated to advancing bus and coach technology and providing workforce development. Since opening in late 2017, the VIC has hosted more than 300 interactive events, welcoming 5,000 industry professionals for EV and infrastructure training.

New Flyer recently unveiled its Next Generation Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric bus, the Xcelsior CHARGE FC™. This model uses hydrogen for power and converts it to electricity in a fuel cell to power the bus with the only emissions being clean water vapor. The bus has a range of more than 370 miles and can be refuelled in six to 20 minutes.

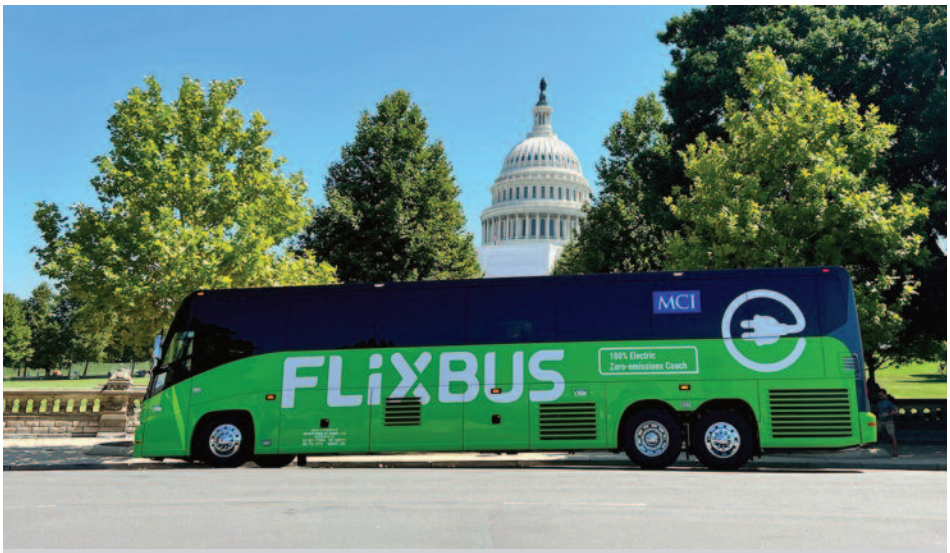
MCI's J4500 CHARGE™ Motorcoach Travels the U.S.

NFI's Motor Coach Industries (MCI) has recently partnered with FlixBus, North America's fastest-growing intercity mobility provider, to run an electric bus pilot program. From August 11-19, MCI's zero-emission J4500 CHARGE motorcoach travelled between Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one of the most heavy traffic corridors in the U.S.

This pilot project aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of ZEB transportation as an environmentally-friendly solution to reduce GHG emissions, while also providing passengers with the chance to experience the future of emission-free intercity travel.

$1.6 Billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding to Nearly Double the Number of Clean Transit Buses

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration recently announced $1.66 billion in grants to transit agencies, territories and states across the country to invest in 150 bus fleets and facilities. Funded by the President's Bipaprtisan Infrastructure Law, more than 1,100 of those vehicles will use zero-emmisions technology, which reduces air pollution and helps meet the President's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. This year's funding alone will nearly double the number of no-emission transit buses on America's roadways. For the first time, five percent of low- and no-emission bus funding will be used to train transit workers on how to maintain and operate new clean bus technology.



MCI recently partnered with FlixBus on an electric bus pilot program. An MCI zero-emission J4500 CHARGE coach ran between Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from August 11 to 19 in passenger service. The project demonstrated zero emission bus operations and gave passengers an opportunity to experience emission-free intercity travel.

"With today's awards, we're helping communities across America – in cities, suburbs and rural areas alike – purchase more than 1,800 new buses, and most of them are zero-emission," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttgieg. "Funded through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this announcement means more good jobs for people across the country, clean air in our communities and more affordable and reliable options to help people get to where they need to go.'

The bus grant awards – made under FTA's Buses and Bus Facilities and Low- and

No-Emission Vehicle programs – are FTA's first competitive grant selections under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The programs support the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to expand our nation's transportation infrastructure, create and maintain good-paying jobs and fight climate change.

"When a transit door opens, whether it is a bus, train or ferry, it is a great equalizer for everyone in our nation," said FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez. "With this tremendous amount of funding, the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law gives more Americans access to the opportunities that transit creates, more often, in more places. These investments also help us meet our goals of cutting transportation emissions, creating good-paying American manufacturing jobs and helping America's transit workers prepare for new vehicle technology."

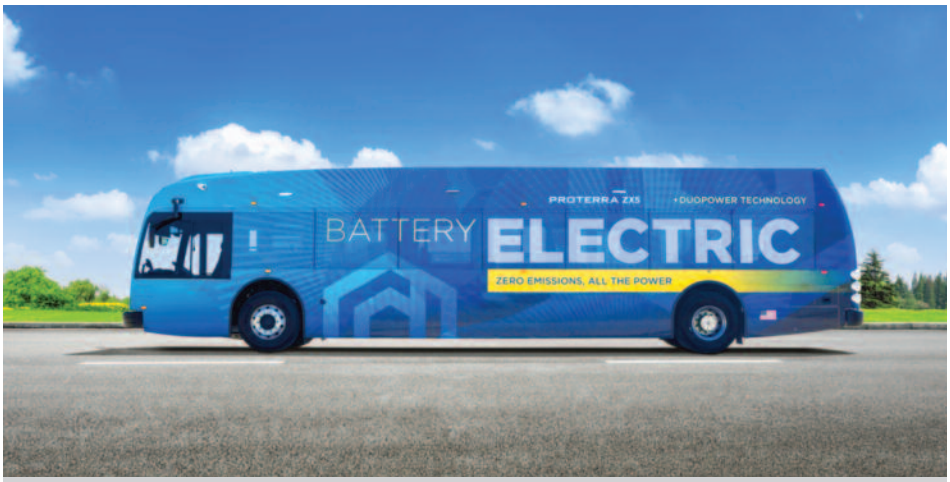
FTA's Low or No Emission (Low-No) Grant Program makes funding available to help transit agencies buy or lease U.S.-built low- or no-emission vehicles, including related equipment or facilities. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides $5.5 billion over five years for the Low-No Program – more than six times greater than the previous five years of funding. For Fiscal Year 2022, approximately $1.17 billion was available for grants under this program.

FTA's Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program supports transit agencies in buying and rehabilitating buses and vans and building bus maintenance facilities. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides nearly $2 billion over five years for the program. For Fiscal Year 2022, approximately $550 million for grants was available under this program.

Examples of projects selected to recevie Fiscal Year 2022 funding include:

- The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) will receive $116 milion to buy approximately 230 battery-electric buses to replace older diesel buses, electrifying nearly four percent of its 5,800-bus fleet and launching a comprehensive workforce training and development program. The project will improve the safety and reliability of transit service and improve air quality for residents and visitors to New York City.
- The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) will receive $104.1 million to buy approximately 160 battery-electric buses to replace older compressed natural gas buses as well as charging equipment. The project will improve safety, air quality and reliability for residents and visitors to the Los Angeles metropolitan area.
- The Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) will receive $54 million to build an operations and maintenance facility. The facility, which will be located in Memphis, will accommodate more than 300 vehicles and improve safety and ensure a good state of repair for the bus fleet.
- The Colorado Department of Transportation will receive $34.7 milllion on behalf of Summit Stage, a rural transit agency that provides bus service in Summit, Park and Lake counties in northeast Colorado, to build a bus depot for electrical charging and storage. It will replace Summit Stage's aging facility and prepare for a 100-percent electric fleet in the future.

In response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity, FTA received 530 eligible project proposals totaling approximately $7.72 billion in requests.



The Federal Transit Administration recently announced $1.66 million in grants to transit agencies, territories and states to invest in bus fleets and facilities. More than 1,100 of those vehicles will use zero-emission technology. This year's funding will nearly double the number of no-emission transit buses on America's roadways.

Nova Bus To Supply Up to 35 Articulated Buses to Honolulu

Nova Bus, a member of the Volvo Group and a leading North American transit bus manufacturer, has announced it has been awarded a contract for up to 35 Nova Bus Artics, the 60-foot clean air diesel bus model of Nova Bus, by the city and county of Honolulu, Hawaii. The buses will be delivered over a three-year period.

With this order, Nova Bus will be adding up to 35 articulated buses to the 24 Nova Bus 40-foot buses already part of the city and county of Honolulu's fleet. The city's transit system includes more than 107 bus

Nova Bus recently announced receipt of an order from the city and county of Honolulu for up to 35 buses. They are the 60-foot articulated clean diesel model and will delivered over a three-year period. The transit system operates more than 107 bus lines serving more than 600,000 passengers weekly.

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, Ohio – Photo by Mark Bealer

Northern Kentucky Skyline with Roebling Suspension Bridge – Photo by Liz Dufour

The Beast Roller Coaster at Kings Island, Mason, Ohio – Photo by Kings Island

Ark Encounter, Williamstown, Kentucky – Photo by Ark Encounter

Newport Aquarium, Newport, Kentucky – Photo by Newport Aquarium

Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, Cincinnati, Ohio – Photo by Robert Webber

Join the group travel show that works! Heartland Travel Showcase 2023 will be held in the Cincy Region, (Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky) March 10-12. With destinations and sellable group ideas in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Ontario, Heartland Travel Showcase is unmatched. Discover innovative tour experiences, learn new sales tactics, and meet with excited, unique suppliers focused on helping you get business. **#OnlyInTheHeartland**

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lines, serving more than 600,000 passengers on a weekly basis. The new articulated buses will support the modernizing of the city's fleet by delivering a fuel-efficient and EPA-approved clean air diesel propulsion system, as well as the capacity to support growing demand for public transit in the region.

"We are looking forward to delivering our first 60-foot articulated buses to Honolulu," said Martin Larose, president of Nova Bus. "We're excited to partner once again with the city and county of Honolulu to provide reliable, energy-efficient and safe buses to public transit users in the region."

The new Nova Bus LFSe+ electric bus recently completed testing at the FTA Altoona testing center. Testing opens the door for U.S. federal subsidy programs to purchase the buses. Nova Bus is a member of the Volvo Group and completes buses for the U.S. market at their plant in Plattsburg, New York.

The popular TECO Line Streetcar in Tampa recently celebrated reaching one million riders in fiscal year 2022. Arpan, the one-millionth rider and a medical school student, was given a prize pack that included a restaurant gift card. Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022, the line operates between the Convention Center and Ybor City, passing several attractions along the way.

The TECO Line Streetcar Celebrates a Million Rides in Fiscal Year 2022

The TECO Line Streetcar celebrated one million riders in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) on August 31 by surprising a lucky rider with a prize pack featuring a $100 gift card donated by Columbia Restaurant.

The lucky rider, Arpan, rides the Streetcar five days a week to medical school and was on his way to USF Health Morsani College of Medicine when staff surprised him as the millionth rider.

"I appreciate it. I take it (the streetcar) every day to med school and it's very useful," said Arpan.

The TECO Line Streetcar has seen quite a resurgence in FY22, breaking the previous annual ridership record of 850,788 trips in FY19 and setting all-time monthly ridership records.

'We are elated to celebrate a milestone of million rides this year," said Michael English, president, Tampa Historic Streetcar. "It is quite an achievement to set an all-time ridership record just out of a pandemic which at one point saw the Streetcar only operating essential service."

The TECO Line Streetcar will be celebrating 20 years of service in October 2022.

Nova Bus Completes the Altoona Test for Its Long-Range Battery-Electric Bus, the LFSe+

Nova Bus, a member of the Volvo Group and a leading North American transit bus manufacturer, has announced that its long-range, 100 percent battery-electric bus, the LFSe+, has successfully completed the Bus Testing Program of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) operated by the Altoona Bus Testing Center in Pennsylvania. This rigorous evaluation aims to certify the safety and efficiency of buses through a series of tests whose results are objectively analyzed.

In addition to attesting the reliability of the LFSe+, the FTA certification allows future transit bus buyers to access various U.S. federal subsidy programs and to comply with contractual criteria of certain Canadian customers. The successful completion of these tests therefore allows Nova Bus to position itself strategically on the North American market.

The LFSe+ buses intended for the Canadian market are assembled at the Saint-Eustache plant in Quebec and those intended for the American market at the Plattsburgh plant in New York State.

Thanks to its great autonomy, its low maintenance costs, as well as the elimination of any emission of pollutants and greenhouse gases, the LFSe+ is a first-choice solution for the transition to sustainable public transport.

"Achieving Altoona certification for our LFSe+ fills us with pride. It is one of the highest marks of recognition of quality and durability that our vehicles can receive," said Martin Larose, president of Nova Bus.

Nova Bus, member of the Volvo Group, is a leading provider of sustainable transportation solutions in North America. Its portfolio includes electric, hybrid, CNG and clean diesel buses, high-capacity vehicles, as well as integrated intelligent transport systems. Nova Bus accompanies transit authorities and bus fleet operators in their transition to electromobility with its flagship LFSe+ long-range electric bus, combining the proven Nova Bus structure with the latest innovations in electric drive. Nova Bus is committed to helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and positively contributing to a greener economy. For more information regarding Nova Bus products and services, visit www.nvoabus.com.

IMG Launches New Quote Functionality

After an extensive search, the International Motorcoach Group (IMG), North America's premier motorcoach network, selected The Bus Network (TBN) to modernize its Web site quoting tools.

TBN, creators of the industry-leading SalesDriver tool, has helped IMG launch new functionality on its Web site. This tool allows customers to plan their charters quickly and easily with state-of-the-art visual trip planning. Requests are then sent to IMG operators who serve the area the trip will be traveling.

Bronwyn Wilson, president of IMG, had this to say about the project, "We are excited to be the first network to make these powerful tools available to our customers. We have seen that customers are shifting their online shopping expectations. This change is a huge leap forward in delivering a more familiar and effective experience when they book charters with IMG operators. This initial launch is the first stage of an ongoing project to enhance customer and IMG operator online experience."

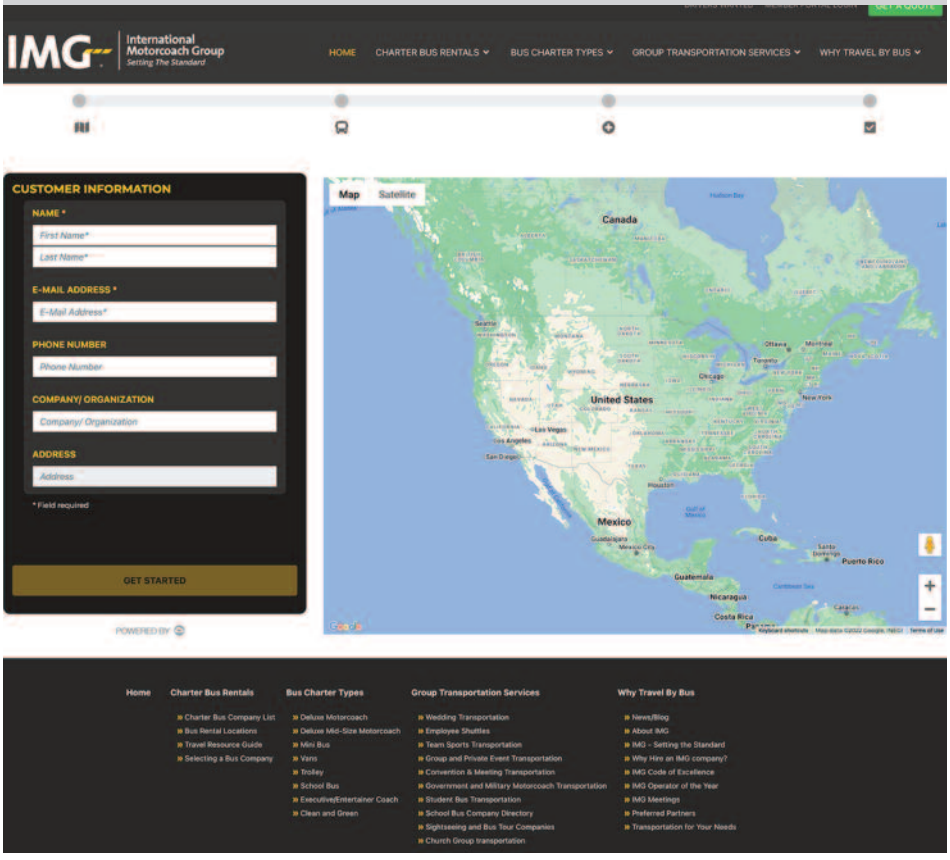
The new tool developed by TBN allows customers to plan their trips online using a familiar Google Maps-powered interface. During the process, they can also choose the type of vehicle they want to book and any additional items or services they may need during the trip.

TBN's CRO Christian Riddell, said this when asked about the project, "We are thrilled that IMG made this move. Customers all over North America are switching to the TNB tools, and having a network such as IMG make that jump is a testament to the power of these next-generation solutions. We have delivered over 60,000 quotes to operators, and customer feedback is consistent. These tools make it easier and faster for them to get exactly what they want, and it feels comfortable, easy to use and familiar. We are excited that people shopping for IMG-certified member companies can now access these same benefits."

IMG's Web site has long been a resource for customers interested in choosing operators who embrace the network's commitment to customer service and safety and want a nationwide network's reliability. As an invitation-only network, customers can confidently deal directly with operators who own and operate vehicles and eliminate the risk of dealing with fly-by-night brokers. These new tools make access to these benefits more accessible than ever before.

Customers can see this new tool on the IMG Web site at quote.imgcoach.com.

The Bus Network (TBN) recently completed a modernization of the International Motorcoach Group (IMG) Web site quoting tools. Customers can plan their charters quickly while online and have their request forwarded to IMG operators in the area. Customers can also select the type of vehicle they want and book additional items or service during the trip.



Stars From the World of Sports Love the New Mercedes-Benz Tourrider

The American Thrasher Brothers Trailways bus company attracted attention at the World Games 2022 in Birmingham, Alabama, with a Mercedes-Benz Tourrider Premium. The motorcoach, painted metallic black, was used exclusively to transport selected top athletes to the various competition sites around Birmingham.

Owner Alan Thrasher was more than proud of this high-profile order: "There was no better time for us to showcase the exceptional Mercedes-Benz Tourrider Premium motorcoach than this superlative event. All athletes immediately felt at home on board. The vehicle is equipped with 56 travel seats and completely provides all the things you'd expect in a Mercedes-Benz, making a strong impression on all those involved."

Specially designed for the North American market, the new 45-foot, three-axle motorcoaches with chrome-plated center star set new standards in the U.S. and

Canada in terms of design, comfort, technology and individuality.

Thrasher Brothers Trailways is a 50-year-old family-owned company that specializes in chartered transportation exclusive touring coaches while also serving routes extending through the entire country.

Alyce Davidson, owner and secretary/treasurer of Thrasher Trailways, stated, "The drivers and athletes were highly impressed with the coach's comfort and ride. The time on the coach allowed drivers to share a bit of the southern hospitality and charm with the athletes."

A total of 3,600 athletes from all over the world took part at the World Games, which took place in the U.S. for the second time since 1981. One hundred ten nations fought for medals in 38 non-Olympic sports, including powerlifting, billiards and tug-of-war.

NFI Receives a New Contract for 10 EVs and Infrastructure from California's SamTrans

NFI announced a new contract from San Mateo County Transit (SamTrans) for 10 next generation, zero-emission Xcelsior Charge NG™ 40-foot transit buses, 20 ABB 150kWh plug-in chargers, project coordination and commissioning by NFI Infrastructure Solutions™ to support the zero-emission bus (ZEB) deployment in San Mateo County.

The new EVs will deliver clean air benefits with immediate greenhouse gas reduction in San Mateo County while advancing the fulfillment of the California Air Resources Board's Innovative Clean Transit regulation, requiring agencies to transition bus fleets to 100 percent zero-emission by 2040.

SamTrans is one of 11 California agencies to rely on NFI's advanced battery-electric bus and infrastructure solutions to enable the transition to zero-emission at scale.

VDL Bus & Coach Delivers 10 Futuras to The Bus Ontime

The Spanish transport company The Bus Ontime has added 10 VDL Futuras to its fleet. They will be used for company transport, school, tourism and events. VDL Bus & Coach and The Bus Ontime are working together for the first time.

"Despite some difficult years, the coach industry will always be of great importance to Spain and the tourism sector in particular," said Hector Rodriguez, managing director VDL Bus & Coach Espa a S.L. "We are delighted that our customers continue to invest in their businesses by purchasing new coaches, relying on our Futuras for their cost-effectiveness and high level of passenger comfort. It goes without saying that VDL Bus & Coach Espa a S.L. will strengthen its activities in the field of sales of new vehicles, parts and service. Spain is one of the most important growth markets for VDL Bus & Coach in Europe. We therefore look forward to a long-term cooperation with The Bus Ontime."

NFI recently received an order from San Mateo County Transit (SAM Trans) for 10 new buses. They are the next generation zero-emission Xcelsior CHARGE NG™ 40-foot transit buses. Included are 20 ABB 150kWh plug-in chargers, project coordination and commissioning.

With the increase in freedom to travel, especially for the tourism sector, there is light at the end of the tunnel again. "The coach market in Europe is showing signs of recovery," indicates Pieter Gerdingh, business manager coach of VDL Bus & Coach. "We have recently increased the production of coaches, which has enabled us to respond well to the needs and demands of the European market."

The VDL Futura range has more than proved itself in terms of reliability and cost-effectiveness. In particular, the competitive kilometer price due to the low weight and fuel consumption combined with the high passenger capacity adds value to increase profitability, especially at a time when the price of fuel is skyrocketing. The economical Euro 6 driveline has a minimal impact on the environment. In the VDL Futuras comfort, safety, technology and design are perfectly matched.

The Futuras for The Bus Ontime have a powerful DAF MX-11 engine with 450 hp (seven units) or 410 hp (three units)

Thrasher Brothers Trailways attracted attention at the World Games 2022 in Birmingham, Alabama, by operating a Mercedes-Benz Tourrider premium coach. Painted metallic black, the coach was used to transport athletes to competition sites around Birmingham. Built in Turkey, the coach seats 56 passengers.

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By entering into strategic alliances, VDL Bus & Coach Espa a S.L. intends to strengthen its position in the Spanish market. The new commercial network consists of representatives spread throughout Spain, not only on the mainland, but also on the islands. They are active in the sale of the full range of VDL vehicles, parts and service. Rodriguez stated, "They are supported by the VDL Bus & Coach organization in Madrid in offering the quality and reliability VDL is known for. Thanks to the cooperation with our partners, we are able to be closer to our customer in all aspects of our business."

VDL, a leading European bus builder, recently delivered 10 of its popular Futura coach models to The Bus Ontime in Spain. The buses are equipped with DAF MX-11 engines; three units with 410 horsepower and seven with 450 horsepower with all equipped with Predictive Power Control, the intelligent cruise control. Support is provided by the VDL facility in Madrid.

Alexander Dennis announced on August 24 that it would expand its zero-emission product line with electric buses fully designed and engineered in-house. In the past, Alexander Dennis had outsourced this equipment. These new models will be available for delivery starting in late 2023 and will include a new small bus as well as an electric double-decker.

At the end of January 2022, VDL Bus & Coach Espa a S.L. revealed another ambition to meet a specific demand in the Spanish market: the introduction of a new innovative rental concept, Rentalbus. It offers the perfect solution for passenger transport companies. VDL Bus & Coach is collaborating on this concept with Onrent, a company with vast experience in the rental business, from passenger cars to lorries. Rentalbus has its own sales team and operates out of its headquarters in Madrid.

Alexander Dennis Adds In-House Integrated Electric Buses

Alexander Dennis (Alexander Dennis Limited, ADL), a subsidiary of NFI Group Inc. (NFI), one of the world's leading independent global bus manufacturers, announced on August 24 that it is expanding its zero-emission bus portfolio with the addition of new electric bus products fully designed and integrated in-house using its own expertise. Available for customer delivery from late 2023, a new small bus and a new electric double-decker will complement the highly successful products of the BYD ADL partnership, which will continue to be sold and supported.

Buses for the United Kingdom and Ireland will be fully built in Britain. Details and technical specifications will be released over the coming months.

Internationally, the new platform will be tailored to the requirements of cities, transport authorities and bus companies in each territory, in line with Alexander Dennis's philosophy of providing the optimal solution for every market demand. The recently announced order for Enviro500EV electric double-deckers in Hong Kong will be part of this new generation of zero-emission buses.

The hugely successful battery-electric BYD ADL Enviro200EV and BYD ADL Enviro400EV products built in partnership with BYD will continue to be offered in the UK, Ireland and New Zealand, giving operators an unrivalled choice of solutions. Alexander Dennis's second-generation hydrogen bus, the Enviro400FCEV, will also

continue to form an important part of the company's zero-emission bus range and will be delivered to launch customer Liverpool City Region later this year. Already fully designed and integrated by Alexander Dennis, it shares technology and key driveline components with the upcoming new battery-electric models.

"Alexander Dennis continues to lead the transition to zero-emission mobility and this unparalleled investment in the latest zero-emission technology gives operators, transport authorities and councils the freedom to choose from an even wider range of buses," says President and Managing Director Paul Davies. "We have always been highly respected for our product innovation, and throughout this difficult period for our industry we have continued to challenge our engineering team to evolve our range. The result will be a brand new fully in-house designed, integrated electric double-deck and small bus product giving our customers access to the latest zero-emission vehicle technology from a single, trusted source. Investments can be made safe in the knowledge that everything will continue to receive the first-class aftermarket support that we are renowned for."

New Generation VDL Citea for the First Time on Display

Berlin will be the setting for the official presentation of the new generation VDL Citea. This world premiere will take place during the international exhibition InnoTrans, from September 20-23 in the capital of Germany. VDL Bus & Coach will demonstrate its new city bus, an LF-122, which is entirely based on an all-electric driveline.

The introduction of the new generation of Citeas is VDL Bus & Coach's answer to the challenges of tomorrow's public transport. Whereas in recent years "Aiming for Zero" was the ambition, zero emissions is now the norm for the liveable city. This requires new technologies and a different way of thinking. VDL's new Citea bus concept offers solutions without compromise.

Alex de Jong, business manager public transport, stated, "With the new generation VDL Citea, VDL offers a public transport product range in which there is no reason not to use a zero emission public transport bus. The necessary conditions such as passenger capacity, range and total cost of operation are all met in accordance to market demand, zero compromise."

VDL Bus & Coach will be showing the VDL Citea LF-122 for the first time in Berlin during InnoTrans, the world's largest transport technology exhibition. Not only is the range of the new VDL Citea significantly improved, one of the most important starting points in the development of the new generation Citea was to increase the number of passengers and their comfort.

De Jong stated, "During InnoTrans visitors can experience the new generation VDL Citea for themselves. We will be present on the outdoor area, where we will present the new generation VDL Citea on the so-called bus display. In addition, we will organize knowledge sessions in and around the bus and all the necessary information about the new generation VDL Citea will be available for our guests."

The core activities of VDL Bus & Coach consist of the development, manufacturing, sales and after-sales of a wide range of buses and coaches, the conversion or extension of mini and midi buses and the purchase and sales of used buses. VDL Bus & Coach consists of multiple bus companies that operate cooperatively in the global market. Manufacturing takes place in Western Europe. VDL Bus & Coach places high value on quality, safety, durability, the environment, low fuel consumption, comfort and low maintenance costs. In the transition to zero emission transport, VDL Bus & Coach offers turnkey solutions and is not only a bus supplier, but also a system supplier.

Sales of VDL Bus & Coach products take place through a worldwide network consisting of corporate-owned sales offices, importers and agents in more than 30 countries. For after-sales and maintenance, the client can count on rapid, hassle-free assistance from VDL Bus & Coach employees in any of the many service locations. An extensive distribution network ensures that spare parts and accessories are delivered to the requested destination as quickly as possible. VDL Bus & Coach is one of the largest bus and coach producers in Europe.

Marcopolo Exports First G8 Coaches to Argentina

After conquering Brazil, with sales in all markets where the manufacturer operates, the Generation 8 of Marcopolo coaches is already present in some of the main countries of South America and has now arrived in the Argentinian market. Andesmar S.A., in the province of Mendoza, acquired 11 units of the Paradiso G8 1800 double-decker model, which will be used in tourist operations and on interstate lines in that country.

VDL showed their new generation Citea transit bus at the InnoTrans in Berlin from September 20-23. The newest addition to the popular Citea line is the LF-122 model. Improvements include an increased number of passengers and increased passenger comfort.

"The receptivity of our international customers is yet another example of the high level of technology and innovation that the Generation 8 has introduced for transport operators.

Marcopolo recently exported its first G8 model coaches to Argentina. Andesmar S.A. in the province of Mendoza received 11 of the Paradiso G8 1800 double-decker model that will be used for transporting tourists and on interstate lines. Founded 72 years ago, Marcopolo is located in Brazil and has sold buses that are running in more than 100 countries.

The G8 models are already being put into operation in different countries in South America and now in Argentina as well, one of our biggest markets in the region," says André Armaganijan, director of international buses, commercial operations and foreign market.

With a total length of 14 meters (46 feet) and a Scania K 440B 6x2 chassis, the Paradiso G8 1800 DD has a capacity for 58 passengers, 46 on the upper deck, in half-sleeper seats, and 12 on the lower deck in sleeper seats, all with USB sockets, retractable seatbelts and cup holders. The vehicles are equipped with Valeo CC430 P3 air conditioning and entertainment systems, with a DVD player and six monitors, DPM (mobile seat device) for full accessibility, reverse camera, curtains, electronic destination sign, luggage area and overhead luggage rack.

Andesmar S.A. has been a Marcopolo customer since 1998. The company was created in 1967, shortly after Guido Badaloni, founder of the group, acquired the Expreso Camp Los Andes (ECLA) company, providing services between Mendoza and La Consulta (120 kilometers). ECLA laid the foundations for the creation of Andesmar Autotransport, which initially made trips between Mendoza and Bahia Blanca, in the province of Buenos Aires.

In 1972, Autotransporte Andesmar continued to grow and expand throughout the Argentinian territory, in addition to expanding its business to Chile. Today, in the hands of the third generation of the Badaloni family, the company offers the longest route in Argentina and transports more than 1.8 million passenger per year, covering about 45 million kilometers.

The Paradiso 1800 double-decker is the Generation 8 model most acquired by transport operators for its safety, comfort and efficiency characteristics, with the highest standards in the Brazilian market, especially for the more than 140 new attributes for drivers, passengers and operators introduced in the road segment. The model has an unprecedented design, with Marcopolo DNA and an aerodynamic coefficient of only 0.379, which ensures lower fuel consumption and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Founded 72 years ago in Faxias do Sul (RS), Marcopolo is the leading bus body manufacturer in Brazil and ranks among the largest manufacturers in the world. The company continuously invests in improvement, technology, design and expansion, producing solutions that contribute to the development of collective passenger transportation. With factories on five continents, the vehicles produced by the company drive on the roads of more than 100 countries. ❑

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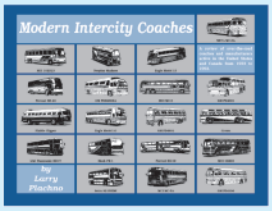

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Bus Equipment People

Motor Coach Industries

Motor Coach Industries (MCI), a subsidiary of NFI Group Inc. (NFI) and North America's motorcoach leader backed by reliable in-field technical expertise, 24/7 roadside assistance and parts support, recently announced that **Tom Wagner** has joined the company. **Wagner** will be working alongside **Patricia Ziska**, vice president of private sector sales, who will retire at the end of the year after more than a four-decade career with MCI.

Tom Wagner

Upon **Ziska's** retirement, **Wagner** will lead MCI's team of regional sales vice presidents in the U.S. and Canada. The team sells new MCI models and pre-owned coaches to private sector operators.

Having joined the MCI's public sector sales team in 2005, **Wagner** has built a 15-year career at MCI, rising to a vice president position before leaving in 2020 and joining another original equipment manufacturer.

Ziska, who has held many leadership roles within MCI and is widely respected throughout the industry, will work with **Wagner** and the MCI sales team prior to her retirement. Among the milestone achievements in her career is the launch of many new products and services, including the MCI J4500, the industry's ongoing best-selling coach model.

Paticia Ziska

"We value the talents **Tom** brings to his position and all that **Pat** has accomplished in her extraordinary career at MCI," said Brent Maitland, vice president, private sector sales and marketing. "**Tom** has a depth of experience managing complex contracts. He knows our product lines and manufacturing processes and has proven himself to be a strong sales leader. **Tom** helped to shape our reliability – and relationship-driven business philosophies and is both trusted and respected industry wide. He has the skills to lead our sales team and continue **Pat's** legacy."

While at MCI, **Wagner** contributed to the success of MCI's D-Series Commuter Coach with public transit agencies, including New Jersey Transit, and was involved in the launch of the compressed natural gas and hybrid electric powertrain. He also helped to introduce the next generation, low-entry D45 CRT LE and its zero-emission, battery-electric version. **Wagner** holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and economics from Northern Illinois University.

Ziska joined MCI in 1976 and became the company's first female vice president in 1996. Her career achievements also include the launch of MCI's earliest green marketing environmental campaigns for motorcoaches. She has been an instrumental member of industry associations including IMG, Trailways, UMA and ABA. She was an influential supporter of ABA's Women in Buses and helped build the Motorcoach Marketing Council.

"MCI has provided me with an astounding career, and I value the friendships I've made along the way," **Ziska** said. "Our leadership team will be strengthened by **Tom's** contributions, and I look forward to many more MCI milestones ahead of us."

Masats

Masats has announced the appointment of **Ignacio Elburgo** as the new CEO of Masats.

Elburgo is a person with a great professional career and with training as an industrial engineer from the University of Navarra, and a master's degree in Business Administration MBA and international postgraduate degree from New York University. He has worked in important companies such as Fagor, Ficosa and Zobele, and in recent years he has been general manager of major projects at Fluidra.

Elburgo's experience in large companies and international projects will give Masats a boost to carry out its strategic growth plan, which is planned for the coming years.

The company is very grateful to Solé for these years of intense work, where in addition to winning important clients in the bus sector, he has led the company into the railway and railway infrastructure sector.

"The Board would like to thank Solé for his great personal and professional effort to lead Masats to become a reference in the international market."

With the new stage that begins, the objective will be to increase the competitiveness of the company, the impulse to innovation and the digitalization of products and processes. All this without losing the essence of the company, which is based on the value of people, customer service and innovation, with products that facilitate the mobility of people, and all this with a necessary focus on sustainability.

Ignacio Elburgo

Masats is a benchmark in accessibility systems for public transport, including access doors and ramps or lifts for people with reduced mobility for both buses and trains. It is also active in the infrastructure sector, improving passenger safety and mobility with platform systems, such as PSD platform screen doors. From its plant in S. Salvador de Guardiola (Barcelona), where more than 300 people work, and with a production subsidiary in Kennesaw (U.S.), it exports to more than 45 countries. ❑

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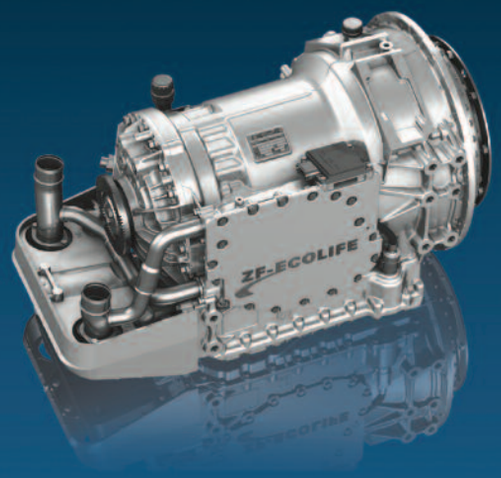

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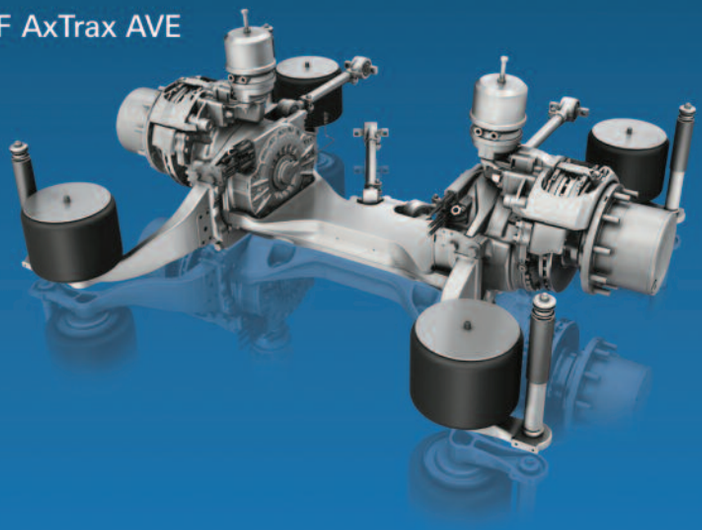

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Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Buses

Photos courtesy of Stagecoach South

One of the more interesting and unusual examples of specialized graphics on the side of buses can be found on two Alexander Dennis Enviro 400 double-deck buses operating for Stagecoach South in southern England. The special graphics commemorate the Platinum anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II. This is a very unique event since records indicate that no prior British monarch served for 70 years.

Billboard buses and special graphics have been around for decades. They became more popular in the 1980s when stainless steel was replaced by painted bus sides, effectively creating a rolling billboard. Over the years special exterior graphics have encouraged tourism, announced special events, commemorated anniversaries and delivered a message to those nearby. When the industry moved from paint to film, it opened the door for personalized and attractive exterior graphics. There are two buses running in the south of England that may be among the most unusual and unique in this category. Their distinctive and noteworthy exteriors commemorate the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. One has to ask: When is the last time you saw a bus exterior commemorating the 70th anniversary of a reigning monarch?

Elizabeth was born in 1926, the oldest daughter of Prince Albert Frederick Authur George. In 1936, her father became King George VI. During the war, Elizabeth joined the women's services, became a second lieutenant and drove and repaired military trucks. She and her husband, Philip Mountbatten the duke of Edinburgh, were in Kenya on February 6, 1952 when her father the king died. This made her Queen Elizabeth II. The formal coronation took place on June 2, 1953 where she said the coronation oath that bound her to the service of the people of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth. Following the ceremony, millions of spectators stood in the rain to cheer the Queen and Duke on their five-mile procession.

As Great Britain celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, bus operator Stagecoach South has unveiled two platinum jubilee-themed buses to mark this unprecedented anniversary. Both are double-deck Enviro 400 buses from Alexander Dennis. The buses were officially launched in the week of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne, which took place on February 6, 1952. The platinum jubilee buses will be seen across the year, on services throughout Hampshire, Surrey and West Sussex.

Managing Director of Stagecoach South Edward Hodgson commented: "The whole nation and our commonwealth countries are gearing up for a big celebration and we felt that it was important for us to honor this historic milestone within the communities we serve. We are, therefore, proud to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, with these two special buses that

will be used throughout the year on our local bus networks."

The two buses feature the official Platinum Jubilee emblem and have been finished in a white, platinum and purple adaption of the Stagecoach livery scheme. The platinum color represents Her Majesty's 70 years on the throne, while the purple color is synonymous with royalty.

Steve Thorpe, marketing officer for Stagecoach South, said "This is such an historic moment, as it is the first time that any British monarch has attained 70 years on the throne. We hope that our customers and residents across the area will enjoy traveling on, and seeing, the jubilee buses on the streets throughout the year."

The jubilee-themed buses will initially enter service at Andover depot in Hampshire and Worthing depot in West Sussex, before commencing a tour of the other six depots throughout the South region during 2022.

Carla Stockton-Jones, UK managing director for Stagecoach, said: "We're proud to be playing our part in the celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee that are taking place across the nation and the wider Commonwealth. The Jubilee is a celebration of the Queen's decades of service to the country and it is bringing communities across the UK together. That's why it's fitting that our operatng companies up and down the country are marking the historic milestone with a special livery on buses that connect our communities and bring people together right across the UK.

"Since the Queen took the throne in the 1950s, we've seen a huge step forward in the quality of bus travel, with investments in new technology to make journeys easier for our customers and new greener vehicles to help protect our environment. Looking ahead there is a bright and strong future for the bus, helping economic recovery following the pandemic, levelling up our communities and delivering net zero. I'm confident that we will see a new golden age of bus travel with buses being even more relevant and important in 2050 as they were in 1950.

Editor's Note: Sadly, Queen Elizabeth II passed away at Balmoral Castle on September 8 at the age of 96 after having served for 70 years as the reigning monarch of the UK. These Jubilee buses may never be repeated. ❑

This photo shows one of the two Platinum Jubilee Buses operating in Barnsley. Plans are to move the two special buses between eight depots throughout the South region during 2022 so as many people as possible get to see them. The unique paint scheme, and particularly the purple color on these two special buses, can be contrasted with the standard livery of the following bus.

This photo provides a better view of the special lettering and graphics on the side of the buses. A large version of the Platinum Jubilee logo appears on the street side of the bus, which is the right side because they have right-hand drive. These two buses obviously contrast with the rest of the fleet in both color and graphics.

The Inflation Reduction Act: EV & Infrastructure Funding, Credits & Incentives

How Do Ground Transportation Industry Stakeholders Benefit?

by Matthew W. Daus, Esq.

The new Inflation Reduction Act includes a substantial section on zero emission and electric vehicle incentives and tax credit. In addition to trucks, the provisions of the act include electric automobiles, school buses and passenger buses. It also goes beyond that to talk about charging stations and related equipment. MCI.

On August 16, 2022, President Joe Biden signed a historic budget reconciliation package that includes clean energy provisions and tax reform to fight inflation, invests in domestic energy production and manufacturing, and reduces carbon emissions by roughly 40 percent by 2030. The legislation, named the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA or the Act), is a scaled-back version of the Democrat's Build Back Better (BBB) plan. The Act will raise $739 billion in revenue and invest $369 billion in energy security and climate change and another $64 billion to extend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) over the next 10 years.

The IRA supports a mix of transportation sector decarbonization technologies and strategies that will apply to operators of taxis, for-hire vehicles, and buses. There are numerous financial incentives to encourage the purchase of electric and hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles and the deployment of charging stations and related infrastructure. The Act also provides grants to expand clean energy vehicles and infrastructure. Whether these incentives will be enough to drive the U.S. forward to meet Biden's goal of 50 percent of electric vehicle (EV) sale shares in the U.S. by 2030 remains to be seen. For now, the transportation industry should explore these new and expanded tax credits and incentives to see what is available for their businesses.

An explanation of some of the transportation-related provisions of the IRA is below. If anyone has questions about grants, funding, guidance and how they might be able to apply for – or otherwise benefit from – the unprecedented spending on green transportation initiatives, reach out to Windels Marx Transportation Practice Group at https://www.windelsmarx.com/practices/transportation for advice and counsel at mdaus@windelsmarx.com or (212) 237-1106.

EV Tax Credits

Clean Vehicle Credit (Sec. 13401)

The IRA extends the $7,500 consumer income tax credit for the purchase of new electric vehicles, with a $3,750 tax credit if it meets a "critical materials" requirement and another $3,750 if it meets a "battery component" requirement. The credit will be available at the point of sale. The Act renews the credit starting in January 2023, and carries it through until the end of 2032. Under the new credit, the former 200,000-vehicle cap is removed and all manufacturers have access to unlimited credits as long as they fulfill the other requirements of the Act.

The IRA makes several significant changes to the existing tax credit for electric vehicles in section 30D of the Internal Revenue Code. These changes will phase in over time. Effective immediately after the Act's enactment (after August 16, 2022), the tax credit is only available for qualifying electric

vehicles for which final assembly occurred in North America. Further changes to the eligibility rules will begin in 2023, including a requirement that at least 40 percent (increasing over time) of critical minerals in the battery must come from the U.S. or a country with a free-trade agreement with the U.S. There is also a requirement that vehicles have an MSRP of less than $55,000 for cars and $80,000 for SUVs and trucks. In addition, the IRA imposes a household income cap of $300,000 for joint returns, $225,000 for heads of household and $150,000 for all others.

Preliminary guidance from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) addresses two important issues regarding the North American assembly requirement and vehicles purchased in 2022:[1] First, those who entered into a written binding contract to purchase a new qualifying electric vehicle before August 16, 2022, but did not take possession of the vehicle until on or after August 16, 2022, may claim the EV credit based on the rules that were in effect before August 16, 2022 (including those involving the manufacturing caps on vehicles sold). Second, for those who purchase and take possession of a qualifying electric vehicle after August 16, 2022, and before January 1, 2023, the final assembly of the vehicle had to be completed in North America, otherwise, the same rules in effect before the enactment of the IRA apply.

The U.S. Department of Energy has a list of Model Year 2022 and early Model Year 2023 electric vehicles that may meet the final assembly requirement, available at https://afdc.energy.gov/laws/inflation-reduction-act. There are dozens of vehicles on this list, including the Ford Mustang MACH E, Nissan Leaf and Tesla Model 3, all of which the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) has approved for use as a taxi. The TLC approved Tesla Model 3 as a taxicab vehicle model already, and the other vehicles are part of the current pilot program to support the use of battery-electric vehicles until the TLC proposes and enacts vehicle specifications for EVs. Also on the list is the Chevrolet Bolt EV, which is a vehicle model used for rideshare. However, because some models are built in multiple locations, there may be vehicles on the list that do not meet the final assembly requirement in all circumstances. The eligibility for a specific vehicle should be confirmed by entering its vehicle identification number, or VIN, into the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's VIN Decoder tool, available at https://vpic.nhtsa.dot.gov/decoder/

Expectedly, tax credits for electric and clean automobiles are included in the act. However, it does make several significant changes to the existing tax credits in the Internal Revenue Code. In addition to current purchases, there are also credits for previously-owned clean vehicles. The act also covers hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and electric charging stations. JOE NOMIAS.

The new act amends the earlier Clean Air Act to allocate grants and rebates to businesses and government agencies to fund replacement heavy-duty vehicles with zero-emission vehicles. Programs should start by December 14, 2022. Shown here is a New Flyer Xcelsior CHARGE NG electric bus. NEW FLYER.

Consumers that purchase a qualifying EV can continue to claim the electric vehicle tax credit on their annual tax filing. Starting in 2024, the IRA establishes a mechanism that will allow car buyers to transfer the credit to dealers at the point of sale so that it can directly reduce the purchase price.

Credit for Previously-Owned Clean Vehicles (Sec. 13402)

The IRA includes a new tax credit for individuals worth the lesser of $4,000 or 30 percent of the sale price of pre-owned electric vehicles. Like the credit for new vehicles, there is an income limit: the credit would be available for household income of $150,000 for joint returns, $112,500 for a head of household and $75,000 for all others. To qualify as a previously-owned clean vehicle, the model year of the vehicle must be at least two years earlier than the calendar year in question. Unlike the tax credit for new vehicles, the tax credit for previously-owned clean vehicles is not contingent on regional assembly or sourcing requirements. This credit applies to vehicles acquired after December 31, 2022.

Qualified Commercial Clean Vehicles (Sec. 13403)

The IRA provides a new business tax credit of up to 15 percent of the cost of certain commercial clean vehicles, increased to 30 percent for vehicles not powered by a gasoline or a diesel internal combustion engine or the incremental cost of the vehicle (the amount the purchase price of the commercial clean vehicle exceeds that of a vehicle comparable in size and use powered solely by a gasoline or diesel internal combustion engine). The qualified commercial clean vehicle credit is capped at $7,500 for vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of fewer than 14,000 pounds and $40,000 for all other vehicles. The Treasury Department and IRS will release more information and guidance on the commercial clean tax credit – including, hopefully, what constitutes a "commercial vehicle" for the purposes of this tax credit.

To qualify, the vehicle must be treated as a motor vehicle and manufactured primarily for use on public streets, roads and highways, or qualify as "mobile machinery" (e.g., vehicles that are designed to perform the function of transporting a load over public highways). In addition, the vehicle must either (1) be propelled to a significant extent by an electric motor that draws electricity from a battery with a minimum capacity of 15 kWh (reduced to 7 kWh if the vehicle's gross vehicle weighting is less than 14,000 pounds) and capable of being recharged from an external source of electricity, or (2) satisfy certain requirements for "qualified fuel cell motor vehicles" under existing section 30B of the Internal Revenue Code. There are no income limits on the eligibility of the taxpayer purchasing the vehicle for the qualified commercial clean vehicle credit. Also, there is no North American Assembly requirement. This credit applies to vehicles acquired after December 31, 2022.

Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles (Sec. 60101)

The IRA amends the Clean Air Act of 1963 (P. L. 88 – 206) and allocates $1 billion in grants and rebates to businesses, states, tribes and municipalities to fund the replacement of Class 6 and Class 7 heavy-duty vehicles with zero-emission vehicles. This includes school and transit buses and garbage trucks. This money can be used to replace trucks and equipment with models that emit zero exhaust emissions, defined as any air pollutant or greenhouse gas. The program must begin no later than December 14, 2022, and money will remain available through September 30, 2031.

EV Manufacturing Incentives

Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing (Sec. 50142)

The IRA appropriates $3 billion for the Secretary of Energy to make direct loans for the cost of establishing or expanding U.S. manufacturing facilities that produce advanced technology vehicles or components with low or zero GHG emissions. The money is allocated for fiscal year 2022 and will remain available through September 30, 2028.

Domestic Manufacturing Conversion Grants (Sec. 50143)

The IRA appropriates $2 billion for grants for domestic production of hybrid, plug-in electric hybrid, plug-in electric drive and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles. The money is allocated for fiscal year 2022 and will remain available through September 30, 2031. Recipients must contribute 50 percent of the cost of the project carried out using the grant.

EV Infrastructure Incentives Credits & Funding

Alternative Fuel Refueling Property Credit (Sec. 13404)

The IRA extends through 2032 a currently expired tax credit for alternative fuel refueling property, such as electric charging stations or hydrogen fuel cell recharging stations. The maximum tax credit would be 30 percent of the property's cost, capped at $100,000 per item of property (increased from $30,000 under existing law). To qualify for the maximum 30 percent credit, a business that installs an EV charger will need to ensure that laborers and mechanics employed in the construction of the facilities meet new prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements. The credit for projects that do not meet these requirements is reduced to six percent. For home EV charging station installations, the tax credit is 30 percent of the costs of hardware and installation for qualified property, like EV chargers. This credit applies to properties placed in service after December 31, 2022.

Grants to Reduce Air Pollution at Ports (Sec. 60102)

The IRA further amends the Clean Air Act and allocates $3 billion to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce air pollution and emissions at ports via the installation of zero-emissions equipment

Electric school buses are also included in the act. Actually, school buses are a good use for electric power because of their limited miles of use and time to be charged overnight or between runs. Shown here is a Thomas electric Jouley school bus. THOMAS BUILT BUSES.

and technology. The EPA must establish a competitive grant and rebate program. The money could go toward planning and permitting in connection with the purchase or installation of zero-emission port equipment or technology and the development of qualified climate action plans. Eligible applicants include port authorities, state, regional, local and tribal governments, or private entities that either apply in partnership with the previously mentioned eligible applicants, or that own, operate, or use the facilities, cargo-handling equipment, transportation equipment or related technology.

Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program (Sec. 60501)

Environmental justice is a significant focus of the IRA. There is $3 billion for states, tribes, municipalities and community-based nonprofit organizations for environmental justice and climate justice block grants. This money is allocated to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for a competitive grant program to improve walkability, safety and affordable transportation access via construction projects and to mitigate or remediate negative environmental impacts in disadvantaged or underserved communities. Of the $3 billion, $1.11 billion is for similar grants in communities that are economically disadvantaged, have entered or will enter into a community benefit agreement with community representatives, or have demonstrated a plan for employing local and impacted residents. Grant recipients must contribute 20 percent of the total project cost, with an exception that the federal cost of a project in an underserved community may be up to 100 percent. The money is allocated for fiscal year 2022 and will remain available until September 30, 2026.

What's Next?

The IRA contains significant appropriations for EVs and related infrastructure that will be available in fiscal year 2022, which begins October 1, 2022. The only change to the EV credit that already took effect when the President signed the law on August 16, 2022, is the North American assembly requirement. However, manufacturers will need to overcome hurdles for vehicles to qualify for the credit, and it may take years before many consumers will see the EV tax credit available to them because of manufacturing and supply chain constraints.

Others changes to the EV credit will go into effect over the coming months and years. Manufacturers like Chevrolet, GMC, and Tesla that have already reached the 200,000 EV credits cap will not qualify until January 1, 2023. At that time, tax credits for pre-owned clean vehicles (section 25E of the IRS Code) and for commercial clean vehicles (section 45W of the IRS Code) will be available, too. The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the IRS will release more information on all the clean vehicle credits in the coming months.

The Biden Administration set a target of 50 percent of electric vehicle sale shares in the U.S. by 2030. Currently, EV sales account for only 5.6 percent of the total market.[2] It remains to be seen whether these recent changes will be enough to meet that mark. ❑

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[1] https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/plug-in-electric-drive-vehicle-credit-section-30d
[2] https:// www.coxautoinc.com/market-insights/ev-sales-hit-new-record-in-q2-2022/

Looking for a One-Seat Ride

by Larry Plachno

This is really a Part II of our effort to provide ideas to help transit operators. Our first article, "Is Transit in Trouble?" in the September issue of NATIONAL BUS TRADER, covered some of the history of transit and how the private automobile has been its biggest competitor. Now we will take a close look at the one-seat ride and how it might help transit operators.

One of the oft-mentioned reasons for people not riding public transportation is that the buses do not go where the people want to go. To resolve this, some transit operators have been working on First Mile and Last Mile options and alternatives to help move passengers from their origin point to the bus or train and from the bus or train to their destination point. However we find that historically, passengers would prefer a one-seat ride. It is not only the most popular alternative for local trips, but it also seems to be the most successful and sometimes the most profitable alternative for bus operators.

Cost and Convenience

Why do people choose one form of transportation over another? There are actually some rather complex answers to this, but for our purposes we can look at cost and convenience. Cost would seemingly favor public transportation over private alternatives. However, it appears that those making this transit decision overwhelmingly are likely to place more emphasis on convenience than cost. I have seen numerous studies showing that passengers are unhappy about changing from one mode of transportation to another. Almost invariably, transfers cut down on ridership. Historically, the statistics show that the form of transportation with a one-seat ride or at least fewer transfers will win.

Records suggest that in 1902, something like 80 percent of local transit was provided by streetcars. Much of the remainder included walking, bicycles and even horses. However, 20 years later in 1922, more than 90 percent of transit trips had gravitated to the private automobile. While the automobile cost more to operate than riding streetcars, it offered a one-seat ride from home to work. Autos went to places where the streetcars and later buses did not.

This situation only got worse over the years as the pattern of local trips became less and less similar. In earlier years, many railroads, rapid transit lines, bus and streetcar lines served the central city as well as some major traffic corridors. As families, stores, companies and businesses began moving to the suburbs, we lost those defined corridors. Transit trips no longer followed major patterns and became very diversified. It became nearly impossible for fixed route buses to deal with this. As a result, we saw more people depending on their private automobile for their local transportation needs.

While cost seems to favor public transportation over other modes, most passengers place a higher value on convenience. As a result, much of public transit has had to deal with American's love of their automobiles and their preference for a one-seat ride. This same trend to door-to-door service has been obvious in other areas including freight, retail sales and package delivery. MCI.

An interesting side note to this is that there were attempts to find ways to provide more effective suburban transit. Chicago has a railroad line through much of its suburbs that was originally built as a belt line to move freight around the city instead of through it. However, attempts to develop a system of shuttle buses serving railroad stations on this line proved to be somewhat unworkable. Travel times would be high because of the transfers required and the time it would take to complete the average trip using a bus, the train and another bus.

Buses and a One-Seat Ride

This brings us back to the concept of a one-seat ride. The overwhelming majority of people have decided to use their private automobile for their transit trips. Some researchers have suggested that a measurable number have left public transit in favor of taxis, Uber, Lyft and other TNCs. There are statistics showing that 15 percent of local traffic in New York City has gone in this direction. One has to note that in addition to providing a one-seat ride, these alternatives also come to the passenger rather than expecting the passenger to come to the buses.

While many people might think that buses cannot provide a one-seat ride, that is not the case. Unlike streetcars, buses do not need to follow tracks and can go where they

are needed. The actual facts are that more buses provide a one-seat ride, or at least come close, than you might think. In addition (surprise!) the buses that provide a one-seat ride or come close tend to be among the most profitable.

For the most part, school buses provide a one-seat ride from home to school. In most cases it is the schools that pay for the service. While the actual routes and stops may vary slightly from year to year, basic service continues relatively unchanged. Although the numbers are smaller, there are numerous industrial routes operated by major corporations or government agencies. Most involve transporting employees to remote facilities or work sites. These can include mining operations and some rather rugged roads. It is interesting that MCI provides an optional heavy-duty package on its coaches for operations like this.

There are larger employers who run buses for their staff. Neoplan at Lamar, Colorado provided buses from nearby communities. The schedule was inbound to the factory in the morning and then back home after quitting time. The buses were driven by employees who worked at the factory. I know of several larger employers, including amusement parks, that provide bus service for their staff. A major expansion on this has taken place in Silicon Valley in recent years. Some of the larger employers, many involved with the Internet, operate employee shuttles to and from work. It helps in finding and retaining staff.

There are also some interesting variations to this theme. For example, some of the commuter coaches going into New York City will serve the Wall Street area for those employed there. At one time there were also two bus operations that catered to the Jewish people who worked in a specific area in the Big Apple.

There are several bus operations that provide transportation to specialized or remote industrial sites for workers. MCI even offers a special package on their coaches for operators providing this service over unpaved and dusty roads. It has recently become increasingly popular with major employers in the Silicon Valley area. MCI.

One question that I have been asked is whether it is possible to operate a one-seat ride bus service without the involvement of the employers or for multiple employers. The answer is yes, and I have done just that. At one point I was involved with helping establish and run commuter buses to train stations in some Chicago suburbs. In discussions with commuters, I learned that many were dissatisfied with the need to change from bus to train and then back to a bus again to reach their place of employment. They indicated that the mode changes were both inconvenient and time consuming. Many said that they would give up the train ride in exchange for a one-seat ride.

As a result, we started a service called Executive Commuter Coach and sold seats on a monthly basis. We picked up passengers at suburban corners and transported them to downtown Chicago as well as up Michigan Avenue. There was a limited opportunity to switch to an earlier or later bus. While they gave up the train ride, they got reclining seats, reading lights and a restroom. Today they would also get Wi-Fi. The service was successful. While the coaches had to battle traffic on the expressway, the time difference compared with the train and two buses was less than expected because no time was lost transferring between modes.

When you actually look at the numbers, a surprising amount of bus operations provide a one-seat ride or come close. Virtually all of school bus operations provide a one-seat ride from home to school or come reasonably close. This photo shows a Thomas Saf-T-Liner arriving to pick up a group of children on their way to school. THOMAS BUILT BUSES.

Looking Beyond Transit

It is interesting if not downright sobering to realize that this movement to a one-seat ride and door-to-door service is not limited to the transit industry. It has appeared in many other places in our society including other transportation, freight operations, entertainment and even retail sales.

This same trend was obvious in other forms of transportation at the same time that

After losing some of their freight business to trucks, railroads were able to gain some of it back with piggyback or TOFC (Top of Flat Car) service. This combined the advantages of the truck for pick-up and delivery service with the advantages of the railroad for the long haul in between. Railroads have also developed a way to transport standard shipping containers that are used on ocean-going ships. 652234/5348 IMAGES.

it appeared in buses. Railroads and the early interurban lines carried most of the traffic between cities in 1902. As time went on they had the same problem as transit because passengers began moving to the private automobile. This only got worse for the railroads as better roads and then the interstate highways were built. Remaining interstate passenger service is now vested in Amtrak and requires a subsidy too.

Moving away from passengers, we can note that virtually the same thing happened to the freight industry in this same era. In 1902, essentially all freight was carried by the railroads or the early interurban lines. Smaller items like express and less-than-carload-lots (LCL) were transported in express and baggage cars. I might add that some railroads and interurban lines offered pick-up and delivery service; which would be the freight equivalent to what today is called "First Mile, Last Mile" in the transit business. By 1922, the shorter express freight movements were increasingly being taken over by trucks because they offered door-to- door service – the equivalent of a one-seat ride in transit. As time went on, and as roads and trucks improved, trucks took over more and more of this freight business just like private autos and Uber taking over transit trips.

It is interesting that eventually the railroads reclaimed some of this business back with truck trailers carried on rail cars (TOFC). This combination took advantage of the best attributes of each mode by using trucks for the pick up and delivery but the railroad for the longer haul in between. This works well because the freight does not complain about the extra time required to move the trailers on and off the train. It would be interesting to see if someone could come up with a similar program for commuters. However, putting buses on railroad flat cars could be awkward and would probably take more time than what would be saved by using the train.

Could the concept of railroad piggyback service be applied to private automobiles? Yes, this does work. The best example I know of is the EuroTunnel rail connection between England and France under the English Channel. Automobiles are driven into special railroad cars for the journey and passengers stay with their autos. Other trains carry trucks, but their drivers ride in a railroad passenger car. This works well with automobiles because competition is a slower ferry boat. It may not be as practical in commuter applications because of the additional time required to drive on and off the train.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Greyhound and other bus companies did a booming business in package express. As with everything else, the biggest problem was pickup and delivery service; the traditional "First Mile, Last Mile" concern. Eventually, a new company called UPS got started and took over much of this business by offering door-to-door service.

One of the best examples for transporting passengers along with their autos can be seen on the EuroTunnel operation between England and France. Special railroad cars are used that allow the automobiles to be driven inside the train and then off again on the other side of the English Channel. This photo shows automobiles being driven down the ramp leading to a train that is filling up prior to departure. ©AD MESKENS/WIKI-MEDIA.

You can see this same trend in entertainment. At one time people went to shows and theaters or movie houses for entertainment. This slowed down when you could rent VHS tapes and then DVDs to watch movies at home. Now, even the trip to the video store is no longer necessary because you can download movies right to your home.

You can also see this same thing in retail sales. In 1902 it was difficult for rural residents to get to the big department stores. Hence, the stores provided mail order catalogs so people could order what they wanted and have it delivered. Today, this has expanded to being able to order on the Internet and have things delivered to your door. People are increasingly expecting things to come to them.

Transit Thoughts and Questions

All of this brings up numerous thoughts and questions that might provide some ideas for transit operations in the future.

• It is obvious that an overwhelming number of passengers would prefer to have the transportation come to them instead of having them go to the transportation.

• Most passengers would prefer a one-seat ride over changing modes during their journey.

• Are our regular route buses going where the passengers want to go?

• Are our regular route buses going where the passengers not riding want to go?

• Instead of planning routes on a computer, it might be worth while to ask the passengers where they want to go.

• Would smaller buses or even vans make more sense in providing more personalized service? In some situations would subsidized car or van pools make sense and provide service more attractive to riders?

• Think outside of the box. Streetcars were big vehicles following a fixed route. Is that what people want today? ❑

While on the EuroTunnel train, drivers and passengers ride along with their cars inside the rail cars so they can roll off easily at the other end of the line. Amenities are minimal but the duration of the trip is not much different than commuting. It would be interesting if someone could figure out how to apply this concept to commuters. IPIERRE.

This movement to door-to-door service has gone well beyond transit and can be seen in freight, retail sales and package delivery. Package express, once primarily carried by railroads and buses, has mainly shifted to other carriers because they provide both pick-up and delivery. Pick-up and delivery in freight and packages is the equivalent of "First Mile, Last Mile" concerns in transit. UPS.

Historical Bus Fest 2022

Article and photos courtesy of Dave Millhouser

The now-annual Bus Fest event is sponsored by the Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center. They drive several of their historical buses to the event and put them on display. Here is a row of buses containing several of the New Jersey historical buses. *Below:* One of the more interesting buses on display was this MCI G4100. There were only a limited number of these built before Greyhound elected to order the 45-foot length. This one had been operated by Trans-Bridge Lines in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The Historical Bus Fest drew more than 430 enthusiasts, bus industry veterans and retirees to the Starr Tours facility in Trenton, New Jersey on September 17. This annual event, produced by the Friends of The New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center, is a showcase for restored transit and highway coaches.

In addition to dozens of buses, ranging in age from a mid-1950s GM PD4104 to a brand new 45-foot Irizar demonstrator, one of the most popular features of the gathering is a marketplace for historic bus industry memorabilia and artifacts. Old trade magazines, posters, schedules, brochures and badges mix with both antique and brand new model buses.

There were 29 of the Friends of The New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center's historic fleet on display, as well as at least 20 "visiting" coaches. A large part of the evolution of bus design from WWII to the present was available for folks to see and touch.

Chris Johnson's 45-foot Eagle motor home is an interesting story. He has brought the coach to several gatherings over the past few years. Like many conversions, it takes a lot of time to get things right when a you work a regular job too. It is fun, and instructive, to watch Johnson's progress from event to event.

Folks traveled from as far away as the Midwest, New England and the Southeast. Jeff Silver of Iconic Replicas drove his converted MCI from Florida, and used it as the backdrop for his display of "Awesome Diecast" models.

Perhaps the rarest coach present was an MCI G4100. Formerly operated by Trans-Bridge Lines out of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in "Platinum Service," it is one of only 25 built. Living in retirement at the Museum of

In addition to the historical New Jersey buses, at least 20 other individuals and companies drove to the event with their own buses. They ranged from a brand new Irizar demo coach to a 45-foot Eagle converted to a motor home. Bus people came from several different states to attend the event.

Bus Transportation in Hershey, Pennsylvania, this was a welcome opportunity to stretch its legs.

There are several historic bus gatherings during the course of each summer, literally spread all over the U.S. Each has its own unique tone (a subtle hint that if you love bus history, you might want to hit as many of them as possible).

Bus Fest's special flavor is its ability to draw lots of people who are, or were, serving in the bus industry – a very knowledgeable crowd. Wandering through the yard, you could learn a lot and hear all sorts of fascinating (and sometimes true) stories.

For more information on the Friends of The New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center, their mission and future events, check out their Web site at www.friendsnjthc.org . ❑

A major part of the Bus Fest is a marketplace held inside the garage. Vendors offered a wide range of bus items including trade magazines, posters, schedules, brochures and badgers. There were also numerous models available of antique and modern buses.

The Big Picture

by Dave Millhouser

There are numerous examples of individuals who have come up through the ranks at bus companies and other businesses while learning many, if not most, of the skills and gaining the experience required in the operation. They often make good managers because they understand how things work and get "The Big Picture." Unfortunately, many administrators and regulators have little experience or knowledge of the industries they supervise. OBERHOLSTER VENITA.

Duane was a large and powerful man – but not too fast. That was good, because he was chasing me around the garage yelling something about my "frying the engine" of a bus I had "repaired."

He had asked me to swap the compressor on a 4104, and I figured I had done a fine job – no extra parts lying around, and it seemed to be pumping air as the engine revved. There WAS this pool of green liquid under the bus. It never occurred to me that the compressor was water cooled, and I had drained a substantial part of the coolant to install the new unit – and was now overheating the engine.

Duane was a fine man – an excellent, if excitable, mechanical mentor, but I had missed the big picture, and did not understand how all the components worked together. Experience is a great teacher, over the years I never repeated that mistake – saving energy for newer and bigger blunders.

The announcement that the administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration was stepping down offers an opportunity. The administration could appoint a replacement with actual transportation operating experience. Admittedly the motorcoach piece is dwarfed by the trucking industry so there is little hope of a "bus person" in that slot, but someone who has a had transportation operating experience would be a plus. FMCSA's first administrator was a retired trucking executive, but since then law enforcement and politically connected association executives have dominated the position.

Those skills are useful and relevant, but is not time for someone who has had to juggle **all** the balls.

News articles tout the departing administrator's successful efforts to eliminate unsafe carriers and her promulgation of new regulations that make commercial transportation safer. Generally speaking, the companies that FMCSA closed down were unsafe, but the current regulatory blitz has also taken a serious toll on competent, well intended carriers.

It is uncertain whether new regulations will substantially improve safety in industries that have enviable (if not quite perfect) records.

Over the years the Federal Aviation Administration has been criticized when they failed to strike the correct balance between safety and promoting the aviation industry. They may not always get it right, but at least they recognize that there is a balance. At the end of the day, if you want to be completely safe, agoraphobics have it right. In recent years a departing administrator made the points that we should put safety first, profits second, and that her job was not to better the industry, only to improve safety.

A regulator with operating experience might have a better understanding of the big picture – how all that fits together. It is easy to take shots at facets of a business when you do not have responsibility for the outcome. Profits pay for safety. Successful companies (and their insurers) have a major stake in preventing accidents. Rules should be written and enforced by people who see the big picture and understand the practicalities of operating safely in the real world.

The folks doing enforcement are well intentioned "investigators," determined to find something wrong. They always do, because you are functioning in the real world with human beings doing the work.

Years ago *Bus and Motorcoach News* ran a story about John Hill who entered the private sector after a career in government and 2½ years as FMCSA's administrator. In essence, he said that he wished he had known then what he learned from operating a business. In an interview with the *Indianapolis Star*, Hill said, "I would like to have better understood the effect of laws and regulations on society that I now have experienced as a small-business owner."

It would have been nice if he had that experience **first**.

A 100-percent safe industry looks great on a regulators resume, but at what cost? Bad companies have been driven out, but good companies have been forced to either shrink in order to pay for compliance (that may have minimal impact on real safety), or to raise prices. Few new companies (with the innovation and energy they bring) are entering the business. That may seem good to established carriers, but long-term consequences could be ugly.

Many regulators and administrators in Washington do not understand how business works. They may also not have experience in the industry they are working with. The result can sometimes be less than desirable. WENHAN CHANG.

In our case this discourages the public from riding coaches – forcing many into automobiles where their accidents do not mar the bureaucratic record.

The solution is reasonable rules, applied with common sense, by people who have real world experience. A great place to start would have been a new administrator who has "walked the walk."

When my niece Jenny was 12 years old, I let her drive my 45-foot demo coach around the parking lot (closely supervised). To the best of my knowledge Jenny has more actual operating experience than any FMCSA administrator since 2002. She just graduated college and is available for the job – just in case anyone in the administration actually reads this. ❑

Sadly, many of the bus industry administrators and regulators have had little knowledge of and experience in the industry. Hence, they may not get "The Big Picture" and understand how everything works together. This may result in regulations that do more harm than good. SETRA/DAIMLER.

Survival and Prosperity by

Ned Einstein

Congestion Pricing and Congestion Thinking

Those like myself with nearly a half-century's experience in the public transportation industry have a luxury of knowing about a lot of stuff. One example is my context for New York City's imminent implementation of a congestion pricing program. In its current, half-baked form, this program threatens to introduce yet another barrier to motorcoach operations.

This program threatens to introduce yet another barrier to motorcoach operations.

This installment concludes with my recommendations for reversing this travesty of injustice and small thinking. These are my personal opinions – in this case, aggressive and perhaps overboard opinions – not the policies or recommendations of NATIONAL BUS TRADER. Unique among transportation industry publications, NATIONAL BUS TRADER provides a platform for those like myself to explore and present of all sorts of ideas, often unconventional, often critical, often innovative – including lessons from other modes.

Origin of Species

In 1977, in my second "day-gig" after I obtained my Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, I became the project director of a transportation group within a Washington, D.C-based public interest think tank named Public Technology, Inc. (PTI). With purported guidance from representatives of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Urban Consortium for Technology Initiatives, we were funded by various federal agencies to conduct projects to address these communities' most critical problems. Once a year, these groups came together to produce a "top 10 list." Within the transportation group (funded mostly by UMTA [now the FTA]), our central focus was fixed route transit. In 1977, our top priority was the decline in efficiency, or "productivity" (as it was then referred to). Like almost everything those days, our projects were completely bipartisan. Tilting the board in one direction or another was heresy.

As part of then-President Johnson's Model Cities Program (1964), within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Johnson created the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA). Most importantly, UMTA paid for 80 percent of the cost of a transit agency's or municipality's buses. When the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) was formed in 1967, UMTA was almost immediately transferred from HUD to USDOT. UMTA then began providing operating assistance to these agencies and municipalities (requiring both city and state "matching" funds). When I joined PTI 10 years later, these funds were covering only 50 percent of transit's operating costs. Sixty-two percent of every $1 of UMTA funds translated immediately into wage increases. (Depending on one's political sensibilities, this was not necessarily a bad thing, since this helped swell our middle class and narrow the income gap between white and blue collar workers). Nevertheless, transit agencies were beginning to panic.

As PTI's transportation group's number one priority, this concern led us to develop and conduct the National Conference on Transit Performance, held in Norfolk, Virginia, in September, 1977. I designed the conference, wrote the proposal for funding it and had the luck and privilege of organizing and running it (since my far-more-qualified boss was pregnant at the time). I also wrote the Conference Proceedings.

At the Conference, 200 hand-picked experts from a spectrum of disciplines – transit officials, academicians, economists, union representatives, planners, etc. – from throughout the country spent two days (at 10 tables of 20 people each) exploring countless solutions. Every "table's" conclusions were summarized and presented to the full conference on its third day. Many ideas were terrific. Almost none were implemented.

Specious and Squandered

Long before robots, corruption and politics began destroying the public transportation industry (already affected by the "urban sprawl" which almost killed it before President Johnson's rescue), the industry, in the 1970s, was swollen with great ideas: Park-and-ride lots. The "500-mile" rule (limiting

The major enemy was traffic. The solution was buses.

senseless air travel). Early applications of Dial-A-Ride (initially a 1969 "experiment" to use vans as feeder services to a commuter rail line between South New Jersey and Philadelphia). Ridesharing. HOV lanes. Alternative work schedules. A profusion of ferry boats (often carrying automobiles as well as other passengers). On and on. The major enemy was traffic. The solution was buses. The fact that one full bus replaced roughly 40 cars was the rationale, and our mantra. Any thought of hampering transit's growth and success was blasphemy.

Following the 49,500-mile, 99.5 percent completion of President Eisenhower's Defense Highway Act of 1954 – a critical goal of national, strategic importance – reducing traffic was considered a necessity. Along the way, someone in Singapore stumbled upon a unique strategy that was successfully implemented, and which enjoyed tremendous popularity and political support: Congestion Pricing. To its credit, USDOT offered $1 million to any major U.S. city willing to initiate what was then known as a "demonstration project." This offer held the promise of a turning point to fend off the collapse of the public transportation industry. Not a single city stepped forward to accept the offer.

The reality was that, at this point in our history, technical solutions were further taking a back seat to politics. No American elected official was willing to jeopardize his or her electability in "The Car Country" for some scheme that would naturally alienate motorists. The public interest and national goals be damned. Not to denigrate a decade of magnificent progress (1964 through 1973) in what was then, and still is, the planet's most powerful country, in 1977, we were still reeling from our loss of the Korean War and the Vietnam War (not what the Koreans and Vietnamese called them). While we were not about to promote "no stinking motorist-crushing innovation," no discussion of congestion pricing included the idiotic notion of applying its fees to buses. Anyone who

dared suggest such a thing would have been laughed out of the room.

Dreamers and Disregarded Derrieres

Needless to say, traffic became worse and worse in urban areas – despite the "urban sprawl" that lured tens of millions out of the "inner cities." For a considerable number of reasons I discussed in many previous installments of NATIONAL BUS TRADER, transit ridership was still high in the early 2000s. Yet traffic levels were becoming insufferable.

The clues were hardly surprising. Seven or eight years ago, an issue of a publication by New York City's Downtown Alliance noted that while there were 2,500 residential units below Wall Street (mostly in Battery Park), another 5,000 were under construction. My six-story Fulton Street apartment-and-office at the time (six blocks above Wall Street) was soon replaced by a 30-story office building. Talks about building a third tunnel (between the Holland and Lincoln tunnels) went nowhere, while the New York/New Jersey Port Authority spent $4 billion upgrading the World Trade Center PATH station (transporting mostly stock market and other employees residing in New Jersey to and from the city's "Financial District"). Manhattan became taller and taller, and more and more over-crowded. The vast majority of New Yorkers hated this trade-off, but it made no difference. All that mattered was money and profit. Traffic was a politically-accepted bi-product about which no voters could do anything.

Hope for "small favors" occasionally emerged. Late in his second or third term (2002 through 2013), former Major Bloomberg tried to gain support for a congestion pricing demonstration project designed to charge a fee to motorists (and motorcoaches) operating between Central Park South (59th Street) and Canal Street (running through Chinatown) during daytime hours. The plan was rejected by the State Assembly largely because its members felt that Mayor Bloomberg did not spend enough time upstate lobbying for this program – an omission which many Assemblymen, particularly upstate, interpreted as a sign of disrespect.

The "formal" excuse was articulated by elected officials from the "other four boroughs" and surrounding areas (mostly Westchester and Rockland counties, and Brooklyn and Queens): Question: "Why should my constituents commuting from the poorer boroughs (and the rich suburbs) subsidize the Uber-Rich in Manhattan?" Regardless, politics overruled common sense and popularity, as it has increasingly done at the expense of increased traffic and lower transit ridership.

Too Late or Too Trivial

Recently (see https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/09/nyregion/congestion-pricing-manhattan.html), the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYCMTA) conducted dozens of public hearings about new attempts to launch this same project (some boundaries may have changed since the first attempt a decade earlier). Automobile fees could be as high as $23 a day.) In perspective, of course, parking one's car in the Financial District costs $70 a day.) Otherwise, congestion pricing is practically on New York City's doorstep. The plan is estimated to bring in $1B billion a year. To place this "windfall" in perspective, one need merely reference the $4 billion upgrading of the World Trade Center PATH station. Or perhaps the fact that, by the end of 2015, the city had allowed 15,000 Ubers to enter the city without purchasing a taxi "medallion" – which, at the time, cost $1.1 million. The owners of few of these unneeded vehicles would likely have purchased any medallions. Had they, this first 15,000 Ubers would have raised $16.5B billion. (The city recently capped the number of [still-medallion-free] Ubers at 60,000. Clearly, some of them would have paid something for a medallion.)

The point is that, in New York City, $1B billion a year in additional revenue is a footnote. The revenue from motorcoach fees would barely cover the cost of the printer cartridges to make hard copies of the program's budget.

A modern motorcoach takes up less space than three small cars glued together.

Hypocrisy and Impunity

Throughout my 23 years writing monthly columns for NATIONAL BUS TRADER, I have repeatedly railed at the stupidity (and gall) of charging motorcoaches bridge and tunnel tolls. Stupidity appears to have no end. The impending, any-day-now congestion pricing program will also charge fees to motorcoaches. In the old days of 40-footers, a motorcoach would replace a mere 40 automobiles. Today's 45-footers, with 12 more seats, would likely replace 50. Who cares? The ability of elected officials to perform fourth grade math (i.e., long division) has become as irrelevant as their command of 20th Century history and wisdom. Equally obsolete are counting and measuring. Even a dog chasing one knows that a modern motorcoach takes up less space than three small cars glued together – front bumper to rear bumper.

As an ugly footnote, transit ridership had fallen, nationally, by roughly 10 percent a year during the two years before COVID-19 struck. At the present time, New York City enjoys the highest percentage of operating costs covered by fares in the country – 35 percent. (This figure is 13 percent in dense San Francisco and nine percent in Los Angeles County.)

When one squeezes the technical juice from this bag of @y%k$#, what is left are corruption and power. After all, what power do 33,000 motorcoaches' drivers (and perhaps a few hundred large or medium-sized fleet owners) and their two miniscule lobbying groups have over leviathans like Uber and Lyft? Or General Motors, Chrysler Corporation and Ford Motor Company? Or more importantly, huge construction conglomerates knocking down every third building in Manhattan to erect a much taller one whose offices are filled by countless more motorists?

We do not need cleaner, safer, fancier or larger motorcoaches. We need more of them.

The Couch, One's Buttocks and One's Thumb

Name three things that should never be combined at the same time.

One constant I have observed over my 35-year association with the motorcoach industry is that it has changed little and accomplished even less. Exceptions like cleaner engines, three-point seat belts and longer vehicles are barely asterisks. We do not need cleaner, safer, fancier or larger motorcoaches. We need more of them. Paying a daily penalty for replacing 50 cars that day is hardly a good start. At this point, my opinions depart from the mainstream of do-nothingness that characterizes the motorcoach industry's lemmings.

If you do not want to pay congestion pricing fees, there are actually a number of things you can do.

Parody and Disparity

For starters, do not pay them. Let the fines pile up and force the NYPD to tow, impound and store your vehicles. Put those near-worthless mothball spares to some

good use. Park a handful at the intersection of Broadway and 42nd Street, and a few dozen at other key intersections and dismantle the engine. Drive them onto the lawn in Central Park and Washington Square Park. Park them on the sidewalk in front of some key public buildings. Take apart a few old ones of no value and strew their components and sheet metal fragments on every side street in Manhattan. Park a cluster of them at the entrance to the Lincoln and Holland tunnels, the Queens Midtown Tunnel, the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and on the ramps to the George Washington Bridge – and puncture their tires (after you replace them with junkyard tires with no remaining tread). Position them sideways on West Side Highway and FDR drive, and remove the tires, wheels and transmission.

For a decade now, Silicon Valley companies have not even pretended to offer product improvements. They openly declare their intentions to disrupt what currently exists. As they succeed, they own the territory. There are now twice as many Ubers operating in New York City as there are motorcoaches operating in the entire country. How do you think that happened? If you wish to succeed in today's America with today's rules, you must act accordingly.

If New Yorkers or Americans do not yet understand traffic, you must show them what it is. Even the dumbest of the dumb will not punish you by taking you off the roadway. If they did, traffic would only get worse. With a tad of support from the transit industry or a handful of its drivers, the city would shut down so fast that it would make COVID look like a bad cold.

$25 is too much to remove 50 cars.

If Americans barely know what motorcoaches even are, how about showing them? Along the way, you might even teach them to count and measure. You will surely teach them that local politicians have only disdain for their needs and interests. The "T"-shirts would be a national embarrassment. "$25 is too much to remove 50 cars" (an interesting concept since Bridge and Tunnel fees have ballooned to $16 per round trip.) I feel sure that a few thinking motorcoach owners or drivers can improve upon and shorten this slogan.

If you want the right to the roadways, you must take it. If you do not wish to be in the motorcoach business, then find something else to do. If you want to be in this business, do what it takes to stay there. Interestingly, it may not take a great many "disrupters" to draw attention to what traffic is really about. A few score of near-dead "spare" coaches strategically positioned will have an enormous impact, and send a clear message. New York motorists will need only a single day stuck in their cars – frozen in place for hours – to get it. This is not the Ukraine. I doubt New York City has many heavy-duty tow trucks. The task will be harder once you remove the tires and transmissions. Plus, with the streets clogged with a million unmovable vehicles, how would they even get there? Do we have enough Ospreys to lift them up? (Help from our Martian brothers is unlikely.) It could take several days to clean up this mess.

I am talking about a one-day protest/demonstration involving a few score of motorcoaches with little value beyond scrap. One might first strip off almost every part of any value (including rubbing off every trace of its VIN, registration stickers, vehicle operating numbers and emptying out the glove box)—as long as enough parts and fuel remain to drive each one a few miles to its destination. (At the drop-off, unscrew and remove the plates.) This is not much of a contribution for sensible operating rights. Who knows? The imbecility of charging you bridge and tunnel tolls may even come up. Or your spokespersons – not necessarily the coach owners – could raise it

By the way, I cannot even Google a fine for this act. I suspect there may be none. The city will simply impound the vehicle. So how much could this really cost? How much would this vehicle bring were you to scrap it – much less when you could avoid the towing fee? To criminalize this abandonment of property, the City Council would have to conduct an emergency session. New York City's "finest" would have to hunt you down for the three days in jail you might spend and the $500 fine you may have to pay. (Think of all the police officers needed to bat away the hordes of reporters and their camera crews.) All this for a single day's peaceful demonstration in which no one was hurt, and you get to dump your worst vehicle(s). *The New York Times* would have a field day. You would become a rock star – although the flood of interviews in the press and media could become tiring.

As congestion pricing illustrates, no one in America notices stupidity. We are drowning in it. Any deranged teenager can buy a machine gun and shoot up the school or church of his choice. Those in the Car Country will absolutely notice gridlock. They will notice celebrity. They will notice when "The City that Never Sleeps" suddenly cannot move.

Banning motorcoaches from the city will hardly become the penalty. If you leave the decision-makers two choices, increasing traffic levels is not likely to prevail. The "T"-shirts need not say, "More Motorcoaches." They need only say, "Less Traffic." The same lesson. The same message. The same solution.

Tired of being treated like feces? If so, do something about it. Let the games begin.

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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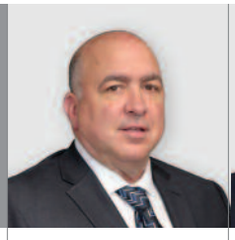

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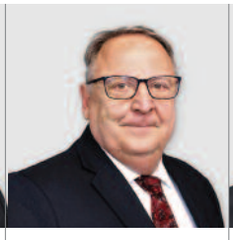

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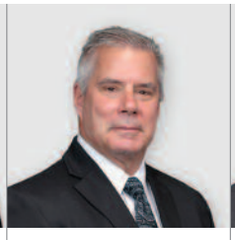

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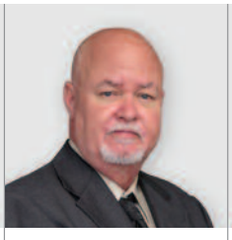

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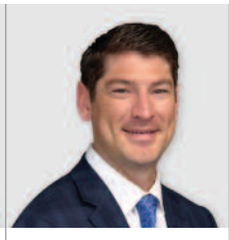

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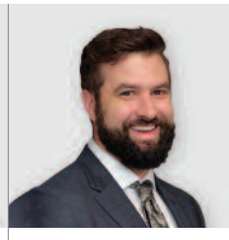

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Coming events of interest to readers of NATIONAL BUS TRADER. Submissions for the department should be directed to the editor. Unless otherwise indicated, events are not open to the general public.

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

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

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

March 10-12, 2023. **Heartland Travel Showcase.** Cincinnati Region. For more information view heartlandtravelshowcase.com.

March 15-18, 2023. **FMCA's 106th International Convention and RV Expo.** Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter, Perry, Georgia.

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