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ON THE COVER: CityLink General Manager Doug Roelfs is shown with one of the Greater Peoria, IL, Mass Transit District's vehicles. Public transportation services have been provided by the transit district since 1970. See page 8.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2022

January 8-11
American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace 2022
Grapevine, TX
Info: 800-283-2877

January 9-10
Busworld North America
Grapevine, TX
Info: busworldnorthamerica.org

January 16-19
Tennessee Motor Coach Association Convention & Marketplace
Franklin, TN
Info: 865-936-8622

January 22-25

National School Transportation Association Midwinter Meeting
Key Largo, FL
Info: 703-684-3200

FEBRUARY 2022

February 23-27
United Motorcoach Association (UMA) Motorcoach Expo
Long Beach, CA
Info: 800-424-8262

MARCH 2022

March 13-15
APTA Legislative Conference
Washington, D.C.
Info: 202-496-4800

MAY 2022

May 1-4
APTA Mobility Conference
Columbus, OH
Info: 202-496-4800

JULY 2022

July 25-28
National School Transportation Association Annual Meeting & Convention
Niagara Falls, NY
Info: 703-684-3200

OCTOBER 2022

October 9-12
APTA's TRANSform Conference
Seattle, WA
Info: 202-496-4800

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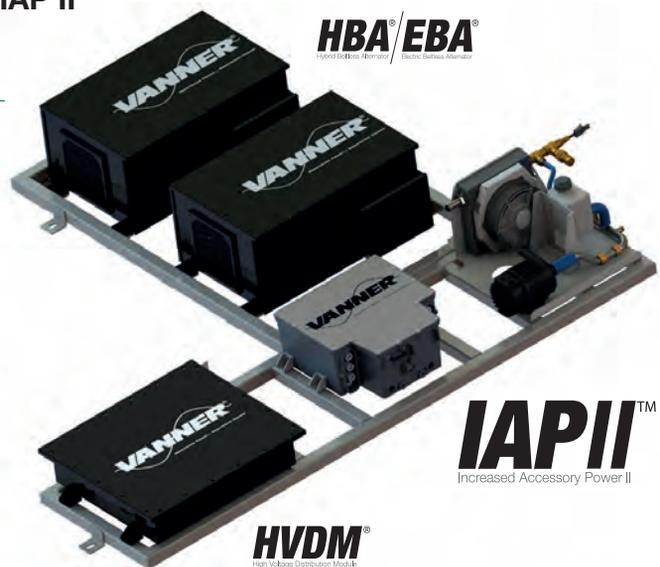
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Transit System 'Plays Well In Peoria'

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Peoria CityLink Steps Up To Maintain Service During Pandemic

By Rick Mullen, *Busline Magazine* Associate Editor

While not heard as much in modern times, “Will it play in Peoria” has been a popular expression for more than a century. The saying that came out of the vaudeville era in the early part of the 20th century stemmed from the belief that if an act received good reviews in Peoria, IL, representing a typical city in middle-America, it would do well nationwide.

One “act” that continues to play well in Peoria and the surrounding area for people who depend on public transportation is the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District’s fixed-route service, known as CityLink, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020. The District has been serving the cities of Peoria, West Peoria and the village of Peoria Heights, since it was established in 1970.

“It is really on us to put something out there that passengers and the people of the area want to use. It is our responsibility to step up and make public transit secure, clean and more dependable.”

— CityLink General Manager Doug Roelfs

Today, the system, including paratransit, services more than 25 shopping centers, two airports, 75-plus schools, four hospitals, multiple walk-in medical clinics, over 25 nursing homes and retirement centers, more than 50 apartment complexes, eight golf courses, as well as public swimming pools, theaters, museums and parks in eight surrounding communities.

“Our main core area is Peoria County and the city of Peoria,” said CityLink General Manager Doug Roelfs, during a recent interview with *Busline Magazine*. “We also contract service to East Peoria and the city of Pekin, IL, just south of Peoria across the Illinois River.

“We run from about 5:30 a.m until midnight. We have about 22 routes right now. Most of them are hourly service. During peak times, a few of them run 30-minute service. Also, one or two routes take about an hour and a half to run just because they are so long. We have three buses on those routes.

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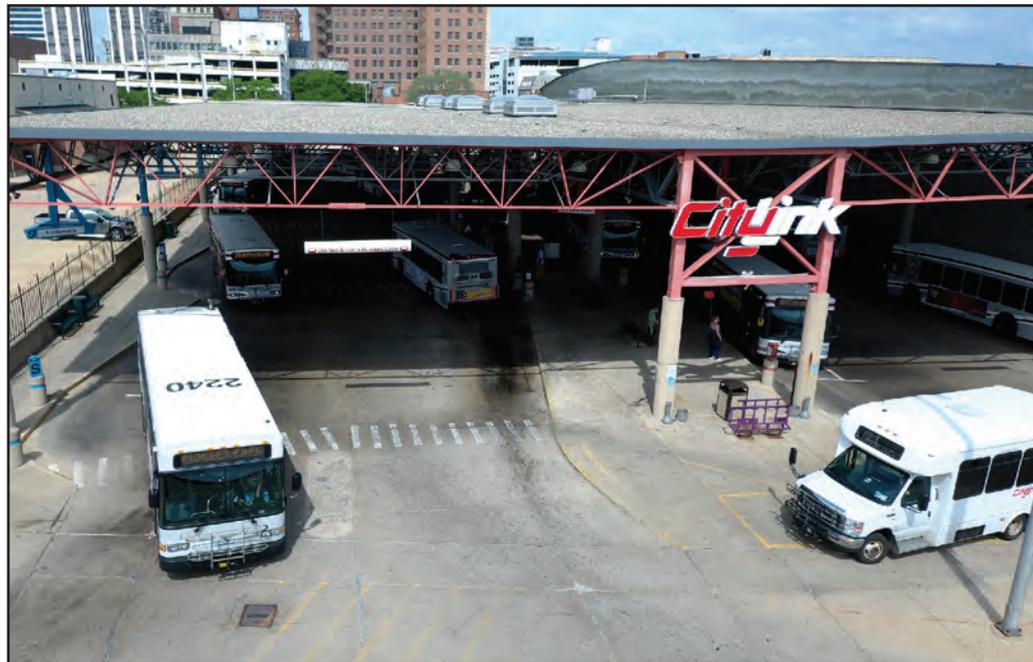
Lead photo, previous page: Shown from left are Ray Rusch, accounting specialist; Jamie Arbogast, procurement administrator; Marcy Biggar, payroll administrator; Emily Watson, marketing & community outreach coordinator; Linda Du, accounting manager; and Doug Roelfs, general manager.

“Everything starts and ends at the transit center. We have looked at options for that, but haven’t really found anything that is going to work as well right now.

“We operate a connector route between Peoria and Pekin that runs hourly, in addition to two circulators in Pekin that also run on hourly service.

“We average about 2.2 million fixed-route miles yearly, with a ridership, before COVID, of about 2.7 million.”

CityLink operates a paratransit service for the immediate area of Peoria called CityLift. That service is contracted with Transdev North America. The agency’s CountyLink is a paratransit service available to all residents of Peoria County.



“Everything starts and ends at the transit center,” said general manager Doug Roelfs.

“Combined, both paratransit systems run about 700,000 miles a year, with a ridership of about 200,000 people,” Roelfs said. “Both systems mirror our fixed-route service hours.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Peoria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) consists of six counties in central Illinois, anchored by the city of Peoria. As of the 2020 census, the MSA had a population of 402,391 people. The population of the city of Peoria was 113,150 people, as of 2020.

CountyLink service begins or ends generally outside the Peoria city limits and the CityLink service area. CountyLink is available in several nearby communities, including Bartonville, Brimfield, Chillicothe, Dunlap, Edelstein, Edwards, Elmwood, Glasford, Hanna City, Kickapoo, Kingston Mines, Laura, Mapleton, Mossville, Norwood,

Oak Hill, Orchard Mines, Princeville, Rome, Smithville, Trivoli, Tuscarora and West Peoria.

Townships serviced by CountyLink include Akron, Brimfield, Chillicothe, Elmwood, Hallock, Hollis, Jubilee, Kickapoo, Limestone, Logan, Medina, Millbrook, Peoria, Princeville, Radnor, Richwoods, Rosefield, Timber and Trivoli.

CityLink has worked to take advantage of population shifts that have taken place in recent years in the city and outlying area.

“When I got here, the area was experiencing ‘urban sprawl,’” Roelfs said. “A lot of subdivisions were going up outside town. Then, money began to be invested in the warehouse district. So, we saw a big shift to lot of downtown lofts and apartments.

“All of a sudden the shift went from ‘out’ to ‘in.’ For example, there is a lot of development taking place downtown, including a new office building being constructed by OSF

HealthCare. We are going to try to capture some of that new downtown ridership. We are going to have to offer reasons for people to try public transit.”

One popular trend in some public transportation circles is the development of microtransit service. One definition of microtransit says it can be thought of, in a general sense, as “flexible transit,” that fits somewhere between private individual transportation (cars, taxis, etc.) and public mass transit. It allows agencies to offer riders an on-demand option that is more flexible than designated fixed-routes and appointment-like paratransit.

“We have just completed a microtransit study. I think that is going to be the next avenue for us to really bring in transit customers and offer them more flexibility,” Roelfs said. “Passengers can schedule their own ride rather than standing out waiting for a bus to come by.

“When we first started the study, we were thinking it would be a first-mile/last-mile program. That is, for areas that didn’t have a fixed-route system, we would be able to bring people into a fixed-route stop and get them on a bus. But, as we talked to focus groups, the company we work with, Via Transportation, turned us a little more toward implementing operating zones.

“One of the most popular operating zones is the downtown area. Even though we have fixed-route service downtown, there are more potential riders in that area that we think are likely to try public transit in a microtransit scenario.”



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In addition, Tri-County Regional Planning conducted a Grey Area Mobility Enhancement and Expansion study for all of the small communities around Peoria.

“That effort sparked some interest for public transit to take baby boomers to town, many of whom don’t wish to drive anymore, for doctor’s appointments, to shop or go to restaurants, etc. We are trying to shift gears to see how we can capture some of that ridership as well.”

Roelfs is also excited about the state’s infrastructure effort.

“It is going to be fun the next few years, especially with the influx of Rebuild Illinois money for infrastructure, a lot of which is earmarked for public transit,” Roelfs said.

The state has allocated about \$25 million in Rebuild Illinois funds through the Fast-Track Public Infrastructure (FTPI) program, according to the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Development.

“Our state government officials are ‘rock stars.’ **It is ‘off the charts’ the funding and support we get from IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation) for public transit,”** Roelfs said. **“We have so much new stuff going on it makes my head spin some days. We haven’t slowed down because of COVID, that’s for sure.”**

One new development for CityLink was the recent unveiling of three new battery-electric buses. The buses were expected to be in service by the end of November, following training with mechanics and operators, Roelfs said.

“We are also implementing AVL (automatic vehicle location) technology,” Roelfs said. “When I got here about five years ago, the system had no AVL. I was surprised a system this size did not have AVL. It took me five years to get it in place.

“We have an AVL app available that allows people to see where their bus is located. Soon we will advertise that app so everybody will know it is available. There is a code riders can punch in (at bus stops) and text a number, and receive a message about how far away the bus is on a particular route.”

Also new are automatic passenger counters and voice announcements.

“Before the automatic passenger counters, we could tell how many people rode a route, but we could not tell where they got on or off on a route. We now have that capability, so we can do a better job dividing routes and figuring out what is working and what is not,” Roelfs said. “With the automatic voice announcements, when you go by a stop, an announcement will tell you where you are located. It is amazing the technology that is available to help, both us and customers, to have a better CityLink experience.

CityLink’s recent purchase of three battery-electric buses is not the system’s first foray into the alternative fuels arena. Indeed, in the 1990s, the transit agency, then known as GP Transit, partnered with several corn growers associations as part of a national ethanol research program. At that time, the



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Peoria transit system was the first, and largest, in the U.S. to operate transit buses on E85 ethanol fuel.

In 2009, CityLink was approached by another partner, Ag-Land FS, to test the viability of using B20 biodiesel — a blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel — in a year-round, cold-climate application.

Since then, CityLink has consumed nearly 5 million gallons of cleaner-burning B20 biodiesel, reducing emissions equivalent to planting an estimated 134,000 trees, while providing a cumulative health benefit of more than \$89,000.

So, what does the future hold for CityLink insofar as alternative fuel vehicles are concerned? Roelfs is in “wait and see” mode.

“There is a transit system to the south of us that is using hydrogen fuel cells, and one to the north that has quite a few battery-electric buses,” Roelfs said. “We are kind of sitting in the middle to see which one will be the most successful, and which one has the most problems, etc.

“We have about two or three years before our fleet really needs to be replaced. So, we are going to do our homework to see which way to go with alternative fuels and/or battery-electric vehicles.”

Furthermore, where autonomous buses fit into the equation is also something Roelfs is pondering.

“Five years ago, I was at Bradley University (located in Peoria) and a professor was talking about autonomous vehicles,” Roelfs recalled. “I thought to myself, ‘Man, this guy is from another planet. What is he talking about?’

“Eventually, entities around the country started to implement routes with autonomous vehicles and I thought, ‘Wow, maybe it is possible.’”

Furthermore, Roelfs thought about two major manufacturers of large equipment, Caterpillar and Komatsu (both of which have manufacturing plants in Peoria), that have made autonomous mining trucks for years.

“I realized we are right in the hub of autonomous technology,” he said. “However, I don’t know if we are ready for autonomous buses at this time.”

COVID & DICKENSIAN IMAGERY

The first sentence of the novel “A Tale of Two Cities,” by Charles Dickens, just might be the most famous literary opening line of all time — “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

Roelfs also used the phrase in describing his feelings about guiding CityLink through the COVID-19 pandemic.

That the pandemic has been “the worst of times,” is obvious.

“When COVID hit the state of Illinois hard in the early spring of 2020, we didn’t know what we were getting into — nobody did,” Roelfs said. “After the initial shock that COVID was going to cause the state to essentially shut down, we did a lot of things early on. We started rear-door boardings early,



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isolated drivers and shut down fare boxes to help keep people safe.

“We were one of the first places to implement a mask mandate, even before the governor’s initiative. Our operators wanted the mask requirement, and we said ‘OK,’ and put it in place.

“During the early days of the pandemic, we never stopped service. We cut service hours and stopped running about 10 to 10:30 p.m., for about three months, mainly because we needed the extra time to clean buses.

“A lot of our regular passengers worked nights at restaurants, fast food establishments and other workplaces that were shut down or closing early, so we didn’t really need as much service on the streets.”

So, how was it “the best of times?”

“I say it was ‘the best of times’ in the sense that the pandemic has shined a spotlight on how essential public transportation and its workers are to a community,” Roelfs said. “Early on, the fact that we could still put some service on the road showed the city still had a pulse — we were out there and moving. While many people were hunkering down at home, others still had to get to work, and we were there to help.”

During the first couple of months of 2021, as the pandemic seemed to be winding down somewhat, and cities were reopening more and more, CityLink relaxed some of the protocols previously put in place. Front-door boarding and taking fares were resumed and the mask mandate was rolled back.

Then, during the summer of this year, the Delta Variant became a serious issue as COVID cases began to spike again, especially among the unvaccinated population.

“We were starting to relax some things like masks around the office, and began having more in-person meetings with our staff,” Roelfs said. “I got, maybe two in-person staff meetings in before the Delta Variant hit. Then, we went back to Zoom meetings. Even though we are all in the same building, we are not all in the same room.

“Throughout it all, we have been very fortunate as far as the number of COVID cases at CityLink. We have had people out because of close contact with a spouse or other family members who tested positive. We have had a lot of quaran-

tines scheduled. We have never had, to my knowledge, a situation where close contact with a passenger caused an issue.

“We are still deep cleaning buses, disinfecting them as well as the transit facility. We did close the transit facility for about three months. We didn’t want to have to shoo everybody out and then try to clean around them, so it was closed for quite awhile. In addition, we wanted to save our cleaning material for buses. We didn’t want to use it all for the facilities.

“Right now, everything is as back to normal as it has been for quite awhile.”

LOOKING FOR PEOPLE-ORIENTED EMPLOYEES

Although finding and keeping good employees in the public transportation channel, as well as in many other industries, was an ongoing challenge before the pandemic, the country’s already anemic worker pool has only gotten worse.

While the temptation might be for companies to hire any warm body that comes along during this crisis, CityLink is sticking to its guns in insisting its employee candidates possess the “people” skills needed to be successful in serving the public.



The Greater Peoria Mass Transit District's fixed-route service, known as CityLink, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020.

“We stress to current and potential employees that a bus system cannot exist without passengers. Therefore, our philosophy is to treat them like family. Sometimes it might seem like it is a dysfunctional family, but we still have to treat passengers well and take care of them.”

“If you don’t like people, you might as well find something else to do other than work in public transportation,” Roelfs said. “Even while just driving a bus around town, a driver is going to be interacting with people in automobiles. An operator must be able to keep his/her ‘cool,’ because people on the road are going to cut him/her off and do other things that are annoying, if not dangerous.

“We stress to current and potential employees that a bus system cannot exist without passengers. Therefore, our philosophy is to treat them like family. Sometimes it might seem like it is a dysfunctional family, but we still have to treat passengers well and take care of them.

“We also remind our staff members, next to passengers,

each individual is the most important person in our organization. Whether a person is a mechanic, an operator, or cleans the buses, we can't operate and take care of our passengers without him/her.

"It is kind of a two-fold process of us taking care of our employees, so they can, in turn, take care of passengers."

Finding good drivers has been a challenge, especially on the paratransit side of the equation.

"We have been struggling to get paratransit drivers to come back to work after being off because of COVID. It has also been a challenge to find new drivers on the bus side," Roelfs said. "We are down a few operators on the fixed-route side, but have run a couple of classes and are slowly getting enough operators to help out with the overtime. Some of our drivers are getting a little stressed and worn out because they have to work so much.

"For the most part, we haven't had the same horror stories as some agencies. Other systems have had to cut a lot of routes because they don't have the manpower to run them. We haven't hit that point, yet, although there have been some days here and there when we had to cut part of a route."

For the most part, CityLink drivers and other employees have put themselves at risk and stepped up to the plate to come to work and take care of the agency's loyal ridership.

"I'm really proud of our organization. When the pandemic first hit we didn't know what we were getting into and what was going to be the outcome," Roelfs said. "People showed up, got into the buses and served the public, even while knowing their health could be at risk. We heard stories of operators dying in other cities, so I know that had to be in the back of their minds, too — 'Am I going to get sick? What are my risks and challenges out here?'"

"However, I can't blame people for not showing up and not taking that risk, especially if their health wasn't the best in the first place.

"Nonetheless, a lot of people stepped up because that was their job and they knew people needed them. So, we are really proud of our organization from that standpoint, as most of our riders are transit dependent, and don't have any or very limited alternatives for transportation."

In addition to drivers, finding good mechanics is also a challenge.

"Many people coming into the workforce these days are looking to get into technology-oriented fields," Roelfs said. "Finding people who are willing to turn a wrench and get dirty is becoming more and more difficult."

To help in finding mechanics, a couple of years ago CityLink started an internship in conjunction with Illinois



Pictured is the current CityLink administration office.

Central College, which has a campus in East Peoria.

"We will have a student come here to work during the school year. As a result of the program, two interns came to work for us after they graduated, one of whom is still with us," Roelfs said. **"Hopefully, that trend will continue."**

NEW MAINTENANCE FACILITY NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Looking ahead, one of CityLink's main goals is the completion of a new maintenance facility, with attached administrative buildings. The \$40 million project is expected to take two or three more years to complete, Roelfs said.

"Getting that project in under budget is a big goal," he added. "We also recently completed a comprehensive operational analysis. As a result, we are going to implement some route changes next March. We are going to be cutting and consolidating some routes to make our system more efficient. We will be offering some 15-minute headways and 30-minute route times, rather than hourly service in some places. We will also increase service by running a little later on Saturdays and Sundays.

"I am optimistic about the future of CityLink. It is really on us to put something out there that passengers and the people of the area want to use. It is our responsibility to step up and make public transit secure, clean and more dependable."

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CEO

The outbreak of COVID-19 has created awareness of our surrounding air quality more than ever. Under this present crisis, SanUVAire has been helping its customers fight the war against the virus with its Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) Systems and re-usable UV resistant air filters. The company offers customized solutions for air purification and surface sanitization applications.

SanUVAire embarked on this venture after learning that many people suffer from some respiratory issue such as asthma, COPD and other lung matters. After much research and analysis, SanUVAire realized the essential need to improve indoor air quality because it is five times worse than outdoor air quality according to leading health organizations such as: EPA, WHO, CDC, etc. Thus, the company launched its air purification product line to various industries but, primarily, to the public transport sector with a concern for its vulnerable ridership. "Most of us, and specifically public transit agencies, are not well-equipped for major public health crises. People talk generally about air conditioning, filtration and humidity, but people do not focus on the risks associated with the significant contaminants in our indoor air which are re-circulated and inhaled all the time," says Chad Sleiman, CEO of SanUVAire. "People are contained in such small and crowded places all day, every day, which only increases the risk of spreading airborne disease." So it was a global idea to incorporate ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) technology into SanUVAire's goal to sterilize indoor air and offer a safer and healthier indoor environment. "We are blessed with the Sun which emits UV-C rays to disinfect our atmosphere and cleanse the air we breathe. SanUVAire harnessed the same UV-C rays in its technology to sterilize indoor air and specifically the re-circulated air in transit vehicles "Our solutions are specially designed with certain UV-C emittance for public transport but also SanUVAire carries product lines for other applications including healthcare, commercial facilities and our own homes", adds Chad.

Encompassed in its significant experience in past years, SanUVAire worked with a Transit Agency seeking to disinfect all its buses due to an airborne pathogen outbreak. No matter what the Agency tried, be it power washing, pesticides, or fumigating, the issue continued to resurface. The Agency had insurance claims against it as a result so the Agency called upon

SanUVAire to analyze the situation. SanUVAire ultimately implemented its solution which focused on the source of the problem, the HVAC systems in the vehicles and corresponding coil disinfection. Where the air in the vehicle was being circulated through the un-clean HVAC units and then continually re-circulated back into the indoor air space, it was leading to the propagating of airborne contamination in the buses due to the fact that HVAC coils and ducts are breeding grounds for mold, bacteria and viruses and other infectious airborne pathogens. SanUVAire fixed the problem at the source and helped the Agency overcome the issue.

The onset of the current pandemic has boosted the demand for SanUVAire solutions and more customers are reaching out to leverage its technology. To protect customers against this airborne coronavirus, all harmful pathogens and infectious diseases, SanUVAire is offering its best SanUVAire360™ comprehensive and all-inclusive solution. No other company offers this complete and extensive indoor air purification and surface sterilization packaged remedy or anything similar. SanUVAire has been prepared for a pandemic and launched a streamlined, all-inclusive approach to address the situation from every angle. As well, while keeping hygiene and safety in mind, “We also keep our solutions environmentally-friendly and assure optimal performance at a lower budget,” says Chad.

The journey of this company has not always been an easy ride. It has faced various market challenges, but mostly, SanUVAire’s challenges have revolved around educating the public about indoor air purification and why is it so important. “Many people lack the education and understanding of what SanUVAire stands for and what it does. The primary concern of customers in the transit market is always budget, for which it seems they are unfortunately ready to risk their own lives” Chad states. Hence, SanUVAire not only makes an effort to educate its customers, but also offers its solutions at a sustainable rate. With the flow of government funding now available because of this current pandemic, SanUVAire is able to help transit agencies think proactively for the next wave of the current health crisis or even the next pandemic, solve the problems with the HVAC breeding ground, and ultimately reduce the infectious spread while offering cost reductions.

Moving forward, with its SanUVAire360™ approach, its UVGI technology and product lines, SanUVAire believes it is offering a significant and healthy trend for the evolving human lifestyle. It all can be used in advanced vehicles and modernized facilities. “We feel positive about our company’s future prospects. We are poised and prepared to overcome any problem related to indoor air quality,” concludes Chad.

“We are blessed with the Sun which emits UV-C rays to disinfect our atmosphere and cleanse the air we breathe.”

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MTRWestern:

A Hospitality Company, First And Foremost, Servicing The Transport Needs Of The Pacific Northwest



By Harrell Kerkhoff
Busline Magazine Editor

As America begins to emerge from the COVID-19 epidemic, MTRWestern, a leading Pacific Northwest bus and motorcoach company, is feeling optimistic about the future — thanks to ongoing refocusing, planning and teamwork that saw the Seattle-based operator through a period that rocked the transportation industry.

“We first addressed the pandemic at a March 2020 planning meeting, and we continue to work to mitigate its impact, including the current labor shortage, every day,” said MTRWestern President Jeremy Butzlaff.

Because Seattle was the first COVID-19 hotspot in the United States, MTRWestern management found itself grappling with the impact of the pandemic long before other U.S. transportation companies were impacted — and before there

was a consensus on how to minimize the spread of the virus.

“We had to take a very conservative strategy early on in response to COVID,” Butzlaff said. “When it became apparent that it could take three years for the transportation industry to fully recover from the pandemic, we had to make some hard decisions.”

Faced with an increasing cancellation rate, MTRWestern decided in March 2020 to preserve as much cash as possible. That meant scaling back operations and laying off employees. Eventually, 75 percent of the MTRWestern staff was laid-off.

“Those layoffs were hard because our company works hard to maintain a close relationship with our employees,” said Butzlaff. “I think most of our people understood what was going on, but it was still a gut-wrenching process.”

MTRWestern, which has always prioritized staff and customer health and safety, also began developing protocols to limit the spread of the virus.

“Very rarely will there be a great looking and well-maintained vehicle, with a great driver, and in the background a messy company. Cleanliness, safety, and a well-run business are usually tied together.”

— MTRWestern President Jeremy Butzlaff

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Lead photo, previous page: Shown from left are Debbie Eckholt, accounting specialist; Danny Reynoso, technician; Curtis Magruder, technician; Jeremy Butzlaff, president; Lorraine Trundle, Seattle operations manager; Todd Paulson, director of operations; Al Miller, motorcoach operator; Kristopher Roberts, technician; and Charley Jones, motorcoach operator.

“After that March planning meeting, we started ordering cleaning supplies — buying pallets of everything we could find to properly disinfect and clean our equipment and facilities,” Butzlaff said. “We were successful in ordering a lot of supplies before they started to become scarce.”

Since the early days of the pandemic, it’s been a long haul for MTRWestern, and just about every other North American transportation company. But, after some false starts, there are now signs of lasting improvement.

“On several occasions during the pandemic, we saw early indicators that demand for travel was increasing,” recalled Butzlaff. “But then another wave of the pandemic would strike, causing business to fall again. In May and June of 2021, however, business started to pick up for good, and we were able to bring back some employees. Since then, business has been pretty good.

“We are not yet back to our pre-pandemic revenue levels, but we are happy for the gains we’ve made over the past four to six months. We think demand for our services across a va-

riety of market segments will continue to increase. I feel the worst is behind us, from a COVID standpoint, although we are not yet out of the woods. I do think business will continue to strengthen as we go into 2022.”

Butzlaff discussed several positive signs that led to increased travel activity in MTRWestern’s service area.

“For one thing, heavy traffic has returned to metro Seattle and other area cities. Businesses are opening up. Just like everywhere, people are anxious to regain some resemblance of normality,” he said. “Vaccination rates are good in the Pacific Northwest, helping to boost confidence for a re-emergence of all types of activities. The only major impediment for further activity is the ongoing labor shortage across different industries.”

To comply with executive orders in Washington and Oregon, MTRWestern drivers and passengers must wear masks while traveling in company vehicles. Electrostatic sprayers have been used throughout much of the pandemic as part of the company’s efforts to keep vehicles disinfected and clean.

MTRWestern officials recently implemented a vaccine requirement for all company employees, effective late November. The policy was announced shortly after Washington state officials issued a vaccine mandate for most state employees, health care workers and education staffers.

“The vaccine requirement was a tough decision, something we debated for a long time, weighing the

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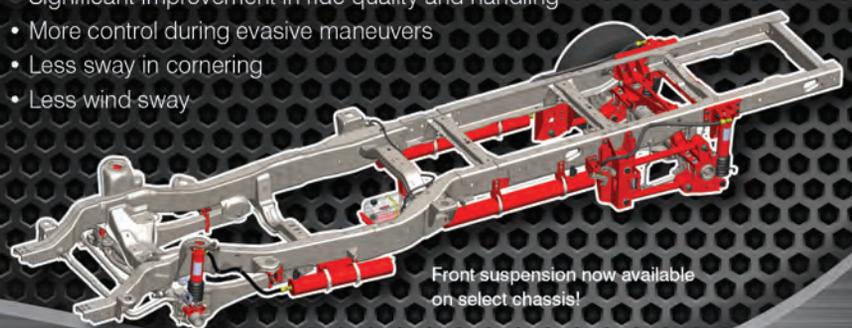
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pros and cons,” Butzlaff said. “Ultimately, it came down to us, as a company, wanting to do our part in the fight to help eradicate COVID while getting business and the industry back on track.”

A FULL SERVICE TRANSPORT PROVIDER

Have Bus/Coach, Will Travel — that could be MTRWestern’s motto, as the company provides a wide variety of charter and shuttle services throughout the Pacific Northwest. The company’s clients include professional and collegiate sports teams, corporations, the military, tour and travel providers, concert venues, special events, cruise ships, convention centers, school field trips, resorts, casinos and public/private transportation partnerships.



MTRWestern President Jeremy Butzlaff (left) and Director of Operations Todd Paulson help the transportation company reach different customer segments located in the Pacific Northwest.

ABC Companies, the exclusive U.S. and Canadian distributor for Van Hool.

“We are a transportation company. We pretty much provide any type of service for our clients, featuring a variety of equipment — from small vans to full-size motorcoaches,” Butzlaff said. “Our services vary by market, but tour and travel is a big part of what we do. That involves single- and multi-day trips. We also stay very busy with athletic and school moves. Moving sports teams is an integral part of who we are, as an organization.”

MTRWestern’s fleet includes just under 100 motorcoaches, 90 percent of which are 45 footers.

“We are primarily a big coach provider,” Butzlaff explained.

The fleet comprises of several 35- and 45-foot Van Hool motorcoaches, as MTRWestern officials continue to work with

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“I feel there is a good culture fit between ABC Companies and MTRWestern. It’s important that we both continue to make inroads in the post-COVID transportation world,” Butzlaff said. “That can be done by capitalizing on the entrepreneurialism and direction already set by both companies.”

MTRWestern’s Van Hool motorcoaches are primarily used to transport charter customers, although some can be found on the company’s line routes.

Regardless of vehicle type, passenger safety and convenience are paramount at MTRWestern. That focus applies when the company selects vehicle amenities. On the convenience side, widely requested charging outlets that allow passengers to charge their various electronic devices are now readily available. On the safety side, air filtration systems have become the norm. This practice helps reduce passenger exposure to viruses and other pathogens.

“When it comes to amenities, especially as they relate to safety, we want all the ‘bells and whistles,’” Butzlaff said. “That includes collision avoidance systems, adaptive cruise control, cameras, etc.

“It’s all about ensuring we are doing everything possible to improve safety for both employees and passengers.”

Butzlaff continues to be amazed by the technological advances in today’s buses and motorcoaches.

“I feel like the (bus/coach) industry has reached a seminal moment when it comes to technology,” he said. “That’s one reason I see a bright future for our business.”

One key to MTRWestern’s success is the company’s relationships with customers.

“Our focus on customer service goes beyond just drivers to also include sales agents, our dispatch team and other employees,” Butzlaff said. “At MTRWestern, we take pride in being a transparent company. We know that not everything is going to go right in this business. We politely acknowledge where we could

have done better and figure out how to fix the problem when it doesn’t. It’s important to build a culture that focuses on customer service. We say, ‘MTRWestern is a customer service company that happens to provide great transportation.’ We are a hospitality company, first and foremost.”

Part of that customer service focus is showing up for work in immaculate vehicles.

“I view our vehicles the same way I view the tip of a spear — the vehicles are what customers see first. Yes, we often have contact with customer representatives before a trip, but when we show up on the scene, our vehicles truly represent our company. They have to look clean and be clean. It’s all about curb appeal,” Butzlaff said. “It also gives clients a

Continued On Page 28

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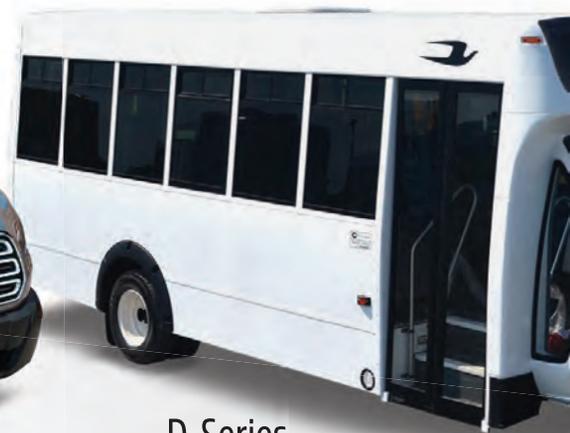
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“Very rarely will there be a great looking and well-maintained vehicle, with a great driver, and in the background a messy company. Cleanliness, safety, and a well-run business are usually tied together. The old saying, ‘You only have one chance to make a good first impression’ has a lot of validity.”

MTRWestern officials have also spent time recently improving the company’s marketing and branding efforts, which Butzlaff added is an ever-evolving process.

“Coming out of the pandemic, we are currently revamping our marketing plans and client engagement. There are a lot of ways that can happen,” he said. “Our company’s website is essential, but people have to know about that website. They have to know that we, as a company, exist before a search can be done. It’s crucial to drive more traffic to that website.

“We have placed a lot of emphasis on that process during the pandemic. It helped that there was available downtime to work on such a project.”

Representatives at MTRWestern also spend time conduct-

ing outreach with specific organizations in various communities, such as Chambers of Commerce. The goal is to provide more information about the company and help drive future business.

Butzlaff added that it’s also important to recognize the power of word of mouth.

“Providing quality service prompts clients to recommend our company to others. On the flip side, negativity can spread 9 to 12 times faster than positivity if something goes wrong during a trip. As a transportation provider, you are only as good as your last move,” he said. “It’s always important to make sure we are on our game.”

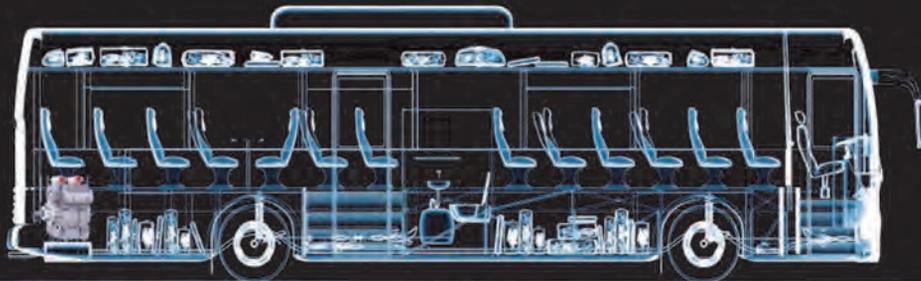
HELP WANTED: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

MTRWestern currently has a workforce of approximately 170 employees, including 135 drivers. Eighty percent are full-time. Other employees include technicians, trainers, managers, dispatchers and management.

One of the serious challenges currently facing many transportation companies, including MTRWestern, is finding qualified drivers. It’s a subject attracting national attention and impacting various activities, including

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“The driver shortage is a real issue. Originally, when we tried to forecast in early 2020 what the coming COVID-19 pandemic would do to our business, we felt that our capacity would be at roughly 50 percent by 2021, 75 percent by 2022, and at full capacity by 2023,” Butzlaff said. “As of right now (October 2021), I would still have confidence in those numbers if there was no labor shortage.”

He noted that there was a national driver shortage for all types of transportation prior to the pandemic, but the problem has been exacerbated since the emergence of COVID-19.

“Hands down, this is the most difficult time in decades to hire anybody,” Butzlaff said. “We are trying to find ways to counteract the problem, including an increase of almost 15 percent in wages. Thus far, we still only see a trickle of new candidates.”

When it comes to hiring drivers, officials at MTRWestern first look for necessary company requirements. That includes being fully licensed and having two years of professional driving experience. After that, attitude and personality come into play.

“We look for candidates who we feel will match our company culture, who possess that ‘can-do attitude,’ who have great personalities and who can be relatable to our clients,”

Butzlaff said. “We also want employees who will uphold the values of MTRWestern, be great teammates and ambassadors for our company, and deliver excellent customer service.”

MTRWestern requires all new hires to receive a minimum of 80 hours of training at the company. That typically involves a minimum of 45 hours behind the wheel and 35 hours of classroom work. The latter includes a review of company policies and customer service training.

Ongoing education for drivers and other employees is also required at MTRWestern. That involves such course subjects as safety, diversity and equity, and sexual harassment prevention. Butzlaff stressed the importance of continuing education in an ever-evolving transportation marketplace and world.

“Things change and will continue to change. As a company, we want to make sure our teammates are educated about those changes,” he explained. “That is a focus that will never end.”

A REGION WITH A VIEW

The Pacific Northwest is bounded to the west by the Pacific Ocean and to the east by a section of the Rocky Mountains. Although loose in definition, many consider the area to include the states of Washington,

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Oregon and Idaho, northern California and western Montana, and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and western Alberta.

The region's famous natural attractions include the Oregon and Washington coastlines, Mt. Rainier and Puget Sound, and well-known and growing cities such as Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, BC.

"It's a great place to live and work, especially if you like four seasons," Butzlaff said. "The region attracts a lot of tourism, which is great for transportation companies such as MTRWestern. We are blessed with an abundance of natural beauty that is attractive to tourists and residents alike.

"As a transportation provider, we also have great access to Canada. Thankfully, the U.S./Canadian border is scheduled to reopen in both directions in November."

The company's service region is extensive in miles covered, stretching from northern California to British Columbia and Alberta. MTRWestern equipment can also be found as far east as western Montana.

"We are proud of our footprint and our ability to read and react to whatever challenges come our way. There are always

complexities, but we think, at the end of the day, MTRWestern provides a high level of service for clients while delivering a consistent product," Butzlaff said. "One challenge is that many areas in our region, including Washington, were the first to shut down due to the pandemic and among the

last to reopen. That has certainly been a problem we, as a company, have worked to overcome. There are signs of improvement, which is good. For instance, the cruise ship business, which we provide service for, is starting to recover.

"Another challenge of operating in The Pacific Northwest is not related to the pandemic. A lot of our busi-

ness is seasonal. This part of the world has some cold and dark winters. Business tends to slow down during that time of year, and then in the summer — it's full speed ahead."

To help the company properly service such a large geographic region, MTRWestern has facilities in four locations.

"In Oregon, we operate a full-service facility in Portland that includes room for maintenance and operations. Since it's an urban location, a diverse group of clients can be found in that market. We also perform quite a bit of maintenance work at our Eugene location, where we provide school-related, line

"In many respects, after what has transpired with COVID, it feels like our company is a startup. We are attacking different startup problems thrown our way. Our first goal was to survive the pandemic. Now, we are trying to figure out how to grow."



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run and contract work,” Butzlaff said. “In Washington, our Spokane location is also full service, allowing us to maintain vehicles at that facility. We traditionally see heavy demand for school and traditional charter transportation in Spokane. Seattle, of course, is the largest city that we operate from, and similar to Portland, it’s a full-service location with a very diverse clientele.”

A NEW FRONTIER

A lot has occurred in the North American bus/motorcoach industry since the early months of 2020. For many companies that have survived the worst of the pandemic, a familiar saying holds true, “There is nowhere to go but up.”

“In many respects, after what has transpired with COVID, it feels like our company is a startup. We are attacking different startup problems thrown our way,” Butzlaff said. “Our first goal was to survive the pandemic. Now, we are trying to figure out how to grow.”

Butzlaff takes a glass-half-full viewpoint when discussing how the pandemic impacted his company.

“It’s provided us with a great gift of time to figure out how to grow even better than before the pandemic — more strongly and profitably,” he said. “I feel there is a

wonderful opportunity for all companies within our industry to use this time to strengthen business models, grow profits and mitigate risks. I think the (bus/motorcoach) industry is ripe for success as everyone moves forward.”

Despite all the past two years’ setbacks, Butzlaff — who has been with MTRWestern for 10 years and had industry experience before joining the company — said he would still recommend transportation as a career choice.

“It’s a great industry and challenging. No two days are alike. That is one of the things I like about it, along with the diversity of clients and working with great people,” he said. “One of the most important goals for the industry should be that of attracting young employees. It’s important to show that our industry is attractive, especially when one thinks about the exciting technology being developed. That includes the emergence of electric vehicles. It can be an exciting time for new entrants.

“We have to attract younger people or run the risk of becoming irrelevant, and that is something nobody wants for their company or the industry.”

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nearly anywhere within a vehicle. Commercial paratransit van transporters can now be converted from ambulatory to wheelchair transport and back as often as needed, taking less than a minute per seat to install or remove. Features include: innovative seat bases with wheels means no lifting; constructed with 1-1/4" extruded aluminum, SmartFloor™ adds significant strength to unibody frames currently found in the Ford Transit and Ram ProMaster; and installed as one piece with automotive-grade adhesive, there's no risk of exposed bolts causing damage to the underbody or other components. 21

Forbo Flooring Systems North America

8 Maplewood Dr., Humboldt Industrial Park
Hazleton, PA 18202 USA
800-842-7839

E-Mail: info.na@forbo.com

Website: www.forboflooringna.com

Products: Flooring product portfolio for the bus and coach sector. Includes entrance systems, safety floors, vinyl floors and flocked flooring as well as adhesives, accessories and installation tools. 20

Gerflor USA

595 Supreme Dr.
Bensenville, IL 60106 USA
877-266-2042

Website: www.gerflortransport.com

Products: Gerflor is recognized as a specialist in PVC transit flooring solutions. Tarabus is the Gerflor product range designed for bus and coach applications. High product quality and innovative designs make Tarabus a leader in this market. Developing close partnerships with bus and coach manufacturers for more than 50 years, Tarabus offers a complete flooring solution designed to meet customers' requirements and expectations. 18

Milwaukee Composites, Inc.

6055 S. Pennsylvania Ave.
Cudahy, WI 53110 USA
414-571-2788

E-Mail: sales@milwaukeecomposites.com
Website: www.milwaukeecomposites.com
Products: Since 1997, Milwaukee Composites has produced its patented lightweight floor for the transit industry. 20

ProFusion Industries, LLC

822 Kumho Dr.
Fairlawn, OH 44333 USA
800-938-2858

Email: astrainfo@profusionindustries.com

Website: www.astrafloor.com

Products: Profusion Industries, a provider of school bus flooring for more than 25 years, now offers Koro-Trans® Astra Flor®, a line of decorative, slip-resistant bus flooring products that are rigorous enough to meet the demands of transit and paratransit applications. Koro-Trans Astra Flor systems provide high performance through better construction and stronger materials. Astra Flor's unique smooth surface is attractive, clean and secure, meeting industry standards in slip resistance. Manufactured in the USA without harsh aggregates that can tear mops while cleaning, Astra Flor is rugged and easier to maintain. Astra Flor is resistant to abrasion, moisture, fire, contaminants and UV rays. Koro-Trans® flooring has been installed in over 50,000 public and privately

operated vehicles. An expanded range of colors and designs, including popular metal flake textures and wood grain patterns, offer a variety of options to create a great first impression. 19

Protectolite™ Composites Inc.

84 Railside Rd.
Toronto, ON M3A 1A3 CANADA
416-444-4484

Website: www.protectolite.com

Products: Protectolite™ has been serving the mass transit bus community for over 50 years. It supplies a wide variety of products, including transit seating and seat components, flooring, exterior and interior body panels, bezels and headlamp housings. 20

Safeguard Technology Inc.

1460 Miller Pkwy.
Streetsboro, OH 44241
800-989-1695

E-Mail: info@safeguard-technology.com

Website: www.safeguard-technology.com

Products: Anti-slip flooring products for transportation and other industries. 20

SpaceAge Synthetics, Ltd.

1402 39th St., NW
Fargo, ND 58102 USA

701-277-5631

Website: www.spaceagesynthetics.com

Products: Thermo-Lite Board®, a fiber-reinforced urethane product for applications subjected to static and dynamic loads. The company's product lines offer a non-absorbent, lightweight, tough material, with lifetime performance, for the bus and other industries. 20

TransitFlor

1833 E. Market St.
Akron, OH 44305 USA
800-321-2340

Email: info@transitflor.com

Website: www.transitflor.com

Products: TransitFlor® premium-grade rubber flooring, stair treads and entrance plates are designed for such vehicles as school, metro and touring buses. 18

Wooster Products Inc.

1000 Spruce St.
Wooster, OH 44691 USA
800-321-4936

Website: www.wooster-products.com

Products: USA manufacturer of anti-slip safety stair and walkway products. Wooster's stair treads and nosings can be used for vehicle entry steps. Samples available for evaluation. 20



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901 Cleveland St.
Elyria, OH 44035 USA
440-329-9000, 1-800-AIR-BRAKE

Products: North American leader in integrated commercial vehicle active safety, air management, and braking system technologies. 21

Bremserl North America, Inc.

1291 Humbracht Cir.
Bartlett, IL 60103 USA
800-939-4047

Email: sales@bremserl.com

Website: www.bremserl.com

Products: German manufacturer of air disc brake pads for coach bus applications. Available for every bus make and model in North America. 20

Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations

200 4th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37201 USA
844-85-TIRES

Email: mccaslinlaura@bfusa.com

Website: www.commercial.bridgestone.com

Company Officers: Paolo Ferrari, President and CEO, Bridgestone Americas; Riccardo Cichi, President and Chief Sales Officer, Bridgestone Americas; Chris Ripani, President, Truck and Bus Radial Tires and Retreads, Bridgestone Americas

Products: Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations manufactures and markets a wide range of commercial tires for the original equipment and replacement markets in the United States and Canada. Bridgestone, Firestone and associate-brand truck and bus, agriculture and off-the-road tires are available through more than 2,500 certified dealer and partner locations across the U.S. and Canada. In addition, Bandag, the business of Bridgestone dedicated to the research, development and manufacturing of premium retread tires, provides customers with a reliable, sustainable tire solution to help maximize productivity and the bottom line. 21

CBM NA

8477 Chemin Dalton
Ville Mont Royal, QC H4T 1V5 CANADA
877-332-3163

Email: info.canada@cbmcompany.com,
info.usa@cbmcompany.com

Website: www.cbmcompany.com

Products: Spare parts for motorcoaches, buses and trams. 18

Continental Commercial Vehicle Tires -

The Americas

P.O. Box 3010
Fort Mill, SC 29716 USA
800-847-3349

Website: www.continentaltire.com

Products: Tires for various markets including the bus and motorcoach industries. 20

Cooper Tire & Rubber Company

701 Lima Ave.
Findlay, OH 45840 USA
419-423-1321

Website: www.coopertrucktires.com

Products: An American company since 1914, Cooper commercial tires include three application-specific series: PRO Series, WORK Series, and SEVERE Series. The WORK Series of tires is engineered for regional applications, with lines that include attributes specifically tailored to the school bus industry. 20

DuraBrake Co.

2311 Calle Del Mundo
Santa Clara, CA 95054 USA
408-748-0400

Email: sales@durabrake.com

Website: www.durabrake.com

Products: Brake rotors, brake drums and brake pads. 20

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

200 Innovation Way
Akron, OH 44316-0001 USA
330-796-2121

Website: www.goodyear.com

Products: Goodyear is one of the world's largest tire companies. It employs approximately 62,000 people and manufactures its products from 46 facilities in 21 countries around the world. It has two Innovation Centers, located in Akron, OH, and Colmar-Berg, Luxembourg. 20

Haldex Brake Products Corp.

10930 N. Pomona Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64153 USA
816-891-2470

Website: www.haldex.com

Products: Haldex develops and manufactures brake systems for heavy trucks, trailers and buses. The product offering covers all primary components and subsystems included in complete air brake systems. The operations are conducted through two business units: Air Control and Foundation Brake. 20

Marathon Brake Systems

See Ad On Page 21

125 Old Mill Rd.
Cartersville, GA 30120 USA
800-223-5201

Website: www.marathonbrake.com

Products: Marathon's OE-approved KVT brake linings, DiscStar Transit Premium air disc pads and DiscStar rotors are proven performers for transit and coach lines across the country. KVT and DiscStar are quiet, long life materials that are friendly to drums and rotors.

KVT Transit Brake Linings — OE Transit Approved KVT is specifically formulated to handle the high heat of multiple stopping of a city bus and the heavy-duty demands of a motorcoach. KVT is an organic, non-asbestos brake lining that combines dependable stopping power and quiet operation with a long lining life. KVT is rated for 28,660 lb. axle loads.

DiscStar Transit Premium Air Disc Pads — Marathon now offers a high performance air disc pad, DiscStar Transit Premium (DSTP). Designed specifically for air disc brakes,

Marathon's DiscStar disc pads were created to handle the extreme conditions of transit bus and coach applications. Formulated using Marathon's service ceramic expertise, DiscStar disc pads provide dependable stopping power, a long pad and rotor life, and noise reduction.

Marathon's DiscStar Air Disc Rotors are manufactured to OE thickness specifications to resist warping and cracking issues caused by high temperature applications. The rotors feature an optimized venting design and maximized heat sink to further enhance their thermal resistance properties. These rotors are manufactured in an ISO 9000/TS16949 certified plant and are geometrically tested for design, metallurgical composition, hardness and balance. In addition, the rotors undergo a thermal integrity test at high loads. The resulting DiscStar rotor used with a DiscStar pad will provide smooth stopping and a longer service life to lower maintenance costs. 21

Meritor, Inc.

2135 W. Maple Rd.
Troy, MI 48084 USA
866-668-7221

Website: www.meritor.com

Products: Meritor is a global supplier of drivetrain, mobility, braking and aftermarket solutions for commercial vehicle and industrial markets. Meritor supplies more than two million brake assemblies per year for trucks, trailers, buses and coaches. 20

MGM Brakes

6200 Harris Technology Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28269 USA
704-547-7411

Email: mail@mgmbrakes.com

Website: www.mgmbrakes.com

Products: Since 1956, MGM Brakes, a division of Indian Head Industries, Inc., has been a global leader in the development of spring parking brake actuator technology and electronic brake monitoring systems. MGM Brakes actively supports the commercial vehicle industry in the truck, trailer, transit bus, school bus, military and vocational markets with drum and air disc brake actuators. In recent years, MGM Brakes has been committed in the development and introduction of patented electronic brake monitoring systems. 20

Michelin North America, Inc.

P.O. Box 19001
Greenville, SC 29602 USA
888-622-2306

Website: www.michelintruck.com

Products: Tires for various markets including the bus and motorcoach industries. 20

Motor Coach Tire Sales, LLC

1133 4th St.
Columbus, GA 31901 USA
678-463-4110

Email: bill@motorcoachtiresales.com

Website: www.motorcoachtiresales.com

Company Officer: Bill Kaiser, President

Products: Sales of Toyo and Yokohama tires to the motorcoach industry. 17

Power Brake LLC

6515 N 50th St., Tampa, FL 33610 USA
813-623-1333

Website: www.powerbrake1.com

Products: Power Brake LLC, located in Tampa, FL, has over 50 years of combined experience in the brake industry, and has been in business for over 12 years. 19

Telma Retarder, Inc.

1245 Humbracht Cir., Ste. B
Bartlett, IL 60103 USA
800-797-7714

Email: customerservice@telmausa.com

Website: www.telmausa.com

Products: Telma provides frictionless braking systems based on the physical principle of electromagnetic induction. Telma's expertise in the field of induction braking systems has been built from over 60 years in the market. 20

Webb Wheel Products, Inc.

2310 Industrial Dr. SW
Cullman, AL 35055 USA
800-633-3256

Website: www.webbwheel.com

Products: Webb Wheel Products produces wheel-end equipment. This includes brake drums, hubs, rotors and spoke wheels. 20

MCI Academy's Fifth Consecutive ATMC National Excellence In Training Award

NFI, an independent bus and coach manufacturer and provider of electric mass mobility solutions, announced its subsidiary, Motor Coach Industries (MCI) has received an ASE Training Managers Council (ATMC) National Excellence in Training Award.

"The MCI Academy, an NFI center for training and workforce development, secured the 2021 first place Grand Award for its Motorcoach Technician Certificate Program with a score of 498 out of a possible 500," according to a press release.

"This marks the fifth consecutive time the MCI Academy has earned the award, and the only time a recipient has won five times.

"The MCI Academy is one of NFI's award-winning training centers, providing high quality training and workforce development in the motorcoach industry for all levels of technicians through online courses, classroom sessions, written tests, and practical skills demonstration."

"In 2020 alone, the MCI Academy had 30,000 courses completed, driven by nearly

20,000 active users taking in 670 courses focused on the facilitation of reskilling and upskilling for the motorcoach industry," said Paul Soubry, president/CEO of NFI. "It is clear the MCI Academy is meeting a critical industry need for advanced workforce development through the new mobility era. We are incredibly proud to not only provide classroom, online, and on-the-job training, but to see the caliber of our programs recognized for the fifth year in a row."

MCI's first submission for the award occurred in 2017, where it was named a winner, and has been every year since. Each year, three awards are given for Excellence in Training, with one Grand Award given to first place. The MCI Academy's Grand Awards include:

- 2017: HVAC 101 (an HVAC Specialist Program);
- 2018: ELECT 401 (an Electrical Specialist Program);
- 2019: Motorcoach Technician Apprenticeship Program;

- 2020: High Voltage Safety; and,
- 2021: Motorcoach Technician Certificate Program.

"The MCI Academy's Motorcoach Technician Certificate Program was recently leveraged by NFI in the development of subsidiary New Flyer's Electrical Technician Training Program, which was announced in October 2021, and aims to provide employees with knowledge and skills to continue leading and supporting zero-emission adoption across North America.

"As an enabler of workforce development — one of four pillars in NFI's mobility solutions offering — MCI Academy training equips motorcoach professionals with knowledge and skills to maintain, diagnose, and repair systems on MCI coaches to maximize on-road time, passenger safety, and operator profitability."

To learn more,
visit mciacademy.com.

To learn more,
visit atmc.org.

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BRC Group

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6061 90th Ave., SE
Calgary, Alberta T2C 4Z6 Canada
888-848-8686
6857 Speedway Blvd., P101
Las Vegas, NV 89115 USA
888-645-8585

Email: info@brcgroup.ca

Website: www.brcgroup.ca

Products: BRC Group operates commercial vehicle collision repair and refurbishment centers in Canada and the United States. The company was founded under the name Big Rig Collision in 1979. 21

CoachCrafters Inc.

27530 County Road 561, Tavares, FL 32778 USA
833-559-7679

Email: info@coachcrafters.com

Website: www.coachcrafters.com

Products: Bus rehabilitation & overhaul, collision repair, repowering, maintenance and a variety of component upgrades including

wheelchair lifts, seating, drive trains, air conditioning and electrical systems. The company provides manufacturer warranties for several bus and component manufacturers. It also has a field service team that travels nationwide to perform services at customer facilities. 21

Complete Coach Works

See Ad On Page 40

1863 Service Ct.,
Riverside, CA 92507 USA

800-300-3751

Email: sales@completecoach.com

Website: www.completecoach.com

Facebook: completecoachworks

Twitter: CCWbus

LinkedIn: complete-coach-works

Products: Retrofits, rehabilitations, repowers, CNG conversions and re-tanking, electric bus conversions, body work, painting, major collision and fire repairs, brakes and suspension, interior repairs, lift ADA systems and HVAC systems. 21

Midwest Bus Corporation

See Ad On Page 38

1940 W. Stewart St.
Owosso, MI 48867 USA
800-627-6251

Website: www.midwestbus.com

Products: Transit bus remanufacturer; after-market parts sales; used bus sales/leasing; Byk-Rak distributor; repower and field services. 21

MTB / Transit Solutions

8170 Lawson Rd.,
Milton, Ontario L9T 5C4 Canada
905-876-0669

227 Thorn Ave., Building Z,
Orchard Park, NY 14127 USA

905-876-0669

Email: info@m-t-b.com

Website: www.mtbtransitsolutions.com

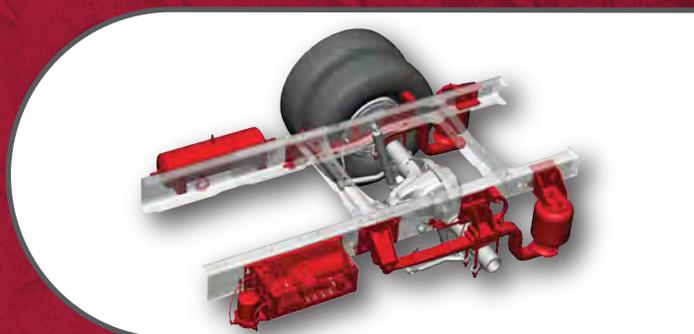
Products: Refurbishment, repair (collision and fire), OEM (upgrades, modifications and warranty), and sales and leasing of buses to government-owned transit authorities, bus manufacturers (OEMs), and private coach companies. 21

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By Harrell Kerkhoff
Busline Magazine Editor

Opening on the heels of the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passage — approved by Congress and signed by President Biden that greatly increases funding for U.S. public transit — the **American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) 2021 TRANSform Conference & EXPO** took place in Orlando, FL, on November 7-10.

The triennial EXPO is traditionally billed as public transit’s premier showcase of technology, products and services. This year it featured an estimated 8,000 attendees and 800 exhibitors (including 208 first-timers) from around the world, according to APTA. The EXPO, last held in 2017, was postponed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this year’s event, attendees visited with exhibitors for three days on a 260,500-square-foot tradeshow floor at the Orange County Convention Center.

Meanwhile, this year’s APTA TRANSform Conference, held concurrently with the EXPO, included a series of educational sessions, speakers, forums and other learning and networking opportunities.

The approved infrastructure bill is expected to provide a long-needed spark for a public transportation industry that has endured 20 months of hardship, shutdowns, reorganizations and sacrifice due to the pandemic. The past and future were both discussed at length during the APTA TRANSform Conference & EXPO **Opening General Session**, hosted by **APTA President & CEO Paul P. Skoutelas** and **APTA Chair Jeff Nelson**, who is also the CEO/managing director of the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLink), in Moline, IL.

Both men addressed all that has taken place since the early months of 2020, when the global pandemic started to change not only the public transportation industry, but most people’s daily lives.

“Never did we imagine the transformational change that would be thrust upon us by a global pandemic. None of us want to relive the past year and a half, but think about what we have overcome, the challenges we have met, the obstacles we have conquered and the communities that we have helped save,” Skoutelas stated to begin the Opening General Session. “This is a special moment. It’s a reunion. It’s a new beginning. It’s a call to action. And indeed, it’s a celebration and we have a lot to celebrate, including the recently passed infrastructure package, something (the industry) has been working on for years.

“(The package) includes a new five-year surface transportation authorization that provides dramatic funding increases for public transit. The importance of that achievement for our industry cannot be overstated. The entire APTA membership, including agencies and business members, have closely worked together over the past few years to help produce an impressive outcome. It allows for a promising future for public transportation.”

Skoutelas noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought certain challenges to the forefront within the public transportation world. That includes issues related to climate change, racial and economic equity, ridership decreases and cyber security risks. Other issues important to the industry that were focused on during the APTA TRANSform Conference & EXPO included the increased electrification of buses, procurement and supply chain issues, new technologies in customer information and fare collection and future ridership trends.

“It’s amazing how much has been invented, updated and brought to market since our last EXPO in 2017,” he said.

THE ORIGINAL FIRST RESPONDERS

During his address at the Opening General Session, Skoutelas spent time reflecting on all that has transpired within the public transportation industry since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted the heroic efforts of many transit front-line employees during the height of the pandemic.

“When COVID threatened their mission, livelihood and even lives, essential workers within our industry showed up and in a big way,” Skoutelas said. “Those transit workers were the first responders to the first responders. I know there are people in this audience who suffered and sacrificed, who worked day and night to keep their systems operating. We applaud you. You put fear and doubt aside to meet unprecedented challenges each and every day.

“I’m also proud our association was able to deliver the tools and support needed by our members during that time. Our first responsibility was to help secure emergency funding to keep public transportation operating. In three separate legislative packages, nearly \$70 billion in emergency funding for public transportation was secured. Those funds were used to avoid layoffs and furloughs, to purchase protective gear and safety equipment and to keep buses on the road and trains on the track.

“APTA, however, did more than just help deliver dollars. We launched a health and safety commitment program to help agencies protect passengers and employees from the spread of COVID-19.



APTA Chair Jeff Nelson, left, and APTA President & CEO Paul P. Skoutelas cut the ribbon to officially open the 2021 TRANSform Conference & EXPO in Orlando.

That helped restore riders’ trust. We also hosted weekly conference calls and roundtable discussions to coordinate responses to the pandemic, to share information and to reassure one another that we would win this fight — together. Critical information was provided on the APTA website from around the world that included links, guidance, research and best practices. As the virus evolved and needs became more complex, APTA created a new set of webinars, online tools and virtual events to help address specific COVID-related challenges.”

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Skoutelas added that U.S. public transportation ridership numbers have steadily increased since the low point of the pandemic.

“While not at where we need to be, the industry is making progress. We are in a much stronger position. For example, ridership for the second quarter of 2021 was 85 percent higher compared to the same period in 2020,” Skoutelas said. “As terrible as the virus has been, it has shown our resilience and adaptability as both an industry and as an association. It has given us a new appreciation for the communities that we serve, and the essential roles that we play. It has revealed how important public transportation is to help mitigate the effects of climate change. It has prompted us to be flexible and resourceful, to experiment, to focus not on operating our systems as we always have, but rather solving new problems no matter how difficult or unforeseen. It has forced us to face our own shortcomings, and made us re-evaluate and appreciate time spent with our families, friends and neighbors.

“Our eyes are now focused on what comes next. All of the lessons we have learned over these past two years will help us (as an industry and association) create a successful future.”

APTA CHAIR ALSO RECOGNIZES HEROES

Speaking of his appreciation (during the Opening General Session) for public transportation’s front-line workers was APTA Chair Jeff Nelson.

“With all of the challenges we (as an industry) have endured since the spring of 2020, we are here today because of our support for one another and the unity of our industry. Think about how much smarter, resourceful, innovative, efficient, safer and financially stable public transportation is today compared to March 2020,” Nelson said. “After more than 35 years in public transportation, it’s truly the high point of my career to serve as your APTA Chair. I would like to thank all those who have helped me along the way and shared in my journey.

“I want to begin today by recognizing the heroes of public transit — the ones we know by name, and the ones we never will know, the men and women who put service before their own safety. We are forever indebted to those individuals.”

Nelson explained that the pandemic didn’t just bring challenges to those people directly involved with public transportation, it exposed to a greater degree travel patterns, rider preferences, limited access in underserved neighborhoods, the need for broader funding and the incredibly important role public transportation can play in social, environmental and economic issues.

“The good news is, those innovations we saw emerging before COVID-19

helped us get through the past year and will help prepare us for what is still to come. Think about what so many transit agencies have been able to do in the past 20 months — redesigning transit networks, adding flexible routes and schedules, investing in energy-efficient infrastructure, advancing the discussion on diversity, and employing new technologies to enhance the health, safety and security of passengers and employees,” Nelson said. “When COVID-19 threatened to shut down our transit systems, agencies also embraced new mobility concepts. That created a greater connectivity among modes ... making transit more convenient, flexible and customer focused.

“The focus on new mobility goals will continue as we take advantage of new funding. That is why the recently approved federal infrastructure package is so important to the future of transit.”

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Nelson also spoke on the importance of issues related to climate change and racial equity.

“We know the transportation sector generates the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. We also know that public transportation is leading the transition away from older fossil fuels. Our industry has a positive story to tell.

So let’s tell that story. We are a critical part of the solution,” Nelson said. “(Transit’s) work to advance equity must also be acknowledge through the shortcomings of our past, so they don’t become part of our future. APTA has made diversity, equity and inclusion a priority. I am proud that the APTA Racial Equity Action Plan has been endorsed by our APTA board of directors. APTA has also launched its Racial Equity Commitment Program which is a road map of how agencies, regardless of size and experience, can advance racial equity. The (pilot program) offers a safe collective learning environment that is open to all APTA members. I encourage organizations to sign up.”

Concluding his remarks, Nelson said that in times of uncertainty, survival often depends on one’s ability to process new information.

“And we have had plenty of that over the past 20 months. We need to think differently. We need to be flexible. We need to be bold. We need to be courageous,” he said. **“There is nothing more fundamental to the human spirit than mobility. It opens pathways to life-changing opportunities.**

“Mobility propels the promise of prosperity, personal freedom and a high quality of life. America needs to move and we (within public transportation) need to act. Successfully connecting to what we know is next is what we must do, can do and will do.”

BUTTIGIEG PROVIDES TAPED MESSAGE

Unable to attend in person, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg provided a taped message at the Opening General Session.

“I am always grateful to address committed leaders and champions of public transit. After more than a year of isolation, people everywhere have a renewed appreciation for just how important transit is — not only for our economy but also for accessibility, equity and the fight against climate change,” Buttigieg said. “Earlier this year, funds from the American Rescue Plan Act helped transit agencies around the country restore and expand service, prevent layoffs and connect millions of Americans to vaccination sites. We are now on the cusp of delivering President Biden’s Build Back Better agenda, which includes transformational investments in combating climate change, in health care and in supporting families.

“Regarding the historic infrastructure legislation, it will make the largest public transit investment in our nation’s history. That involves creating a new generation of good paying jobs for people who build, drive and maintain buses and rail cars. There will also be jobs for construction workers while building new businesses and affordable housing near transit lines, as well as jobs that will address climate change.”

Buttigieg added that transit plays a vital role in helping the world meet emission-reduction goals.

“That is why the President’s infrastructure legislation includes nearly \$6 billion to replace older transit buses with clean, zero emission vehicles. We have already seen transit agencies from around the country make a pledge to convert their fleets to such buses,” he said. “The infrastructure legislation also includes \$2.2 billion to help make transit and paratransit more accessible. FTA (Federal Transit Administration) has prioritize grant applications that demonstrate a commitment to improving accessibility and adding local disability advocates.

“During the past year I have visited communities where local transit agencies have expanded their services in historically underserved and overburden neighborhoods. I have been inspired by the work of those public transportation leaders. That work has helped ensure people, who rely on transit the most, can have better access to jobs, education, medical care, groceries and affordable housing.

“From public transit to passenger rail, from equity to accessibility, from climate change to jobs and the economy — we have a chance right now to make sure America has the best transit system in the world. **Every time you (within public transportation) enhance your service you connect neighborhoods, you clean the air, you improve health care options and you bring people to work. You change lives. You shape communities. And ultimately, you help craft our country’s future.**”

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ABC Companies

ABC Companies, a leading provider of motorcoach, transit and specialty passenger transport equipment in the United States and Canada, has entered the transit vehicle distributor market. The company launched its market entry at the APTA EXPO, showcasing a range of vehicles and technologies designed to address emerging market trends and needs.



American Battery Solutions (ABS)

American Battery Solutions engineers, develops and manufactures high-quality lithium-ion batteries and battery systems to serve growing demands in the electric vehicle (EV), electrified transportation, motive, industrial, and commercial markets.



American Solar Electric (ASE)

Standalone solar bus stop and schedule lights are produced and distributed by American Solar Electric. The company's products provide all-night lighting to improve bus stop safety and comfort. Shown is ASE President William Ramsdell.



Hometown Manufacturing

Producing a variety of vehicles including trolleys and buses, Hometown Manufacturing is a family-owned and operated business. The company focuses on craftsmanship, product quality and customer service.



Bitzer US, Inc.

A leader in the research, development and manufacture of air conditioning compressors for mobile applications, Bitzer features a full range of products specifically designed for bus and coach applications. Shown is Bitzer representative Quentin Crowe.



Freedman Seating Company

Freedman manufactures seats and seating-related products for many applications, including bus and motorcoach.

The company has an extensive collection of fabric and vinyl, available in a variety of colors and styles.



BYD (Build Your Dreams)

BYD designs and builds electrified transportation. That includes battery-electric buses, trucks and utility vehicles. Since its foundation in 1995, the company has also developed expertise in rechargeable batteries.



Vanner

Since 1977, Vanner has been delivering engineering excellence and products that are focused on power conversion and power transformation for commercial vehicles. Shown, left to right, are Vanner Vice President of Heavy Duty Bus & Bus Electrification Markets Chris Collet, Vice President of Engineering Alec Cook, Customer Technical Support Mike Thomas, Bus Sales Manager Doug Adams and Vice President of Sales & Marketing Bruce Beegle.



Complete Coach Works (CCW)

Complete Coach Works is a bus remanufacturing and rehabilitation company. It offers such services as collision repair, interior rehab and fleet alternative fuel conversion. Shown, left to right, are company representatives Jim Paul, Kallie Arevalo and Tracy Owen.



SUTRAK

SUTRAK is a manufacturing company that specializes in HVAC systems for transit vehicle applications. The core of its offering involves bus systems. Other industry lines that the company works in include light rail vehicles and automated people movers. Shown, left to right, are SUTRAK President & CEO Hugh Ferdows, Vice President Christina Ferdows, Vice President of Engineering Dan Van der Hoop, and Vice President of Sales & Marketing Scott Imamura.



Continental

Continental is a global supplier of systems, components and tires to bus/coach, auto/truck and agriculture/construction equipment manufacturers.

It's also a provider of OE-engineered aftermarket parts. Products include wireless camera systems.



Chestnut Ridge Foam

Established in 1986, Chestnut Ridge Foam is a leading manufacturer of fire-resistant and specialty foam products for the transportation seating and other industries. Shown is Chestnut Ridge Foam President Carl Ogburn.



Bitimec

In business since 1988, Bitimec has pioneered the field of mobile washing machines for on-road vehicles and other industries, under its specialized Wash-Bots division. Shown, left to right, are company representatives Bruno Albanesi and Christian Murillo.



ARBOC

ARBOC, a subsidiary of NFI Group, Inc., provides low-floor, body-on-chassis buses serving transit, paratransit and shuttle applications. The company has produced over 4,000 buses and focuses on passenger safety, accessibility and comfort.



Midwest Bus Corporation/Byk-Rak

Midwest Bus Corporation is the distributor of Byk-Rak products for the transit industry. The Byk-Rak frame is very durable for everyday transit use. It's also designed to go through a bus wash, and requires very little maintenance. Shown, left to right, are company representatives Charles Rodman and Ron Coon.



Altro

A manufacturer of slip-resistant floors, Altro's products satisfy the diverse needs of the transportation industry in both bus and rail applications. The company's floor offerings deliver durability, low maintenance and inviting designs.



LiquidSpring

LiquidSpring develops suspension products for various markets involving such vehicles as transit and school buses, EMS and recreational equipment and work trucks. The company provides application engineering, manufacturing, distribution, service and sales of their products throughout the world. Shown are company representatives Christine Harr and Carl Harr.



Dixie Electric

Established in 1968, Dixie Electric produces high quality alternators, starter motors and related components for several markets, including the transit bus and motorcoach industries. Shown, left to right, are Dixie Electric Vice President of Sales Niall Davidson, National Sales Manager Clinton Stohler and Vice President of Marketing Christine Whitfield.



Kelderman

Family owned and operated for 50 years, Kelderman's Air Ride Suspension Systems transform a rough ride into tranquil travel. The company offers a two-stage air ride system for a variety of buses and other vehicles. Shown is company representative Rich Ludvigsen.



Safety Vision

With more than 25 years of experience, Safety Vision provides advanced mobile video surveillance products.

The company focuses on comprehensive solutions, serving the needs of clients, simplifying surveillance systems and strengthening transportation safety.



Voith

Voith continues to meet the growing challenges of public and long-distance transport with innovative solutions. Voith's technologies make sure people stay mobile when using bus and other forms of transportation.



TripSpark

TripSpark's advanced software, in-vehicle hardware and mobile technologies are designed to help customers increase ridership, improve service and operate more efficiently.



Drivege Vehicle Innovations

Drivege is a builder of wheelchair-accessible vans, shuttles and transporters. The company's manufacturing facilities are located in Ohio, Kansas, South Carolina and California. It provides readily available vehicle conversions to health care, fleet management, government, hotel, wheelchair transport, taxi/rideshare, law enforcement, secure transportation and other vocational markets.



Teknoware

Teknoware provides lighting solutions and interior structures for public transportation vehicles. Shown, left to right, are company representatives Mikko Kosonen, Ben Danklefsen, Jeff Pittelli and Jukka Kärkkäinen.



Camira

Camira offers a full range of transport interior products. Fabrics include flat-wovens, moquettes, leathers, vinyls and coordinating trims. All are stringently tested to meet the latest technical and flammability standards.



Icomera

Icomera is a global provider of integrated connectivity solutions for trains, trams, buses and coaches, serving millions of passengers and tens of thousands of vehicles on a daily basis.

Regional Travel Reimagined With ROX Xpress

“Icomera Continues To Facilitate Global Adoption Of Internet-Based Digital Systems To Stay Connected And Productive While On The Move”

“The COVID-19 pandemic sparked the need to work from home, or any remote location of choice, where reliable Wi-Fi connectivity is available as part of the virtual work environment. While taking advantage of a growing preference for remote work, Rapid Overland Express (ROX Xpress) Founder, Jeff McWaters, wanted to invigorate the commercial connection between economic and tourism hubs, with occasional trips to the office,” according to a press release.

ROX Xpress, a Virginia Beach-based, luxury motorcoach operator, partnered with Icomera to provide business and leisure travelers with four hours of enjoyable travel between Virginia Beach and the District of Columbia – and soon Charlottesville, VA.

ROX installed Icomera’s X³ Advanced Gateway for onboard Internet, passenger information, and entertainment. As part of Icomera’s onboard entertainment solution offering, GoView, ROX passengers can access a wide range of media content, from Hollywood movies and TV shows, to magazines, audiobooks, and games – streamed directly over the Wi-Fi network to their personal phones, tablets, and laptops. By providing ROX passengers with a ‘Connected Journey,’ they experience seamless

connectivity and premium entertainment – from origin to destination.

After a pause in service due to the COVID-19 pandemic, service between Washington D.C. and Virginia Beach relaunched in July 2021, catering to commuter

onboard entertainment. Icomera continues to work with motorcoach operators across North America to implement technologies aimed at improving the passenger experience.”

“Being ahead of the curve in providing technological amenities is a big competitive advantage for transport operators; especially on longer-distance routes where services like Wi-Fi and onboard entertainment can influence mode choice,” said Gabriel J. Lopez-Bernal, vice president of sales and marketing at Icomera. “Bringing the best technology and services to operators is our drive and bringing it to our U.S. headquarters’ backyard is an investment in our region and local community.”

According to Icomera, “During even the most challenging of times, Icomera continues to assist its clients in driving innovation and further facilitating the accelerated global mass-adoption of Internet-based digital systems for staying connected and productive while on the move.”

See Icomera’s Expo Booth Photo Above. For more information, visit icomera.com



Trolley Buses, Trams & Street Cars

Hometown Trolley

By Hometown Manufacturing, Inc.



Villager

The Hometown Trolley Villager model is a front engine trolley capable of many applications from a small private tour operator to a full scale transit agency. The Villager model is available in gasoline, bio-diesel, CNG and full electric. The Villager can be equipped with minimal components to make a more economical choice for the small operator or loaded with many transit features such as destination signs, spiral brass railings, bike racks, GPS systems and more.



Hometown Manufacturing
 PO Box 175, 750 Industrial Parkway,
 Crandon, WI 54520
 715-301-0149

www.hometown-mfg.com • hi@hometown-mfg.com

Model	Villager
Length	22', 40'
Width	93", 96", 99"
Height	10'6"
Wheelbase	158, 178, 190, 208, 228
Overhang (front/rear).....	Front 28" / Rear 118"
Inside Height (min./max.).....	Aisle 88"
Tire Size	19.5x6.75 & 22.5
Engine	Cummins ISB 6.7
Transmission	Allison 2
Fuel	Gasoline, bio-diesel, CNG, and full electric
Chassis	Ford, Workhorse, Freightliner
Baggage Capacity	Available
Wheelchair Lift Option.....	Yes
Suspension	Spring or Air

Hometown Trolley

By Hometown Manufacturing, Inc.



Mainstreet

The Hometown Trolley Mainstreet model is a heavy-duty rear engine trolley combining all the transit components for the high volume urban areas, such as full air suspension, air brakes, Allison B300 transmission, Cummins ISB, LED destination signs, Voice Annunciation systems, instep ADA lift equipment and more. The Mainstreet trolley will provide the quality and reliability of any high demand transit needs while at the same time lending the nostalgic feel of the turn of the century cable car.



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Model	Mainstreet
Length	25', 40'
Width	99"
Height	11'2"
Wheelbase	160, 190, 208, 228
Overhang (front/rear).....	42" / 120"
Inside Height (min./max.).....	Aisle 88"
Tire Size	22.5
Engine	Cummins ISB
Transmission	Allison B300
Chassis	Freightliner
Baggage Capacity	Available
Wheelchair Lift Option.....	Yes
Suspension	Air

Trolley Buses, Trams & Street Cars

Hometown Trolley By Hometown Manufacturing, Inc.



Carriage

The Hometown Trolley Carriage model is a front engine, low-floor trolley providing ease of entry and exit with no steps. The Carriage low-floor design allows the ADA ratio of 5:1 and minimal step in height when pulled to curb locations. The Carriage is available in gasoline, diesel, CNG and full electric.

The Carriage is also available with LED destination signs, DVD player and monitor, HVAC with climate control, brass or brushed stainless handrailing, luggage rack, exterior wood package, forward facing or perimeter seating, 110 volt inverter for Christmas lighting on the interior and exterior, and many more transit components.

The Carriage is less than 22-feet in length, making it the perfect size for historical downtown areas, hotels, theme parks and many other shuttle type transportation needs. Capture the nostalgia of a Hometown Trolley in your hometown with the new low-floor Carriage, built to preserve integrity and craftsmanship true to its era of the "turn of the century."



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Model	Carriage
Type	Low Floor Trolley
Passenger Capacity	16-20
Length	20' - 24'
Width	8'
ADA	1 or 2 Position
Engine	Gasoline, Diesel, CNG or Full Electric
Chassis	Chevy 4500
Handrailing	Brass or Stainless
Comfort Control	Full HVAC
Mileage	MPG 12-15

Hometown Trolley By Hometown Manufacturing, Inc.



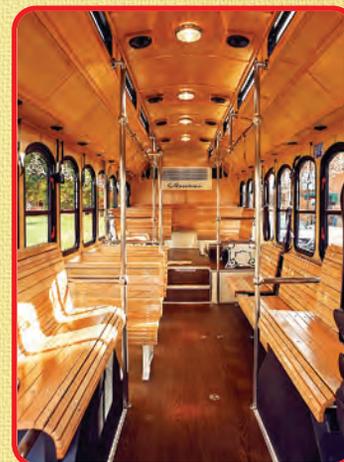
Streetcar

The Streetcar low-floor model combines the nostalgic features of the turn-of-the-century passenger cable car with the modern technology of today's transit advancements. The Streetcar is a powerhouse heavy-duty trolley capable of running in any mass transit, high passenger capacity applications.

The Streetcar is a full stainless steel low-floor monocoque chassis design, exceeding the required 1:6 ratio for ADA loading with the fold out ADA ramp.

Optional equipment such as LED destination signs, DVD flat screen packages, mahogany finishes and many more choices are available to customize the Streetcar.

Standard equipment such as a multiplex wiring system, brass or brushed stainless hand railings, as well as simulated wood trim set the Streetcar in a class all its own. Vintage tram interior, transit flooring, HVAC packages and ADA packages are available. Altoona-tested for 10 years/350,000 miles.



Model	Streetcar
Passenger Capacity	28-48
Length	30' - 40'
Width	100"
Overall Height	10'6"
Wheel Base	190", 208", 228"
Door Opening	48" x 78"
GVW	27,500 - 32,000
Engine	Cummins Diesel ISB and L9N, CNG or Full Electric
Transmission	Allison B300, B400

ABC Rolls Out New Portfolio Of Custom Transit Solutions At APTA Expo

“ABC Companies, provider of motorcoach, transit and specialty passenger transport equipment in the United States and Canada, has entered the transit vehicle distributor market. ABC is building on its strong history of sourcing parts and providing the expert service agencies count on to keep their fleets on the move. ABC launched its market entry at the APTA Expo, where it exhibited as a transit vehicle distributor, showcasing a range of vehicles and technologies designed to address emerging market trends and needs,” according to a press release.

“ABC made the decision to sell transit vehicles based on a need for more customized solutions to address the ever-evolving transit landscape. Its adaptive new lineup of custom-created vehicles, featuring a wide range of available sizes, power options, body styles and technologies will give transit agencies greater choice, scalability and flexibility, paired with the guidance they need to successfully spec and purchase vehicles that best meet their specific and often unique challenges, goals and budgets.

“With ABC as a distributor, transit agencies will also benefit from being able to buy, find parts for and service their vehicles all with one trusted and established partner that understands and respects their needs, streamlining operations, instilling greater confidence in their fleet choices and saving them time and money.”

“Transit agencies are challenged to do more with less, address

emerging demand for more flexible options, and green their fleets — all while enhancing the rider experience,” said ABC Companies President and Chief Commercial Officer Roman Cornell. “ABC is here to help. We’ve entered the transit vehicle distributor market with trans-

formative new offers and products that meet these evolving needs and empower agencies to successfully navigate these complexities, while providing the same level of transparency and personalized service they’ve come to expect from us. With ABC as their distributor, agencies will reimagine transit, challenge assumptions and be more agile.

“ABC has already developed key partnerships with industry leaders including Vicinity Motor Corporation, Optimal EV, Proterra, New England Wheels, Turtle

Top and more, and showcased a wide range of vehicles and technologies at APTA. The vehicles on display were chosen because they represent ABC’s ability to address emerging trends, from smaller models and cut-aways that help meet the growing need for more hyper-local and micro-transit options, to low-floor and modified body chassis that combine ADA compliance and enhanced rider experience with transit-on-demand flexibility, to EV models that are greener and less expensive to operate.”

For more information, visit www.abc-companies.com, or call ABC Companies at 800-222-2875.

See ABC’s Expo Booth Photo On Page 41.



Technical Sales Professional - USA



Aesys is a leading provider of technological solutions for the transit industry. We are looking for a full-time, trusted Technical Sales Professional who is organized, thorough, self-driven, and motivated to learn and excel.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

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- Ensure the availability of all the necessary documents for product release
- Support the release of a new product and phase-out process, sharing information with internal or external customer
- Promote the continuous process of reviewing, evaluating and improving of the product range
- Be the company reference point of the entire US product life cycle
- Contribute to and manage technical and commercial proposals for both the single product and for on-board bus system
- Provide technical support on field or remote in collaboration with HQ customers service to US customers

Requirements:

- Five years of experience in Technical Sales Department (Bus and coach markets will be preferred)
- Excellent sales and negotiation skills • Strong planning and organizational skills
- Strong social skills • Travel flexibility • Italian speaking will be consider a plus

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Aesys – North America

Mae Bogdansky – Director of Operations
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NFI's ARBOC Named In 2-Year Cooperative Contract With California's MBTA

ARBOC, a subsidiary of NFI Group, Inc., an independent bus and coach manufacturer, has announced a two-year contract with Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA), executed on its behalf by ARBOC distributor, Creative Bus Sales. The contract, which includes up to three, one-year extensions, will be available to participating members of the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CALACT) to make purchases of ARBOC vehicles.

"The announcement is another example of cooperatives working together to efficiently deploy mobility at scale," said Paul Soubry, president and CEO of NFI. "NFI is pleased to support this cooperative contract facilitating procurement across the state of California, but more importantly, to continue expanding ARBOC's leading low-floor solutions into communities across California that depend on fully accessible transit and shuttle services."

The contract, which includes ARBOC's Mobility, Independence, Freedom, and for the first time, the Equess, was placed through ARBOC distributor Creative Bus Sales, and provides CALACT members direct access to purchase a variety of transit vehicles.

"We are excited to partner with Creative Bus Sales in providing fully accessible mobility to members of CALACT," said Doug Minix, general manager of ARBOC. "Since inception, ARBOC has built over 4,000 low-floor and cutaway vehicles, and continues to lead the market in accessible mobility for everyone. Today, we expand reach into California by offering a wider lineup of ARBOC vehicles through this innovative purchasing cooperative than ever."

"The MBTA/CALACT contract offers a federal and California

state compliant purchasing solution allowing agencies to select a vehicle that best meets their respective transit needs. ARBOC was first awarded vehicles through the purchasing cooperative in 2011, and has since sold over 200 vehicles into the state of California through the contract. As agencies make new purchases through this cooperative contract, they will be added to NFI's backlog."

See ARBOC's Expo Booth Photo On Page 43. For more information, visit arbocsv.com.

BYD Showcases American-Made Battery Electric Buses During APTA EXPO

"BYD went big at the recent APTA TRANSform Expo in Orlando, FL. BYD (Build Your Dreams) showcased six of its innovative and technologically superior American-made battery-electric buses," according to the company.

"We appreciate our customers and appreciated the opportunity to meet future customers from transit agencies across the United States," said BYD Senior Vice President of Operations Patrick Duan.

BYD transit battery-electric models on display were the 30-foot K7M-ER, the 35-foot K8M, the 40-foot K9M, and the 60-foot articulated K11M. BYD also showcased two of its battery-electric motorcoach models, the 35-foot, double-deck C8MS and the 45-foot C10M. See BYD's Expo Booth Photo On Page 42. For more information, visit byd.com.

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TEMSA Presents North America With Its TS30

“TEMSA drew attention at the recent Chauffeur Driven and the National Limousine Association Show held in Grapevine, TX, with its TS30 model. Providing sales and after-sales services to its customers through its North America structure, TEMSA continues its growth in the market with vehicles featuring high driving comfort,” according to a news release.

“TEMSA continues to strengthen its presence in North America under the partnership of Sabancı Holding and PPF Group (Skoda Transportation). Having sustained its growth in the market even during the pandemic period, TEMSA also continues to participate in leading state, regional, and national expos in the U.S. with its vehicles designed to meet higher standards.

“TEMSA recently exhibited its TS30 model vehicle at the Chauffeur Driven and the National Limousine Association Show, which was attended by over 100 operators from different states, and received full marks from the participants. Prioritizing driving comfort and creating added value for its business associates with vehicles with high luggage volume and advantageous cost of ownership, TEMSA carries the customer experience to a higher level in the motorcoach segment.”

We Create Value For Our Business Associates

In his evaluations, TEMSA North America Country Director Fatih Kozan said that the company gained substantial strength through the partnership of the Sabancı Holding and the PPF Group.

He added, “With the strength we receive from our partners, we come together with our customers and business associates in North America. That is among the top priority foreign markets for us, and strengthens our presence in that market. As a company that has over 1,400 vehicles in the market so far, we use, and will continue to use, our experience and customer-oriented approach to create more value for our business associates.

“With the TS30 that we have developed specifically for North America, while we carry the customer experience to a different level in the motorcoach segment, we present our business associates with a high level of driving comfort, and a very valuable cost of ownership.”



Custom Design For The Limousine Market

“During the event, TEMSA showcased its assertion in not only the motorcoach segment, but also the limousine market, with its TS30 model vehicle. Tailor-made for the limousine market to provide VIP services to large groups, the TS30 draws attention with its black exterior color option and aesthetic interior design.”

For more information, visit temsa.com.



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Local Artist Brings Character And Color To Nashville's WeGo Central

Tennessee artist Meg Pollard is painting the town, and not just red. Pollard's creativity is on full display at WeGo Central. Her artwork entitled *Swirls* was also featured inside a WeGo bus in 2019.

“The *Swirls* artwork was cathartic for me to create; it just came out,” said Pollard. “I’m not trying to make a swirl flow in any certain direction, because it already knows where it’s supposed to go. I used to see them all the time as a child when I’d close my eyes while my mom washed my hair. I didn’t know what they were until I was drawing them one day, and realized where I had seen them before.”



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