

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Consolidation of UMA, ABA wins overwhelming approval Separation of three decades to end | Leaders eager to build new group

WASHINGTON — For the first time in 35 years, the U.S. motorcoach industry is going to have one national trade association.

Members of the American Bus Association and the United Motorcoach Association voted overwhelmingly — in an election that lasted almost five weeks — to consolidate the two organizations.

The margin of victory, roughly 90 percent for unification and 10 percent against, seemed to surprise even the strongest advocates of the consolidation effort.

Equally as surprising to some was the relatively modest percentage of members of

both associations who voted. Only about one-third of ABA's operator members voted and barely more than 30 percent of UMA's members returned their ballots.

A half-dozen reasons were offered up to explain the light vote:

- Apathy and ambivalence
- Assumption it would pass
- Lack of an aggressive campaign against the idea
- The 20-page merger plan that accompanied the ballots literally buried potential voters in details

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WASHINGTON — The two men who will do the most to guide the new organization born of the unification of the American Bus Association and United Motorcoach Association are ready to get to work.

And, they're darn enthusiastic about it, too.

"This provides us with great — and many — opportunities to meet the needs of our memberships," said ABA Chairman Ronald Eyre of Eyre Bus Service in Glenelg, Md. "We're anxious to get the process started."

UMA Vice Chairman Brian Scott of Escot Bus Lines in Largo, Fla., said he, too,

is eager to get going. "We've pulled it off, now we have to pull it together," he said.

Eyre, 59, will begin a one-year term as the combined organization's first chairman, starting in January, and Scott, 36, will serve a two-year term as chairman beginning January 2007. The chairmen who follow Scott are also expected to serve two-year terms.

The two coach company executives, who campaigned for the consolidation, said they were delighted with the 444-46 combined vote in favor of joining the associations that

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New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg pushed for two years for the ouster of the private operators.

## N.Y. bus takeover nearly complete

NEW YORK CITY — The decades-long campaign by the city of New York to get rid of the seven private bus companies that for 30 years have provided daily commuter service for tens of thousands of borough residents is finally coming to an end.

It was announced late last month that the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority is taking over the last of more than 80 tran-

sit routes operated by the private companies.

The city said it had successfully negotiated the contracts for the service away from the final four bus companies that had been holding out.

Under the final agreement, the city will pay \$25.5 million for the routes and assure that the MTA hires all of the union employees of the companies and guarantees jobs

for up to one year for all nonunion staffers.

In addition, the city will rent terminals from the companies for \$7.5 million a year, with an automatic 10 percent increase every five years over the next 21 years. The rental agreement contains two 14-year extensions at the option of both the companies and the city.

The pact allows the MTA to

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## Bus security grant program excludes much of industry, associations are apoplectic

WASHINGTON — A decision by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to award bus security grants only to fixed-route operators has been blasted by the United Motorcoach Association and the American Bus Association.

For the past two years, any U.S. motorcoach company could apply for the grants, which are to be used to upgrade operational security.

For fiscal 2005, however, the department decided to strictly interpret language in a congressional report and limit the companies that can apply to fixed-route operators. That means that more than 95 percent of over-the-road bus operators are excluded from the program.

ABA and UMA contend it makes no sense to leave so much of the industry high and dry.

One senior federal transportation security official told a committee meeting at the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance annual

conference last month in Albuquerque, N.M., that the pool of companies that can apply "will be limited to line-haul operators that serve urban areas that have been determined to be security threats."

However, in announcing which companies would be eligible for funding, the department released a list of operators that appears to have been cobbled together from a 1998 edition of the *Bus Industry Directory* that was missing a few pages. The list not only contains the names of many companies that are no longer in business but names many others that are based in such security hotspots as central Oregon, northeast Wyoming and northern Wisconsin. (See list on Page 14.)

The department said these companies will be permitted to apply for a total of nearly \$10 million in bus security grants.

Also in its announcement, the

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# Greyhound awards contract for rehabbing 400 coaches

DALLAS — Greyhound Lines has awarded Motor Coach Industries a huge contract to refurbish 400 MCI D3 and DL3 coaches.

The project, which includes installing new passenger seats and other interior upgrades, body work, complete repainting, and new graphics, is expected to take upwards of a year to complete.

Greyhound's fleet includes 85 D3 coaches and 660 DL3s, meaning more than half of the company D-models will be refurbished. Greyhound has been operating D3s

since 1996, and began adding DL3s two years later. All of the buses are smooth sided; they do not have stainless-steel fluting along the exterior like the older-model MC-12s.

Although a dollar amount for the contract was not available, it easily could top \$7 million, with the final figure hinging on the extent of the body and interior work needed to restore the buses to Greyhound standards.

The MCI Fleet Support Service Center in Loudonville, Ohio, will handle the project.

"MCI is very pleased to have won the contract," said Jerry Cignarella, vice president of service center operations at MCI. "It's a testament to the confidence Greyhound has in our capabilities."

Cignarella said his goal is to quickly gear up the project so 40 buses are completed each month. All buses will be inspected inside and out against Greyhound standards and the results reported to Greyhound, which will decide the extent of repairs, fixes or upgrades. Although all buses will receive new passenger seats, driver seat

cushioning and upholstery, and entry flooring, some also may require interior sidewall, window or ceiling refurbishing, as well as passenger-compartment flooring.

Similarly, some coaches will need more body work than others.

Under the deal, Greyhound is contracting separately for the 21,000-plus seats that will be supplied to MCI for installation in the coaches.

A key element of the project is new graphics for the coaches. Turbo Images of Saint-George, Quebec, will supply a contempo-

rary Greyhound graphics treatment after the coaches have been repainted white.

For some time, the industry has been expecting Greyhound to launch a big-league rehab project because of cutbacks in its new-coach buying. For a period of years in the 1990s and early in this decade, Greyhound purchased as many as 200 new coaches annually. That stopped after 9/11. Its last new-coach buy of any significance was 20 MCI G4500s more than a year ago — after buying none in 2003.

## Stolen motorcoach is recovered

NEW YORK CITY — A late-model coach that was stolen from a hotel parking lot in northern New Jersey at the end of March has been recovered. The bus was a 1998 MCI DL3 belonging to Virginia Coach Co. of Purcellville, Va.

The bus was discovered parked on a street in New York

City. It had accumulated a number of parking tickets before it was learned that it was stolen.

Godfrey Lebron of Paradise Trailways of West Hempstead, N.Y., bailed the bus out of the impound yard for Virginia Coach. He had it taken to his shop where his maintenance staff inspected the bus.

## Correction

Two motorcoach models that were among the best sellers during the first quarter of 2005 were not included in a page one article in the May 1 issue.

The Van Hool T2145 and the MCI D4000 were mistakenly left off the list of the top-seven selling coaches. Here's a complete list of the best-selling seated coaches dur-

ing the first three months of 2005, as compiled by *National Bus Trader* magazine:

1. MCI J4500
2. MCI D4500
3. Van Hool C2045
4. Prevost H3-45
5. Van Hool T2145
6. Prevost LeMirage XLII
7. MCI D4000

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# THE DOCKET

## British Columbia has new rules for coaches

VICTORIA, British Columbia — A new inspection requirement for U.S. motorcoaches traveling in British Columbia may not be as onerous as initially thought.

The issue became a hot topic last month when it was reported that any U.S. carrier entering and traveling in British Columbia had to have a provincial inspection. Worse, it was believed the inspection had to be done every six months, and had to be completed by an approved Canadian inspection station.

This article, hopefully, will set the matter straight.

The nub of the problem is this: Provincial law requires B.C.-based operators to meet broader and more frequent inspection standards than most American operators. Which, strangely enough, B.C. operators didn't think was fair.

So, the Passenger Transportation Branch of the provincial Ministry of Transportation has been working to find an equitable alternative. While a complete answer has not yet been developed, here's what American operators need to do in the interim:

- If a U.S. carrier is based in a state that has a Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration-approved inspection program, the carrier's vehicles must meet the federal standard through a state

inspection and display a state inspection sticker that is no older than six months. The six-months requirement is important.

- If a carrier is based in a state that does not have an inspection program that meets FMCSA standards, and that includes Oregon and Washington state, the carrier may meet the FMCSA requirement through a federal inspection or a self-inspection. Those companies using the self-inspection process should consider the J.J. Keller system and use the sticker that is supplied. Once again, the sticker indicating the self-inspection, or the federal inspection, must have been completed within six months of time the bus will be in British Columbia and dated accordingly.

- A third option is for American carriers to have their vehicles pass the same inspection, using the same process, required for B.C. carriers. That is, a semi-annual provincial Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program test/assessment conducted by a privately-owned designated inspection facility in the province.

Note: A CVSA roadside inspection does not qualify as meeting the FMCSA standard.

Every-six-months inspections are not unheard of in the U.S. For example, New York and New Jersey require them.

operators in applying for the grants. The packet is available to members of ABA and the United Motorcoach Association.

ABA members wanting the packet should send a request via e-mail to [abainfo.org](mailto:abainfo.org), and UMA members should send their request to [mharder@uma.org](mailto:mharder@uma.org). Those members making the request must identify themselves and their company in their e-mails.

The federal money can be used to add lifts, tie-downs, moveable seats, doors and labor costs associated with work needed to make a coach accessible. The money can be used to retrofit coaches or help offset the cost of having a lift installed in a new coach.

## N.Y. Thruway tolls jump by 35% for buses

ALBANY, N.Y. — Tolls for buses and motorcoaches using the 641-mile New York State Thruway system rose by 35 percent effective May 15.

The increase was the first for the highway system since 1988 and will help fund a seven-year, \$2.6 billion capital spending plan that includes road and bridge improvements, upgraded connections, and more and higher-speed E-ZPass lanes.

Under the plan, buses and other commercial vehicles that use E-ZPass will receive a discount on tolls and be eligible for additional volume discounts.

The toll increases were adopted despite protests from the Bus Association of New York State, its members and truckers. However, the toll authority said the volume discount structure was adopted at the request of commercial vehicle operators.

In the protest filed by BANY, association president Stanley Brettschneider said the toll increase will "drive a number of small charter companies out of business and badly damage the state's tourism industry."

Under the new toll structure, a three-axle coach using the Major Deegan Expressway to travel the 497 miles from the New York City limit, to the Pennsylvania state line would pay tolls totaling \$68.95, up from the previous \$51.05. An E-ZPass would reduce the toll to \$62.47.

Similarly, a three-axle coach traveling the 95 miles from the Connecticut state line to New York City would pay a toll of \$22.70, up from \$16.70.

Highlights of the spending plan include improvements to more than 500 miles of roadway and more than 220 bridges; 15 new dedicated E-ZPass lanes, 28 new higher-speed E-ZPass lanes.

Tolls rise 25 percent for autos. For more information, and to use the thruway's toll calculator, go to [www.thruway.state.ny.us](http://www.thruway.state.ny.us).

## System for correcting info in FMCSA safety database is kept busy

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's new tool for correcting bus and truck safety information in the agency's electronic database has been getting a workout since its introduction last year.

In just 14 months of operation, DataQ — as the system is called — has received nearly 5,300 data challenges, or more than 375 a month. And of those, about 3,700, or more than two-thirds, were closed with corrections made.

Only about 50 of the complaints, though, were filed by motorcoach operators, with the remainder filed by trucking companies.

The FMCSA developed the correction system in response to concerns raised by operators who said correcting erroneous information in the safety database was difficult, and because the federal agency wanted to improve its system of tracking the numbers and types of challenges and study how often corrections were made.

Carriers maintained they needed an easier way to correct errors because the database containing the information is available to the public and could have an impact on their businesses.

Response from motorcoach operators and others since the introduction of DataQ has been outstanding, according to an FMCSA spokesperson who noted that more than 60 percent of the disputes were resolved in 10 days or less.

Most of the challenges to the safety information — 95 percent — involved accidents and inspections, the two areas in which most of the data is collected. In 2004 alone, the FMCSA collected,

information on more than 140,000 truck and bus accidents and more than 3 million safety inspections.

Information open for correction includes accidents that were not reportable (no fatality, injury or tow away), accidents assigned to the wrong carrier, incorrect violations, insurance information, federal enforcement actions, compliance review data and duplicate or incorrect data.

Errors in state information contained in the database must be corrected at the state level before it can be updated in the federal system.

The FMCSA said some data cannot be changed, including non-preventable crashes and dismissed traffic tickets. It said state-reported crashes are still used on a company's profile regardless if the crash was preventable or not. Also, if a driver only received a warning or if a ticket was dismissed, the original citation record remains in the database.

Additionally, although DataQ receives challenges concerning registration information, the FMCSA suggests carriers follow this up with an updated (MCS-150) registration form, which can be filed electronically at <http://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov>.

To use DataQ, a person first must register at <http://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov>. Then log on, and click on the "Add a Challenge" button to bring up a list of items that can be challenged. Users then go through interactive screens, entering any supporting information. At the end of the challenge an ID is provided for future reference. The option of uploading or faxing supporting documentation is also available.

## Lift-grant deadline is near, application help available

WASHINGTON — The deadline is less than a month away to apply for federal grants to help pay for installing wheelchair lifts in new and used coaches.

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration announced last month that grants totaling more than \$6.89 million will be available this year for private motorcoach operators. The deadline is June 6. (See April 15 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Last year, 74 motorcoach companies in 26 states won grants through the *Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility Program*.

The American Bus Association has prepared a comprehensive packet of information to guide

## Transits seek charter firms

The following public transit providers have informed the United Motorcoach Association of their intent to provide charter bus service unless willing and able private operators step forward to offer their services or to bid on contract opportunities. UMA urges appropriate operators to take the time to respond to these notices:

**Atlantic, Iowa**, and eight counties: Cass, Fremont, Harrison,

Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby. Deadline: May 26, 2005. Write to: M.J. Broomfield, Executive Director, Southwest Iowa Planning Council, 1501 SW 7th St., Atlantic, Iowa 50022.

**Columbia, S.C.** Deadline: May 31, 2005. Write to: Director, Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority, P.O. Box 214, Columbia, SC 29202.

# Washington, North Dakota fuel taxes rising; in N.Y....

With many state legislatures winding up their sessions, coach operators soon will begin feeling the impact — mostly in their pocketbooks — of new legislation adopted this year.

In Washington state and North Dakota, fuel taxes are going up, and in New York several types of motor vehicle fees are increasing, plus Indian tribes are expected to start collecting sales and fuel taxes.

The biggest fuel tax hike is coming in Washington where the tax will rise 9½ cents a gallon during the next four years. The current Washington fuel tax is 28 cents a gallon for both diesel fuel and gasoline.

The Washington legislature adopted a massive highway and bridge rebuilding program that calls for spending at least \$8.6 billion during the next 16 years.

One goal of the program is to keep Interstate 90 open — through

the Cascade Mountains — all winter. Washington's main east-west mountain pass was closed several times this past winter even though the season was comparatively mild.

To finance the program, fuel taxes rise 3 cents a gallon starting July 1, and increase another 3 cents a gallon on July 1, 2006, 2 cents on July 1, 2007, and 1½ cents on July 1, 2008.

In addition, a weight fee for for-hire vehicles capable of carrying six passengers or more and small trucks (under 10,000 pounds) went up by as much as 100 percent. But the weight fee for vehicles the size of buses — 20,000 to 40,000 pounds — remained unchanged.

Washington's motor carrier industry largely joined other state business groups and supported the transportation package. Escaping the weight-fee increase was a major factor in gaining industry support.

In North Dakota, the assembly adopted an increase of two cents a gallon in both diesel fuel and gasoline, and a \$10 increase in registration fees for all vehicles. The fuel tax goes to 23 cents from 21 cents a gallon.

And in New York, the new state

budget includes a number of tax-related items, including an increase in several types of motor vehicle fees, including titling fees but not including vehicle registration fees, and a requirement that Indian tribes collect sales and fuel taxes on fuels sold to non-Indian cus-

tomers or, as an alternative, tribes may reach revenue-sharing agreements with the state.

Tribes in New York have long had a free hand in selling tax-free fuel at Indian-owned stations and truckstops to commercial vehicle operators.

## Takeover

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

start as early as next month operating the routes now being run by the Transit Alliance and its four affiliates, Green Bus Lines, Command Bus Co., Jamaica Buses and Triboro Coach. While the MTA plans to begin operating a few of the routes in June, the full takeover is not expected to be complete until later in the summer.

"I am very pleased we have reached an agreement with the Transit Alliance," said New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who hatched the plan to take over the private companies.

Although the city has tried off and for 20 years to sever its relationship with the private bus operators, Bloomberg kicked the effort into overdrive just over two years ago. "This was the final round of negotiations and we now have agreements with all of the franchise bus operators," said the mayor.

The MTA earlier this year took over the routes operated by the other three private companies, Liberty Lines Express, Queens Surface Corp., and New York Bus Co. The seven companies were transporting about 400,000 daily commuters into Manhattan from the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn under a series of contracts with the city, some of which dated back to 1974.

Bloomberg had maintained that the \$100 million to \$150 million the city was paying the private companies each year to operate the

routes was too high and the service on many of the lines was not up to par. The companies, however, said they were saddled with 18- to 20-year old city-owned buses to use on the routes and the city refused to either replace them or keep them in good repair.

The private companies accused the city of allowing more than \$150 million in federal money to sit in a bank account unspent in an effort to create the false impression that the operators and their employees were not doing a good job for the public.

Jerome Cooper, the long-time chairman of Transit Alliance, who spent 45 years working in various capacities for the private companies, said the loss of the routes is tough to take. "It is going to be a sad day when we walk out after 100 years in business," he stressed.

He said he still does not fully understand what the city and mayor accomplished with their "hostile takeover."

"It certainly is going to cost much more than if the private lines had continued to operate," he asserts.

Cooper said the companies will remain in operation, but will no longer do transit work. Instead, Transit Alliance will maintain its paratransit services, offer bus repair work, and continue its bus shelter maintenance operation.

In addition, he said he hopes to be able to do consulting work. "I don't know if anyone will want to use our services, but I can certainly talk a lot about negotiations with municipalities," he noted.

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## Consolidation

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- Little time to focus on the issue because of competing interests
- A general sense it was time for a change

Almost immediately, leaders of the committees set up to oversee the consolidation were on the telephone arranging planning sessions or conference calls to start the process of executing the comprehensive consolidation plan they developed during more than a year of meetings and negotiations.

The unification plan, which is not a merger, requires the creation of a new association that will have a new name, new bylaws, new board, and new organizational structure. A Search Committee is to find a chief executive. The new

association should largely be up and running by January.

The overarching goal of the consolidation is to create an organization that will be much stronger and more representative and effective than the two associations have been separately, said ABA Chairman Ron Eyre and UMA Chairman David Brown.

"This (vote) presents ABA and UMA with many opportunities to develop a new, stronger association that better serves our collective members," said Eyre, who is president of Eyre Bus and Travel in Glenelg, Md.

"Now, we can move forward — together — to build a new organization that will represent the interests of all members, give us a strong, single voice in Washington, and end decades of confusion,

redundancy and duplication," said Brown, who is president and CEO of Holiday Tours in Randleman, N.C.

"I am particularly pleased that the unification plan provides for strong representation for small motorcoach operators," added Brown.

During the run up to the vote, Eyre, Brown and other advocates emphasized how the industry was being hamstrung in Washington because it spoke with two, sometimes disparate, voices.

Among the odds and ends that must be completed as part of the consolidation is that UMA must conduct due diligence of the financial operation of ABA. The ABA conducted similar due diligence of UMA earlier this year. The Washington office of the law firm of

Holland & Knight will conduct the due diligence and present its findings to the UMA board at its regular semi-annual meeting June 2.

ABA board members are being invited to attend the UMA board session.

Brown and Eyre thanked the other members of the Unification Task Force that developed the plan for combining the associations. "These individuals devoted hundreds of hours of their time and

energy to this task. They represented their members admirably," said Eyre.

Representing the ABA on the Unification Task Force were board members Eyre, Charles Zelle (immediate past ABA chairman), Don DeVivo, Doug Anderson and T.J. Morgan. Representing the UMA on the task force were board members Jeff Polzien, Godfrey Lebron, Rick Hillard (former UMA chairman), Brian Scott and Brown.

## Leaders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have competed for members since UMA was formed more than 30 years ago. ABA members backed the proposal by a 93-percent margin, 237 to 16, while 87 percent of the UMA members who voted marked yes, 207-30.

"The vote was truly amazing," said Eyre. "I never imagined it would be so overwhelming in support."

Scott said the results of the election were a loud sign of support for the work the boards of the two associations put into the merger effort over the past one and one-half years. "The membership has clearly spoken on both sides that it is time for the industry to become one and move forward," he said. "We've got direction."

UMA Chairman David Brown of Holiday Tours, also a strong supporter of the unification, said he was most pleased by the lopsided vote.

"My biggest concern was if it were close, it was going to be bad, whether it passed or failed, because it would be something the people would be second guessing for the next 20 years," he said. "As long as it was going to pass I wanted it to pass big and if it were going to fail I wanted it to fail big."

Now, he said, the tough task of working out the final details of bringing the two groups together by a target deadline of January begins. "We have to start executing the steps we laid out to do this, and that's going to be bigger than it was getting us to this point," he said.

Scott and Eyre (pronounced air) agree, maintaining that everyone involved has a great deal of work before them. "But we're anxious to get started," said Eyre.

Eyre and Scott are the only individuals from the ABA and UMA boards who are members of both the Transition Committee, which will oversee the consolidation of the two organizations, and the Search Committee, which will find and recommend to the new combined board a chief executive who will manage the unified association.

They said it is difficult to say what the first priorities will be for the transition team because there's so much work to do. "I think everybody has thoughts in their minds of what is going to be most important, but until we get all of those thoughts down on paper it is kind of hard to say at this point," said Scott.

Eyre suggested that the Transition Committee will have to focus on a broad range of issues, including writing bylaws; integrating staffs and settling on a staff structure; choosing office space; reviewing publications; determining a combined budget; looking for a new name, and discussing member-benefit plans. "We have many, many issues on the transition side to work on," he said.

The Search Committee, which is likely to begin its work quickly, will hire a search or recruiting firm to help find candidates for the chief executive position. ABA CEO Peter Pantuso and UMA CEO Victor Parra are being encouraged to apply for the job.

Scott said he wants to see someone in the job with a charismatic personality who can be a good spokesperson for the group, motivate the membership and pull the industry together. "We need somebody solid who can really focus our energy on moving forward on the things that we can accomplish now that we're together," he said. "Where are we going to find that? We may find it in an association executive. We may find it in an industry executive."

Eyre said he leans toward finding someone who has a strong background in association management. "I think the CEO will have to have an emphasis on association management, absolutely, because this is going to be a very big organization now," he said. "They can always learn the industry."

Most important, though, said Brown, is responding to the vote in a steady and positive manner. "The biggest deal here is that the membership has spoken. We want one organization and we are going to do it."

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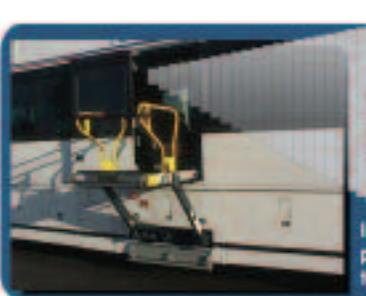




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# Training, coaching employees for results

By Fred Spears  
and Terry Herring

Jack Welch, the lionized former CEO of General Electric, once commented: "Any company trying to compete...must figure out a way to engage the mind of every employee."

In previous articles, we have addressed three essentials for individual and organizational success: Selecting the right person, setting clear expectations, and creating a motivational climate.

Building on Mr. Welch's comment, we add a fourth essential for success: Developing the person.

Effective leaders and managers know they are successful only when the values of the product or service delivered is greater than the cost of delivering it. This is the essence of productivity...and productivity gains come from people. Organizational success depends on getting high levels of performance from other people — and frequently the lowest paid people in the organization.

Within a company, not all people may initially be matched to the right position. Additionally all people are unique and if treated as a group, individual talents will be wasted. Consequently, leaders and managers need to identify the strengths of their people and capitalize on those strengths — not spend time on trying to "improve" their weaknesses to be more successful.

In their seminal book, *First Break All the Rules*, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman made the following points:

- People don't change that much

- Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out
- Try to draw out what was left in
- That's hard enough

Therefore, the primary focus within the organization must be training, rather than education. The difference between the two is a matter of purpose: Education focuses on a level of knowledge for a subject, not directly related to any specific task or for a subject common to several tasks. Training on the other hand, focuses directly on behavior change — specific skills application, action and defined results.

Adopting the following five principles assures effective employee training:

Employees must be ready to learn. They must be alert, in the right place and have met any prerequisites for the particular training process.

The employees must benefit — and understand they benefit — from the training process. If employees see no personal benefit from the training process, their motivation to participate in the process will be marginal, as will the results.

Feedback enhances learning. Contrary to what the advertisements say, Wheaties is not the "Breakfast of Champions" — feedback is. Employees want to know how they're doing. Whether it's in the classroom, or in the workplace, providing feedback — and coaching on performance will generate positive results for both the individual and the organization.

Spaced repetition makes learning permanent. This is critical. Practice doesn't make perfect — it only makes permanent.

Perfect practice makes perfect. Make sure the employees are practicing the right things.

Finally, no teaching takes place until learning occurs. Only when the first four principles are followed does the trainee actually learn what was communicated. The greatest impediment to effective communication is assuming that communication has taken place. The individual(s) responsible for conducting training must use appropriate measures to ascertain that those being trained have received — and understood — the training message that was sent.

While there are four essentials for organizational and individual success, there are twice that number of characteristics that effective leaders and managers possess. They

- are committed to a personal vision,
- are goals-directed (both personal and organizational),
- are action-oriented,
- achieve by helping others achieve,
- maintain a positive climate,
- are enthusiastic and internally motivated,
- work for constant improvement and, perhaps most critically, they
- know the power of personal development and encourage others to make the most of their developmental opportunities.

Today is an excellent time to use the foregoing to assess the effectiveness of your organization's training process to assure that it's on the right track and achieving the results you are expecting, and to evaluate your own characteristics and behaviors to evaluate your level of effectiveness.

# 5,000th Van Hool delivered in U.S.

WINTER GARDEN, Fla. — Every company seems to have a favorite customer.

It may not be the biggest customer, or the oldest customer, or even the one that turns out to generate the highest profit margin.

But, for some reason, they've come to be a favorite.

Don Dinger may be that kind of customer at ABC Companies.

That's because when ABC marked two milestones during the past six months, Dinger happened to be the right customer at the right place at the right time.

Late last fall, Dinger was the first operator to take delivery of a Caterpillar-powered Van Hool coach. Then, a few weeks ago, Dinger bought two more new coaches and one of them turned out to be the 5,000th Van Hool delivered in the U.S.

The first Van Hools built to U.S. specifications were sent to this country from Belgium in 1985. But sales didn't accelerate until ABC Bus Cos. became the distributor two years later.

ABC honored Dinger by presenting him with a plaque that commemorates the delivery milestone. The plaque was nice but Dinger also received a trip for two to the Van Hool factory and passes to Bus World Kortrijk, the giant European bus show held each October.

Dinger is the owner of Gotta Go Trailways, a coach company he founded 20 years ago. It has grown from 9 buses to a fleet of 35 Van Hools.

"Gotta Go Trailways has experienced phenomenal growth through its aggressiveness and willingness to expand into new markets," said ABC Senior Account Executive Bob Holloway. "Don takes pride in his employees and in his equipment. He's a good friend and an excellent ambassador for ABC."

Dinger's two new C2045 Van Hools also have Caterpillar C13 engines, ZF AS-tronic transmissions with intarders, Amaya Brasil seats, Alcoa wheels, REI A/V systems with 10-inch monitors, and Monogram flush-type recirculating toilets.

# Coach tire prices soar as demand skyrockets

AKRON, Ohio — All three of the major tire suppliers to the over-the-road bus industry have announced price hikes in recent weeks, with the latest going into effect earlier this month.

Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire raised its prices for buses, trucks and other vehicles by as much as 8 percent on May 1.

The company said it was forced to boost prices because of persistent increases in the cost of petroleum, steel, chemicals used in rubber processing, polymers and utilities. It was Bridgestone's second price hike this year; a 7 percent increase went into effect Jan. 1.

In March, Michelin increased replacement-tire prices 6 percent for both its

Michelin and BFGoodrich brands.

And in February, Goodyear raised prices on its commercial tires by up to 6 percent.

The huge demand for heavy-duty trucks and trailers during most of the 18 months has reportedly stretched tiremakers' production capacity, resulting in shortages, allocations and disruptions in the procurement process by fleets.

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# Bus refurbishing companies find unique solutions

Like the buses they work on, the sophistication of coach industry rehabilitation and repair companies is growing exponentially.

No longer are they mere body shops with 13-foot doors that patch up 45-foot behemoths, sending them back out on the road. Today, they also help find and deliver unique solutions for their customers' challenges, they tackle special projects, and they give new definition to the term "extreme makeover."

Here are five examples of what these creative companies can do. They demonstrate capabilities, creativity and offer food for thought in coping with problems and finding opportunities.

## North to Alaska

JUNEAU, Alaska — When the owners of Alaska Coach Lines decided to established a cruise ship-shuttle business, they went to ABC Companies to assemble a fleet.

Tim Vaught, vice president of

ABC's regional sales and service center in Grand Prairie, Texas, came up with an unusual solution.

He bought a dozen nearly identical 1991 MCI 102C3 commuter coaches that had been operated by the Dallas Area Rapid Transit, and refurbished them for use in Alaska.

The buses were perfect for transporting cruise ship passengers because they had neither restrooms nor extensive A/V equipment. In Alaska, it's all about the scenery, not the video.

Updating the coaches for use as shuttles involved work inside and outside the buses, plus the engine compartment. Before the refurbishing began, the buses got a thorough going over.

The biggest aspect of the rehab project, said Vaught, was the removal of wheelchair lifts from most of the coaches and installing permanent seats where the wheelchair positions had been. Because the lifts had been in the center of the coaches, the air conditioning system had to be replumbed,

including replacing the A/C duct chase. At the back of the buses, the air starters on the Detroit Diesel 6V-92 engines were switched to electric starters.

DART's signature yellow-and-white exterior color scheme was covered with dark — or forest green — paint and new graphics. Some bumpers had to be replaced.

ABC handled all facets of the job. "They bought the buses sight unseen," said Vaught. "We managed the entire project for them." The last of the dozen buses headed for Alaska last week.

Separately, ABC announced that its 6th Annual Collision Repair Workshop for coach and transit buses had record attendance, with more than 50 people attending.

The workshop is conducted each year at the company's Winter Garden, Fla., location and is attended by claim adjusters/supervisors, safety officers, insurance executives, transit managers and heavy-equipment specialists.

Workshops included frame



Seeing is believing...a hybrid-electric repower commuter bus

pulling, wiring harnesses, multiplexing and — new this year — collision repair techniques for RV's. Presentations were made on Caterpillar engines, the ZF AStronic transmission and ABC/Van Hool products.

Sonny Murianka, senior investigator from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Office of Defects Investigation was the featured speaker.

Next year's workshop will be March 9-10, 2006. For information, call (800) 222-2875, or to go [www.abc-companies.com](http://www.abc-companies.com).

## A hybrid solution

ELK GROVE, Calif. — In California, reducing exhaust emissions isn't a goal, it's a way of life. Regulations demand that public transit systems operate environmentally

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ►



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## Hybrid

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

friendly buses. But transits and their boards of directors have made a fine art of projecting a "green" image in their communities and among their stakeholders.

Buses powered by CNG and LNG generally rule in California, with hybrid-electric moving into the picture, and fuel-cell systems seemingly on the horizon.

That has meant, of course, public transit systems invariably have to buy new buses to get the latest power systems. That is, until now.

Working with Complete Coach Works of Riverside, Calif., the city of Elk Grove, which is a dozen or so miles south of Sacramento, adopted the newest technology without having to invest a half-million dollars or much more per bus.

Complete Coach Works remanufactured 17 buses for Elk Grove, converting them to hybrid-electric power plants and giving the community of 17,000 people what may be the first 100 percent hybrid-electric commuter fleet in the nation.

Starting with 1991, 40-foot Gilligs that had been equipped with Detroit Diesel 6V-92s, Complete Coach Works converted them to a hybrid-electric system that uses an ultra-low-emission gasoline engine.

The power plant produces zero particulate matter and meets 2007 California Air Resources Board and U.S. EPA standards for emissions of NOx.

The propulsion technology was developed by the ISE Corp. of San Diego. Because the system was fully developed when Complete Coach Works, Elk Grove and ISE got together, it took just six months to get all 17 buses in service after the city awarded the contract.

"As a new transit system starting with a clean slate, we wanted to get ahead of the technology curve," says Elk Grove City Manager John Danielson.

"With gasoline hybrid-electric buses, we are giving our citizens the cleanest buses commercially available, and making sure our transit system is in step with technology."

The interiors of the former city buses also got a complete makeover. The transit seating was replaced by high-back Freedman reclining seats, eight TV screens with real-time programming and news broadcasts were installed, along with parcel racks, individual reading lights and an Internet connection system.

"We want to provide every incentive possible to make riding the bus the right decision for our citizens," said Danielson.

During the remanufacturing process, Complete Coach Works stripped the buses down to bare their frames, made structural repairs, and rebuilt the buses from the ground up. During the process, they replaced windows and installed LED destination signs and automatic stop-annunciation systems.

The remanufactured buses were

expensive — \$385,000 each — but substantially less than new, off-the-assembly hybrid-electrics.

### No experience needed

WOODBRIDGE, Va. — Like many operators, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission in Woodbridge had no experience with rehabilitating its buses.

But instead of buying new buses the transit system decided to refurbish the oldest of its commuter coaches, five 1993 MCI 102A3s, that are used on daily, 25-mile commuter runs from Woodbridge to Washington, D.C.

"We'd never done rehab before," said PRTC Manager of Contract Operations Bill Leisen. But after putting pencil to paper, the 75-bus transit system decided that refurbishing made financial sense. Basically, it came down to \$400,000 for each new bus vs. \$121,000 for each refurbished bus.

The transit agency put its project out for bids and CoachCrafters Inc., a full-service bus remanufacturing, maintenance and upgrade facility headquartered in Northfield, Minn., got the job.

The project involved exterior body work; repairs to seats along with new upholstery; LED lights installed on the rear; brake, suspension and air conditioning systems checked and repaired; flooring and window upgrades as required; and Twin Vision electronic destination signs installed.

Finishing off the buses were new paint jobs and graphics, along with the installation of Alcoa wheels to replace the original steel wheels.

The PRTC wanted to restore the coaches to a first-class, functionally new condition. Plus, maximize their comfort and safety, while upgrading operating characteristics.

The goal, said Leisen, was "to make the buses visually appear like the newer buses, and improve their reliability."

Leisen is so pleased with the outcome that he expects the next-oldest buses, four 1995 D3s, will get the same treatment sometime in the future.

### The High Life

MILWAUKEE — Jim Remlinger remembers the phone call well. Lane Manning, a project manager for an event marketing company whose client roster includes the Miller Brewing Co., was panic-stricken.

Manning was the point person for a plan to recreate a bus called the *Miller High Life Cruiser*. The cruiser was a 1953 Flixible that traveled across the U.S. in the early and mid-50s, showcasing a scale model of a new Miller brewery, the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ▶

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## The High Life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

most modern in the world.

Miller had scoured the Internet for a Flxible Visicoach that could be fashioned into a new cruiser, finally finding one in its home state of Wisconsin. A company was located to do the work and the bus was trucked off to Florida — where it sat...for two months.

Manning went down to check on the project and discovered nothing had been done. He was beside himself, but after a bit he remembered he had met Remlinger several years earlier and toured his collision repair facility in Winona, Minn.

That's when he made the call to Remlinger, president of Jim's Truck & Trailer/Coachwerks.

"He asked for a miracle," said Remlinger, which Remlinger and his staff promptly delivered.

The hulk that had once been an operating bus had to be rebuilt in roughly six weeks to meet a deadline for a Miller open house. To say the bus was a mess would be an understatement. All of the flooring and cross-members were rotted or rusted away. There was no way it would run. The suspension was junk. It leaned about a foot to one side; the springs were busted. The air system and tank were trash. As for the wiring; imagine a bowl of spaghetti.

Remlinger flashed into action. He had the Flxible trucked to Winona and set his team to work. He asked other customers if



The Miller High Life Cruiser was a challenging 1950s-era re-creation



Frameless windows, restyled front end distinguish D-model retrofit kit

they would be flexible and allow him to jump the cruiser project ahead of their work.

The rebuilding began. The bus was skinned and the frame laid bare. New side panels, frame members and flooring were fabricated and installed. A 366-cubic-inch Chevrolet engine, hooked to an Allison transmission, was installed. (The bus previously had also been powered by a gasoline engine.)

An air conditioner was installed, along with generators to power the additional electrics. It was rewired and new gauges installed. Springs were made. It was found that Jeep headlight rings matched the originals.

Inside, an old-fashioned bar was built, and a large-screen TV installed for showing vintage Miller television commercials.

Polished stainless fluting was fabricated to match the look of the original cruiser. Towards the end of the project, Remlinger

had 10-12 men working on the bus around the clock.

The night before the cruiser was to be in Milwaukee, about 225 miles away, test runs were being made but the bus wouldn't shift properly. Another near-all-night session got it operating and off to Milwaukee — in time.

Since then, the High Life Cruiser has traveled across the U.S., showing up for events and on television.

"The cruiser is an absolute crowd stopper where ever it goes," says Remlinger, the pride showing.

### Sleek new look

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — In January, Motor Coach Industries unveiled an updated version of its best-selling D4500 coaches, and its shorter D4000 sibling. The revamping includes new styling and model designations. The 45-footer is now called the D4505 and the 40-footer is the D4005, and both will soon start rolling off MCI's assembly line.

Now, MCI Fleet Support service centers are offering a retrofit kit so operators can give the D-model coaches in their fleets a similar look.

Two types of D-Series retrofits have been developed. One is a restyling kit that includes a frameless window sash; flared head and directional lights; new trim and driplines, and a sleeker door and bumper.

The other kit includes the major updates but without the frameless window sash.

The costs for the complete retrofit kit, including the side sash, are \$18,000 for a 45-foot D-series coach, and \$16,800 for a 40-foot D-series coach. Cost for the kit without the frameless sash is \$9,000 for either coach length.

The price includes professional installation at an MCI service center. Quantity discounts also are available.

"The kits have been designed with MCI factory input, and our technicians have been trained on their installation," said Jerry Cignarella, vice president of service center operations. "The new fronts provide an operator with a cost-effective way of achieving up-to-date curbside appeal, while extending a coach's useful life."

MCI Sales will soon begin offering pre-owned D4500 coaches already retrofitted with the new look.

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## Security Grants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

department said it designed this year's program in coordination with a trio of "federal partner agencies," as well as industry representatives, such as the American Bus Association and the United Motor-

coach Association. It's pretty clear from the language used by UMA and ABA that isn't exactly true.

"While ABA and UMA support both congressional and administration efforts to promote motorcoach security through the availability of federal security grants for our industry, we strongly oppose limiting

those funds to only designated operators," ABA President and CEO Peter J. Pantuso and UMA President and CEO Victor Parra said in a statement.

"Though fixed-route operators are and should be a high priority for security grant funding because of the volume of passengers they operate, it has been ABA and UMA's position that all operators should have access to the competitive process of applying for those funds based on the merits of their application and the intended use of the requested funds," added Parra and Pantuso.

The associations are urging their line-haul operator members to apply for grants even if they are not on the list.

Representatives of the associations have met with DHS officials and congressional staffers in recent weeks in an effort to drive home the point that by limiting eligibility to line-haul operators the rest of the industry is put at greater risk. The associations also continue to insist that additional funds — with a wider distribution — must be allocated for bus security grants in the future.

"We are hopeful that those efforts will be successful and we

will work with our membership to press that point with government officials," Pantuso and Parra said.

In fiscal 2003 and 2004, bus security grants were awarded to virtually all segments of the industry and were used to purchase cell phones and security barriers for drivers, GPS equipment, fencing around bus lots, and training. UMA and ABA created "Operation Secure Transport," which distributed security training materials to more than 700 companies. Additionally, 300 bus professionals received training during a series of 10 "Train the Trainer" security workshops.

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## 'Grant-eligible' companies

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has announced that the following operators are eligible for consideration for the fiscal 2005 Intercity Bus Security Grant Program.

The American Bus Association and United Motorcoach Association are urging their members that aren't on this list — but have fixed-route services — to apply for grants anyway.

The list is reprinted here largely as it was published by DHS. We started correcting the mistakes but gave up. One of the most common mistakes is the location of the company. For example, Pacific Coast Sightseeing Tours & Charters is not based in Gillette, Wyo., and the home of Powder River Transportation Services is a long way from Old Town, Maine. But they're obviously close enough for government work.

88 Transit Lines Inc., Charleroi, Pa.

Academy Bus LLC, Hoboken, N.J.  
Adirondack Trailways, Hurley, N.Y.

All Aboard America, Odessa, Texas

Alpha Trailways, Cincinnati  
Americanos USA LLC,  
Albuquerque, N.M.

Anderson Coach & Travel,  
Greenville, Pa.

Arrow Stage Lines Inc., Phoenix  
Arrow Trailways of Texas,  
Killeen

Atlantic Express Coachways,  
Staten Island, N.Y.

Badger Coaches Inc., Madison,  
Wis.

Carl R. Bieber Tourways,  
Kutztown, Pa.

Black Hills Stage Lines Inc.,  
Norfolk, Neb.

Bonanza Bus Lines Inc.,  
Providence, R.I.

Burlington Trailways, West  
Burlington, Iowa

C & H Bus Lines Inc., Macon, Ga.

C&J Trailways, Portsmouth, N.H.

C-A-C Transportation Inc., Bend,  
Ore.

Camptown Bus Lines Inc.,  
Newark, N.J.

Capital Coachways, Princeville,  
Ore.

Capitol Trailways, Harrisburg, Pa.  
Carolina Trailways, Raleigh, N.C.  
Cavalier Coach Corp., Boston  
Central Texas Bus Lines, Waco,  
Texas

Chenango Valley Bus Lines,  
Binghamton, N.Y.

Coach USA Western N.Y., North  
Tonawanda, N.Y.

Colonial Trailways, Mobile, Ala.  
Community Coach (Coach USA),  
Passaic, N.J.

Concord Trailways, Concord,  
N.H.

Decamp Bus Lines, Montclair,  
N.J.

El Expreso, Houston, Texas

El Paso-Los Angeles Limousine  
Express, El Paso, Texas

Eyre Bus Service, Glenelg, Md.

Franciscan Lines, San Francisco  
Fullington Trailways, Clearfield,  
Pa.

Georgia Trailways Ltd., Macon,  
Ga.

Gold Line Inc., Tuxedo, Md.

Golden State Transportation,  
Albuquerque, N.M.

Goodall's Charter Bus Service,  
San Diego

Gray Line of Denver, Commerce  
City, Colo.

Greyhound Lines Inc., Dallas

Grosvenor Bus Lines, San  
Francisco

Gulf Coast Transportation,  
Houston

Hampton Jitney Inc.,  
Southampton, N.Y.

Hudson Transit Lines/Shortline,  
Mahwah, N.J.

Indian Trails, Owosso, Mich.

Industrial Bus Lines Inc.,  
Binghamton, N.Y.

International Bus Services Inc.,  
Hoboken, N.J.

J A T Inc., Birmingham, Ala.

Jefferson Lines, Minneapolis

Keller Transportation Inc.,  
Waldorf, Md.

Kerrville Bus Company, San  
Antonio

K-T Contract Services, Elko, Nev.

Lake Front Trailways, Cleveland

Lakeland Bus Lines, Dover, N.J.

Lamers Bus Lines Inc., Green Bay,  
Wis.

Lion Corp., Rio Grande, N.J.

Lone Star Bus Lines Inc., Tyler,  
Texas

Los Rapiidos Inc., Albuquerque,  
N.M.

Martz Fredericksburg,  
Fredericksburg, Va.

Frank Martz Coach Co., Wilkes-  
Barre, Pa.

New York Trailways, Hurley, N.Y.  
Northwestern Trailways,  
Spokane, Wash.

Orange Belt Stages, Visalia,  
Calif.

Pacific Coast Sightseeing Tours &  
Charters, Gillette, Wyo.

Panhandle Trailways, Amarillo,  
Texas

Peoria Charter Coach Company,  
Peoria, Ill.

Peter Pan Trailways, Springfield,  
Mass.

Pine Hill Trailways, Hurley, N.Y.

Plymouth & Brockton Street  
Railway Co., Plymouth Mass.

Powder River Transportation  
Services, Old Town, Maine

Prescott Transit Authority,  
Prescott, Ariz.

Quicks Commuter & Charter Bus  
Service, Falmouth, Va.

Red and Tan Tours Inc., Jersey  
City, N.J.

Rockland Coaches Inc.,  
Westwood, N.J.

Saddle River Trails Inc.,  
Maywood, N.J.

Short Line Systems, Hurley, N.Y.

Southeastern Stages Inc.,  
Atlanta

Suburban Transit Inc., New  
Brunswick, N.J.

Suffolk Transportation Services,  
Bay Shore, N.Y.

Sunset Stages Inc., Abilene, Texas

Susquehanna Trailways,  
Williamsport, Pa.

T.N.M.&O. Coaches, Lubbock,  
Texas

Trans-Bridge Lines Inc.,  
Bethlehem, Pa.

Trombly Bus Lines, Dracut, Mass.

Valley Retriever, Newport, Ore.

Valley Transit Company,  
Harlingen, Texas

Van Galder Bus Company,  
Janesville, Wis.

Vermont Transit Co., Inc.,  
Burlington, Vt.

Virginia Coach Co Inc.,  
Purcellville, Va.

Wickiser International,  
Ferndale, Wash.

Wilson Bus Lines Inc., East  
Templeton, Mass.

Wisconsin Coach Lines Inc.,  
Waukesha

Yellow Bus Service Inc.,  
Annapolis Junction, Md.

## Driver of burned coach disclaims passenger danger

BRIGHTON, Mass. — The driver of a coach that caught fire and was destroyed in a highly publicized event two months ago, has denied he endangered his passengers when he continued driving.

Shitong Ou, 40, was released on personal recognizance after being charged in Brighton District Court on charges of negligent operation of a motor vehicle and equipment violations.

Early on March 18, Ou was driving a coach for Kristine Travel, a Chinatown company that operates between New York and Boston, when the vehicle caught fire on the Massachusetts Turnpike.

State Police said Ou endangered his seven passengers by driving the bus even though he knew it had a serious defect that was producing smoke that was detectable inside the coach. A report written by Trooper David Bera said Ou "continued to operate the bus without due regard for the safety of the passengers."

Ou's attorney, George Heos, said his client denies he knew the bus was unsafe. "It was just a tire that went flat and started a fire," said Heos.

The Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy, the state agency that regulates buses, has been investigating Kristine Travel in the wake of the fire.

## Ronald Hue, dies suddenly

SILVER SPRING, Md. — Ronald "Junior" Hue, owner of Family Tours LLC., a small tour and charter company based here, died suddenly late last month. He was 47.

Mr. Hue was a native of St. Thomas, Jamaica, and had operated Family Tours for the past half-dozen years. The company has a fleet of three coaches and is a member of the United Motorcoach Association.

Mr. Hue is survived by his widow, Kelly; his children, Ava-Gaye, Whitney and Justin; his mother, and two brothers and a sister.

He was buried in St. Thomas.

A memorial has been established for Mr. Hue's two youngest children. Contributions may be sent to The Ronald Hue Memorial Trust Fund, C/O Brown and Gould LLP, 7700 Old Georgetown Rd., Ste. 500, Bethesda, MD 20814.

# Utah coach operator is charged with theft

SALT LAKE CITY — Steven Orson Lewis, president of Lewis Bros. Stages, was arrested and charged early this month with theft by deception and failing to deliver the title of a coach his company sold to a college in Montana, the Salt Lake Tribune and the Associated Press reported.

According to court records,

Lewis, 56, sold the bus in January to Dawson Community College of Glendive, Mont., for \$85,000. But, as of last month, the school had not received the title.

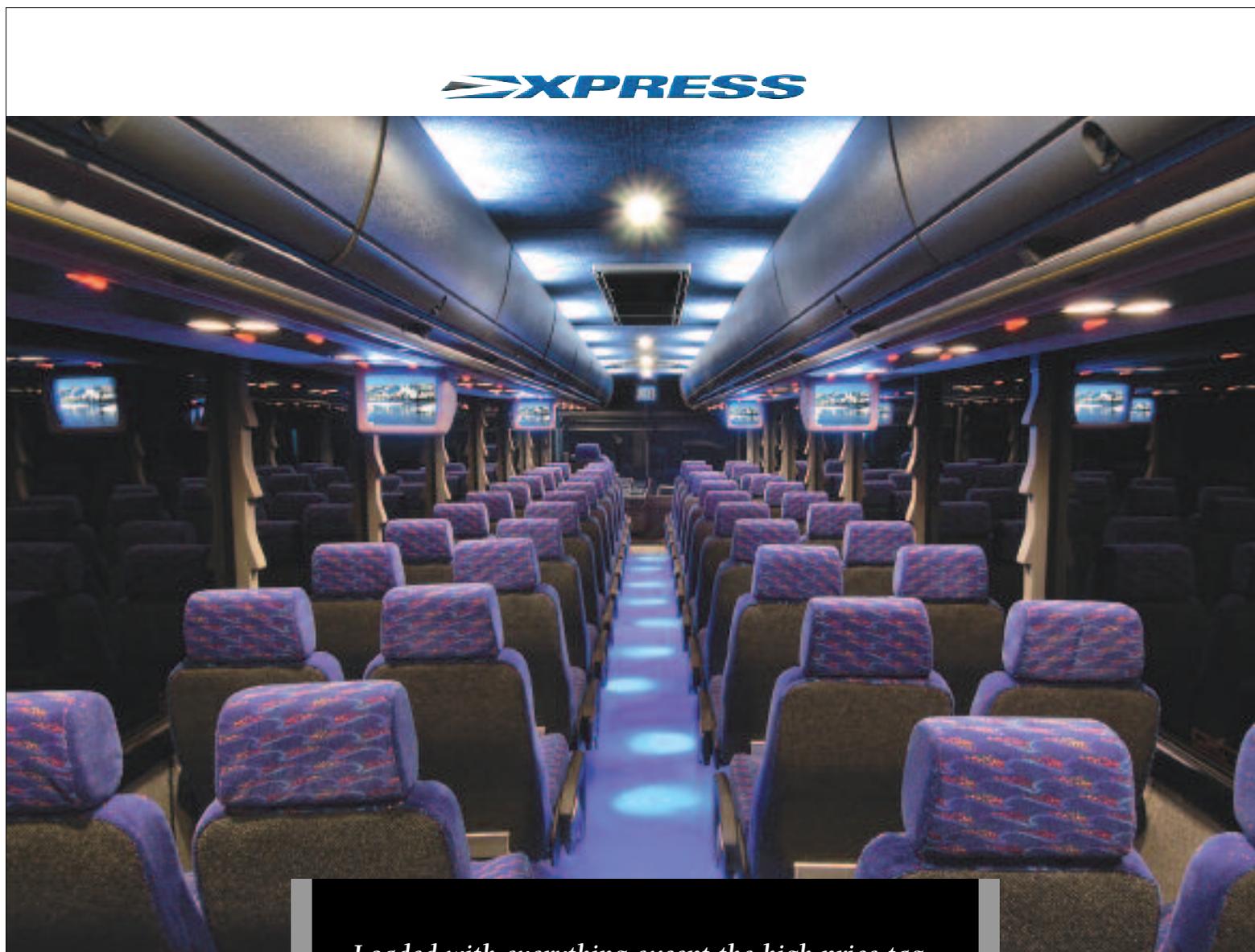
Lewis reportedly said the coach's title was still with the lien holder because he had used the money from the sale to pay other vendors rather than the lien holder.

Lewis was charged with a second-degree felony count of theft by deception and a class B misdemeanor count of failure to deliver a certificate of title.

A resident of Park City, Utah, Lewis is the third generation of his family to head the 90-year-old Lewis Bros. Stages, which operates a fleet of 31 coaches, more than 20

transit buses, and five midsize buses and vans.

According to the Tribune, the company has the contract for the Bryce Canyon National Park shuttle system, and recently shuttled runners during the Salt Lake City Marathon and 5K run. The company also specializes in charter services for skiers.



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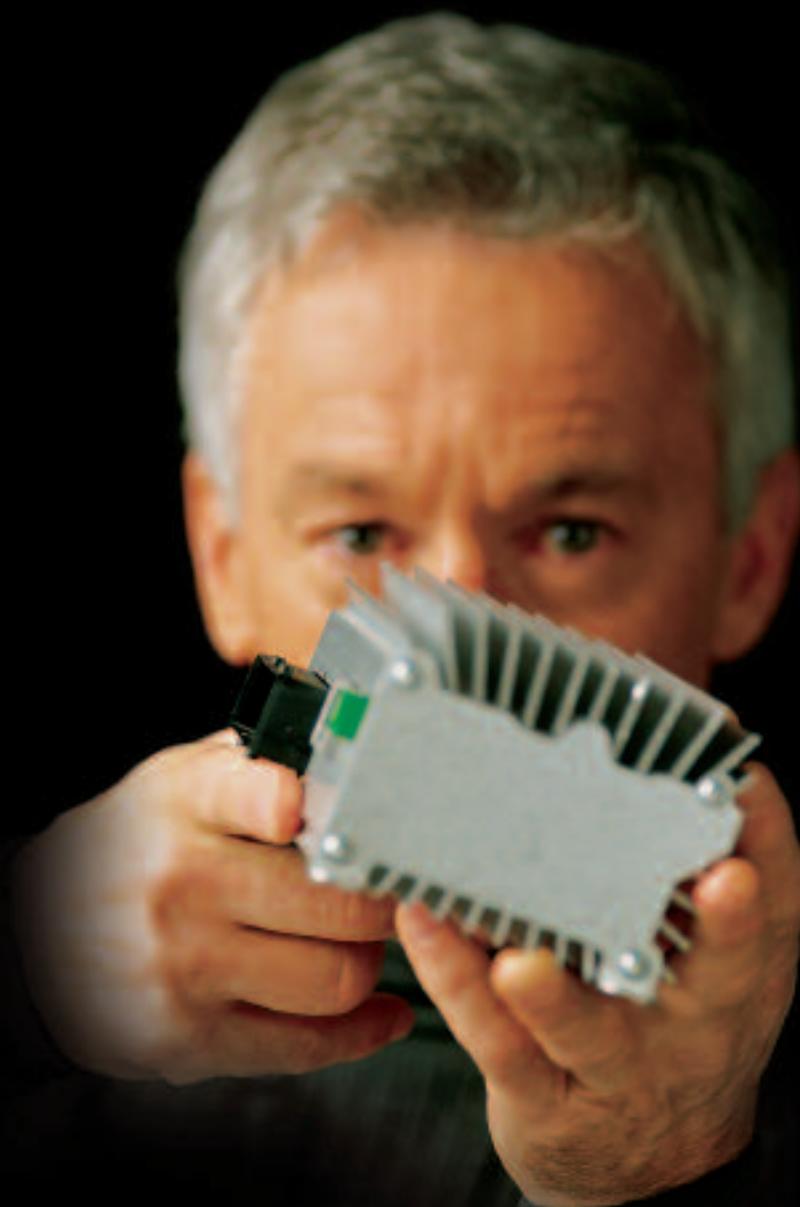
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