

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

## MOTORCOACH EXPO 2018



Roman Cornell, left, ABC Companies' executive vice president and chief commercial officer, and DC Trails owner William Torres celebrate ABC's delivery of the 10,000th Van Hool motorcoach, which was purchased by DC Trails. See more ABC news on Page B-7.



Expo attendees check out the MCI D45 CRT LE commuter coach's low-level entry vestibule accessible by a second door at the midpoint of the coach. The vestibule includes seating for five passengers, allowing for up to two secured mobility devices and an attendant. See more MCI news on Page B-9.

## New Expo exhibitors offer range of products, services

**SAN ANTONIO** — Several exhibitors made their first appearances at UMA Motorcoach Expo in 2018 or returned after absences. Their companies offered such services and products as coach leasing, upholstery, onboard technology, finance, insurance, maintenance equipment and vehicle care. They included:

### Lilee Systems

The San Jose, Calif.-based Lilee Systems is a passenger Wi-Fi company that also provides entertainment, driving behavior monitoring and ELDs.

"Our entertainment system can upload videos for your passengers to play on your coaches during your ride so it doesn't use any bandwidth and doesn't cost anything," said Anthony Andrews, strategic account executive. "We can also upload advertisements so you can sell a spot running on the bottom of the screen while you run movies so you can be making money."

### Coosa Composites

The Pelham, Ala., company makes a composite panel that is high-density polyurethane foam reinforced with fiberglass. It is a

direct replacement for wood subfloors that tend to rot, said Chris Drahman, senior vice president of sales and marketing.

"This does not absorb water, mold or mildew or allow fungus. It even blocks insect and termite infestations," he said. "If an older bus smells musty, that smell comes from the mold spores in the seating or subfloor."

### Master's Transportation

Master's Transportation of Belton, Mo., has more than 30 years of experience in selling, leasing, renting and repairing motorcoaches and shuttles, said General Manager Gene Turovsky. The company offers maintenance, parts, body shop and refurbishing services at eight locations across the country.

"We have a presence in all markets," Turovsky said. "Just in our rental fleet we have over 100 vehicles in Texas, 200 in Missouri and 100 in Denver."

### Dartco

The Anaheim, Calif.-based Dartco specializes in Allison Transmissions at four locations nationwide in California, Texas,

North Carolina and Indiana, said J.R. Sellars, president and CEO.

"Two of our locations are authorized Allison dealers to do new-product warranty work," he said. "We ship around the world. This year is our 40th anniversary."

### Trolex/Aporta

The Cheshire, United Kingdom, company provides the hardware and services for on-bus digital systems including entertainment, Internet access and Wi-Fi. "We also can connect with vehicle data logging systems and transport that information off the bus," said Dave Sampson, commercial director.

The company's Juxta suite can set a limit on complimentary bandwidth for individual passengers and the purchase of larger data packages. The suite also permits

onboard advertising and shopping capabilities.

### Aussie Rimshine

As its name implies, the company is based in Victoria, Australia, and it allows bus owners to keep their wheels polished all the time as part of maintenance without having to send them away, said Chris McKee, who works from the company's U.S. base in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

The polisher consists of a wheeled cart with an electrical cord powering a motor. "The machine comes with cutting pads or polishing pads. If you have a rough wheel, you can cut it back, then polish it," McKee said.

### Pro Image Car Care

The Detroit company sells the

Luminous Special Edition by Pro Image, a product that can detail and clean an entire bus — interior, exterior, windows, seats and paint.

"It works on any surface and cleans and protects and shines," said company owner Darrell Weberg. "It is 100 percent waterless. You do not have to wash the bus, you can just use this product. It has a sanitizer in it as well, so you can clean the interiors of the buses really good with it."

### Infanti Bus & Upholstery

Infanti, of Linden, N.J., does upholstery, embroidery and branding services for motorcoach operators. "We do refurbishing and install electrical outlets, USB ports and Wi-Fi," said company owner Elizabeth Deffer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10B ▶

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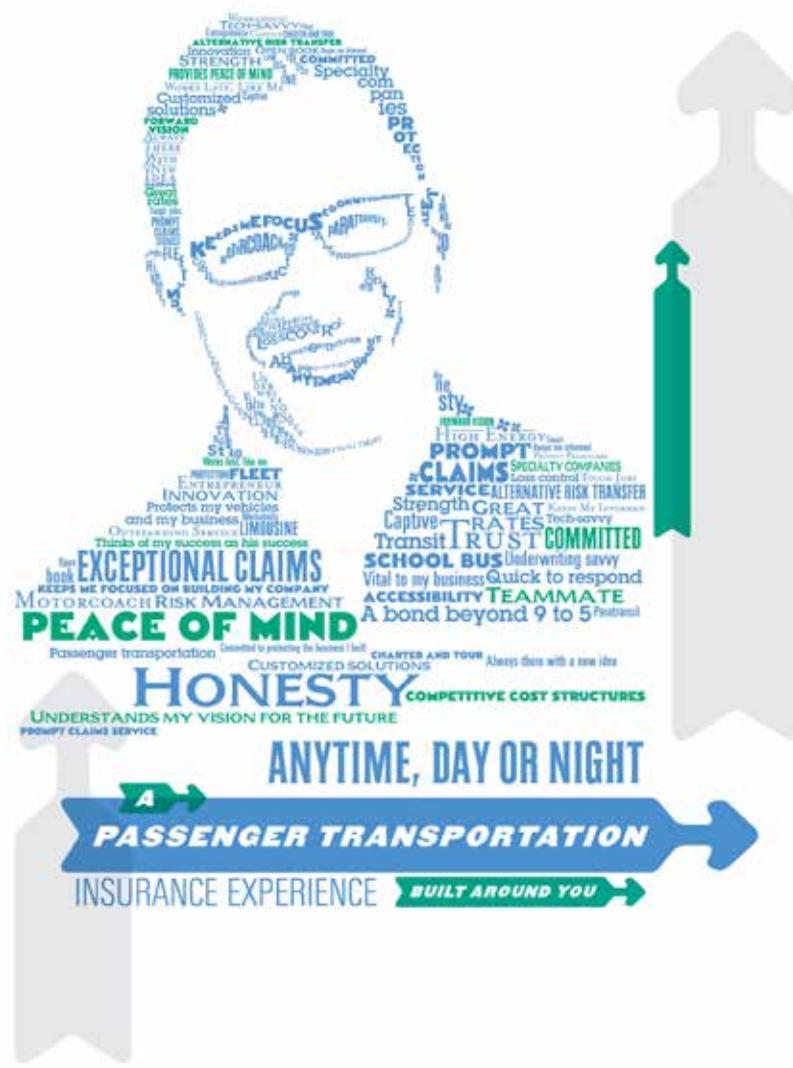
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## Operators express frustrations to FMCSA about faulty ELDs

SAN ANTONIO — Federal regulators are aware that electronic recording devices supplied by some vendors, which became mandatory on Dec. 18, are not functioning properly so enforcement is being withheld through April 1.

"We are very aware of what is going on. You are not the only one," said Danielle Smith, a transportation specialist for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, when asked about an operator's problems with his electronic recording device (ELD).

She spoke at the solution session, "Ask the Experts on Regulations" during Motorcoach Expo 2018. The session also addressed topics — part-time drivers and off-duty status — that will come under greater scrutiny due to ELD tracking. Hours of service could become a major issue for charter operators.

When a member of the audience asked about recourse to his ELD issues, Smith said, "There are massive property carriers that are having the exact same problem you are. I'm not saying what companies they are. I do know they are working on doing patching."

Federal rules required motor carriers to begin using ELDs rather than paper driver logs on Dec. 18, 2017. Currently, however, failure of ELD function will not yet place a vehicle or driver out of service or be applied to a carrier's Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) score listed on the FMCSA website, she said.

"Right now we are in a gray area until April 1. Keep the paper logs and keep driving. I would recommend that you send an email to your state director saying that you are having this issue (with your vendor) and you want to put them on alert," Smith said.

The question was asked by Warren Micale, operator of Master's Touch Christian Charter Service and Tours of Prescott Valley, Ariz.

"When we switched to the full-ELD program we started getting problems. What recourse do we have with the company that provides this when they give us zero support?" Micale asked. "The last time we called they said we need to have our drivers run paper logs then run in the office, go into the ELD program and put all of their logs in. Why should I have an ELD if I have to have drivers run paper logs?"

One of his five motorcoaches has been parked for three weeks because its ELD will not function, Micale said. "I can't keep going on like this. I am not in business to

park buses."

Smith responded that Micale's isn't the only one that is having issues. "We understand your pain," she said. "If it goes on to too long, 30 to 60 to 90 days and you haven't heard anything, send your vendor an email and tell them you are ready to report them to FMCSA because you are getting no help."

FMCSA has a process for revoking the self-certifications of troublesome ELD vendors, she said. The status of ELD vendors is listed on the administration's website.

"When we learn of an issue we can start the process. We will contact the provider and explain to them what we see as noncompliance. Then they have a grace period to get into compliance. Generally that does work," Smith said.

"If they can't, for some reason, meet that technical specification, then we do have the revocation list. As of today I don't believe anyone is on there. I don't know the date that we will go live on that."

She said she has heard that some ELDs have faced problems interfacing with an engine control module. "They may need to get with that engine manufacturer to get the gateway to retrieve that data."

She added, "There are providers we are having no problems with. Then there are providers whose ELDs worked fine in the test lab. Why they didn't test them on some carriers in the real world, I don't know."

Smith also talked about false reporting of driver off-duty status, which can be a problem when tour groups ask a driver to add a side trip.

"That will go away somewhat with the ELD. It takes a lot of effort to falsify an electronic record of duty status."

Drivers are motivated to keep their groups happy, Smith said. "If they have a good trip they are going to give that driver a really neat tip. I recommend to the carrier that their contract or charter order specify somewhere that there will be no changes to this itinerary unless it is approved by your operational person who makes sure your driver has got the hours."

Pressure to keep driving is common, she said. "I don't know how many times a driver may have been in that seat all day long and now the group finds out there is a fireworks show that night and they want to go see it. The driver doesn't want to say 'I can't take you.' Now the driver can say that he is required to ask you to contact that supervisor to approve him to take the trip."

## It's easy to be a wedding specialist

SAN ANTONIO — Like marriage itself, motorcoach carriers must make a commitment if they want to succeed at capturing a bigger slice of the \$40 billion-plus annual wedding industry in the U.S.

The commitment takes the form of marketing oneself as wedding-focused to future brides and grooms and other wedding-related businesses that can be valuable referrals, said Christian Riddell, executive director of the nonprofit Motorcoach Marketing Council.

The principles apply to other “verticals” in which operators might want to focus, as well, Riddell said in referring to family reunions, church groups, sports teams and the like.

Weddings need to stand out in wedding-focused marketing materials — from wedding-specific pages on one’s website with unique URLs to business cards with the wedding-specific URL and brochures with the same address and wedding focus, Riddell said, cautioning operators not to “commoditize” weddings by listing them in marketing materials or websites as one of myriad sectors served.

If a groom goes to a motorcoach operator’s website and it takes six clicks to find wedding information, he thinks the company doesn’t do much in weddings, that “it’s one of the thousand things you care about, but you don’t really care about my business,” Riddell said.

“Ultimately, you’re not the wedding people.”

Wedding parties will spend more for transportation services if they think they’re getting the best transit experience possible for the big day, he said.

There’s business to be had, Riddell said.

“Almost every single wedding has the need for transportation,” he said, citing 2.5 million-plus annual weddings in the U.S.

Combined with the multibillion-dollar impact nationally, “those are huge, huge, huge numbers,” he said, putting the average wedding expense at \$25,000, excluding the honeymoon, and the average wedding party at 140 people.

“There is plenty of budget left in that \$25,000 to offer some service to them and ultimately it will

make their wedding better,” Riddell said.

But image is everything in marketing.

“If I am creating a brochure that I am going to hand out at a wedding show, if I am putting an ad up on Facebook, if I am doing any other thing that I would do to approach brides and/or referral partners for weddings — wedding venues, reception centers, caterers, event planners — everything that I give them in regards to weddings, what I’m trying to sell, is going to that domain, it’s going to that URL,” he said.

“Brochures, follow-up emails, anything that you send, any communication you have with that bride or that groom, has to say weddings,” he said, and not bury weddings among a long list of groups served.

He suggested focusing on referral partners for best results.

“You’re going to go create a relationship with wedding venues, reception centers, caterers, wedding planners, cake decorators, wedding dress shops, photographers — where they have a stake in referring business to you,” Riddell said.



Christian Riddell

said.

“Caterers are probably the very best referral partner we can get for growing our wedding business,” he said.

Motorcoach operators also should pick someone on their staff to be the wedding person, he said. That person can be anyone, but telling callers you’ll connect them to the wedding reservationist implies wedding focus.

Limousine companies often charge more for the same transportation task because they market their experience, he said.

“In most markets, limo operators are getting between 30 and 40 percent more for a motorcoach

service hour than motorcoach operators are,” Riddell said. “They can’t offer a service much different than ours.”

In their marketing, they understand they’re in the experience business and they’re selling how to use it, he said.

“If you can’t raise your prices, you haven’t done enough to differentiate your service,” Riddell said, urging operators to prove why customers should pay 30 percent more for one’s motorcoach experience.

“You could look like the wedding specialist tomorrow for a couple hundred bucks,” Riddell said of marketing materials and sites.

“It’s not that hard.”

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Michael Dominguez

# Speaker: Change your business model or risk being irrelevant

SAN ANTONIO — Economic signals are strong for the U.S. travel industry, an executive at a leading hotel resort company told attendees at the opening breakfast for UMA Motorcoach Expo 2018.

"We are occupying almost 66 percent of all hotel rooms in the United States. We have never done that in history, ever," said Michael

Dominguez, chief sales officer for Las Vegas-based MGM Resorts International, reporting four consecutive years of strength in key hotel metrics and rooms not being built fast enough to satisfy demand.

International travelers, older millennials ages 28 to 35 and baby boomers with retirement incomes from 401(k)s they have to draw from starting at 70 are fueling the surge and they're hungry for experiences, Dominguez said of trends also dovetailing with healthy economic conditions.

The hotel industry's best recovery ever, which produced 111 consecutive months of room revenue growth in the 1990s, appears set to fall, he said.

"We're only 88 months into the cycle right now," Dominguez said of the post-recession recovery, which means the industry could go another couple years before hitting the record."

But no business should rest on its laurels because the world's evolving at a relentless, technology-driven pace that is forcing companies into Darwinian adaptation to survive.

The world will continue to change at a pace not seen before, he noted.

"Any business plan we have today that is looking further than three years out, it's called a wish, it's called a hope, it is not a plan," he said, adding that goals may stretch five years.

Highlighting the disruptive forces shaking industries, he pointed to Amazon's rattling of the retail industry and, most recently, the food industry with its purchase of Whole Foods Market Inc. and changes coming there.

"Here's the thing that should keep all of us up at night and keep us charging forward to know that we need to change and we need to move faster: Amazon has openly said they may not make a lot of money at groceries and nor do they care," he said. "The reason they got Whole Foods ... there's only a 30 percent overlap between a Whole Foods shopper and a (Amazon) Prime member," providing an opportunity to grow its Prime membership and core business.

"What happens when they decide to buy a hotel company that doesn't have to make money, because of a loyalty program and the opportunity to grow Prime memberships?" he said. "What happens

when they decide to buy a motorcoach company and it has nothing to do with making money, it has to do with automating and experience, making it better and candidly, finding a new audience for Prime membership?"

While the amount of money being spent on travel is a "hockey stick" angling upward with people feeling travel is their right, the world is a more open and connected place than 20 years ago, he said. People who live in the U.S. aren't limited to the U.S. for travel.

"There is so much competition for our business that you need to move faster," Dominguez said. "You need to move smarter because there are options and people want to go experience things. How do you make it special and how do you make that experience special?"

The meetings and convention industry, like others, faces disruption, including from the eSports market segment drawing legions of video gamers worldwide to mass competitions in arenas and other large venues.

"Esports is probably the fastest-growing segment of the meetings industry right now," Dominguez said, adding it will be a \$5 billion industry by 2020, possibly an Olympic sport by 2024 and is already a team sport, like football or basketball, at a couple universities. "Most people don't even realize these are some of the biggest meetings we are hosting today."

And throw away assumptions they're all teens, he said. The largest audience playing games is 34 to 44, with females the largest growing segment.

"It's crazy, it really is," he said. "We have these in our arenas, we have them in ballrooms, and they bring in anywhere from 5,000 to 15,000, depending on the event, every time, so if I'm in your seats, I don't know how all these people are traveling here. There are opportunities to start understanding eSports, how big it is and how fast it's growing. It is a tremendous opportunity, tremendous growth opportunity in all segments of our business."

Consumers also have come to expect customization, choosing from myriad products and services to suit their tastes, Dominguez said.

"Every business model has to change today or you're going to be irrelevant in the next few years," he said.



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# Technology, entertainment and insurance costs are hot

SAN ANTONIO — There are a lot of hot topics to follow in the motorcoach industry, according to a diverse panel of experts gathered for the Motorcoach Expo 2018 education session called “What’s Hot, What’s Not: Just Staying Ahead of the Curve.”

“If you are not watching how things are changing, you are going to fall behind and you are going to be run over,” said Joe Gillis, owner of Northwest Navigator Luxury Coaches in Portland, Ore.

The hot topics covered by the panel included regulations, technology, insurance and financing. The not-hot topics included financing practices and autonomous passenger carrier vehicles.

“If I were looking into opening this company today, I would not go into this industry,” Gillis said. “It is crazy — the changes in regulations, the costs that have raised, the things that have happened in this industry and business in general would stop me.”

Insurance rates certainly are a hot topic. Recent declines in fatal motorcoach crashes have not been accompanied by a decrease in the costs of passenger insurance claims, said Tim Delaney, senior executive vice president of passenger transportation underwriting at Lancer Insurance in Long Beach, N.Y.

“Congestion is up. As the economy recovers there are more miles traveled and driver quality goes down,” he explained. “In the last five years medical costs have been rising like they never have before.”

The cost of repairing vehicles has risen because the more technology put in vehicles, the more expensive they are to fix, Delaney said.

“The result is a bunch of years of rate increases, which aren’t fun for any of us. In the commercial auto part of the insurance world, nobody has made money in over five years, even after all the increases we have gotten.”

New safety technologies and telematics will reduce accidents and assist in defenses against liability for damages, Delaney said. “Taking advantage of these things can help with loss control, safety and compliance.”

Entertainment technology also is hot.

“The millennials and even some of our more seasoned travelers are opening up to technology,” said Tim Wilson, director of United Bus Technology in McLean, Va. “Before you talk about the year

and model of the bus, the first questions will be, ‘Will it have Wi-Fi? Does it have electrical plugs? USB ports?’”

“The days of everybody watching the same DVD are long gone. Everybody wants their own individ-

ualized experience on the bus. That means being able to set the Wi-Fi and listen to their music. If they want to watch a movie, they want to watch the movie of their choice and do that on their own time.”

Wilson identified fifth-genera-

tion (5G) wireless information networks and revenue recovery as the next developments in passenger technology. “The next big thing is 5G and it is closer than we realize. The next phase is for operators to turn the entertainment experience

into an additional stream of revenue.”

However, such revenue enhancements may not be pursued by all carriers, but instead will be used to give customers a reason to book with them.

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# Paratransit can help lessen seasonal business swings

SAN ANTONIO — Governments contract out myriad paratransit services, offering opportunities for motorcoach operators to diversify their business and level out seasonal revenue swings, a Kansas politician told attendees at one UMA Motorcoach Expo education session.

"This is the type of services you have to go hunt for because the public sector is not going to be knocking on your door saying, 'Come do my service for me,'" said Steve Klika, a member of the

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners in the Kansas City area. He also is former president of International Motorcoach Group Inc.

Public-sector paratransit services can include running school buses, providing special education, elderly and disabled transit, van services, micro transit (kind of an Uber style), and more — basically any services provided that are not on a 40- or 45-foot transit coach, Klika said. He was the county's representative on the

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority board from 2011 through 2017.

"Public sector transit systems don't want to provide that service. It's not a core business of theirs that they're comfortable with. They'd rather just run big buses," he said.

That presents opportunities for motorcoach operators willing to broaden their service options and perhaps add smaller equipment to their fleets as they seek to offer solutions to the public sector,

Klika said.

Such service may be more challenging, but it has benefits that can result in long-term relationships, he said.

"You get some of these contracts, they provide a stable type of revenue that allows you to meet the basic overhead requirements of your organization and allows you to deal with the seasonal swings, ups and downs, on the motorcoach side," Klika said.

Paratransit service profit margins can hover around 20 percent

or more, he said.

"Paratransit's getting a bigger and bigger definition," Klika said, suggesting it could be moving workers from one point to another or linking a rail and bus stops.

Landing such contracts requires following one's community closely — reading news sites, following city council, county commission, transit advisory board and committee agendas, attending relevant meetings, maybe even making a campaign contribution to help get recognized, he said.

## Agency handling recalls seeks relationship with industry

SAN ANTONIO — The federal agency responsible for vehicle and component recalls visited the bus industry at Motorcoach Expo 2018 to seek a proactive relationship in its passenger safety efforts.

"We wanted to be here today and make connections with you in our agency and have a working relationship in the future if there are defects," said Ryan Rahimpour, safety defects engineer in the Office of Defects Investigation at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in Washington, D.C.

"I am the main contact for motorcoaches and transit and school buses. If there is a problem, if you need assistance, I will be glad to work with you."

Rahimpour described the U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and his agency's requirements for manufacturer defect reporting. The standards regulate the design, manufacture, performance and durability of motor vehicles and safety-related components.

"Our job is to verify if defects

related to motor vehicle safety pose an unreasonable risk and make sure information about recalls is readily available to the public," he said.

"There are two types of safety defects. Noncompliance is when a motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment does not meet one or more federal safety standards. The second type is when a defect in performance or construction of a motor vehicle or its components can cause accidents, deaths and injuries," he said.

Rahimpour noted that the final assembler of components made by itself or suppliers is considered the manufacturer of the vehicle and responsible for reporting defects and directing remediation.

"Manufacturers by law are required to furnish a copy of safety defect and noncompliance reports to NHTSA within the first five days of noticing an issue," he said.

He reminded operators that the safety records of their vehicles can be examined at the government website [safercar.gov](http://safercar.gov). A search by

vehicle identification number (VIN) will provide any safety recalls or service bulletins associated with that vehicle.

NHTSA assigns a higher priority to potential defects on vehicles that carry passengers rather than property, Rahimpour said.

"We don't have enough resources to address all of them, so we prioritize depending on the sensitivity of the problem. Motorcoaches and buses have a lot of sensitivity because there are people in those vehicles," he said.

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ABC'S Van Hool CX 35 now features a two-door option on the popular coach. Since the debut of the 35-foot coach in early 2015, close to 400 units have been delivered, the company said.



The 1917 "Little Red," a vintage bus that originally was operated at Yellowstone National Park, is owned by ABC Companies and housed at the Museum of Bus Transportation in Hershey, Pa.

## ABC unveils upgraded Van Hools, discusses its manufacturing plans

SAN ANTONIO — ABC Company officials unveiled upgraded Van Hool CX 45 and 35 motorcoaches during Expo 2018 and discussed plans for a new Van Hool manufacturing facility and a move to electric coaches.

One prominent change to the Van Hool CX 35 is the addition of a two-door option on the popular coach.

Since the debut of the 35-foot coach in early 2015, close to 400 units have been delivered, the company said.

"Not only does the smaller, more fuel-efficient model enable operators to expand service by adding new passenger applications, it also offers unprecedented parts interchangeability with the Van Hool CX 45-foot coach," ABC said.

"Operators who run both models in their fleets can accrue major savings and reduced parts inventory levels thanks to parts interchangeability."

Other upgrades to both the 35- and 45-foot Van Hool models in-

clude a front-end redesign that integrates:

- New headlight design including new daytime running lights
- New ACC panel
- Increased front area for customer logos
- New front bumper
- Seamless side panels without moldings
- New rear-end redesign including new tail light bezels, engine door latch, and body trim.
- All square keys have been removed

- LHS and RHS fuel fill options

Interior upgrades include new parcel rack design, modern LED lighting and new overhead light service modules.

ABC officials also reiterated the company's plans to develop a CX 45 coach with an electric drive system manufactured by Proterra of Burlingame, Calif.

Full production is scheduled for the first or second quarter of 2019.

Roman Cornell, ABC's execu-

tive vice president and chief commercial officer, said plans are progressing for a new Van Hool manufacturing plant in the southeastern United States. The company has yet to unveil the exact location of the plant but said it would be similar to the 450,000-square-foot Van Hool plant in Macedonia.

The plant is expected to be completed in 2020.

The plant's first product will be a 40-foot diesel coach, followed by the CX 45E electric coach.

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# Personality tests could be key to insuring young drivers

SAN ANTONIO — Drivers younger than 25 could become part of the solution to the motorcoach driver shortage if better pre-employment screening and tracking methods are developed, said Tim Delaney, senior executive vice president of passenger trans-

portation underwriting at Lancer Insurance in Long Beach, N.Y.

During the panel discussion "What's Hot, What's Not" at Motorcoach Expo 2018, audience members asked about the insurance industry's decision to deny coverage to drivers younger than

25 years.

"By the time somebody is 25 they have already made a life and career path decision," said one attendee. "We have had several people who were passionate about driving and wanted to see the country and be involved in the mo-

torcoach industry but couldn't because of insurance regulations.

"Do we see in the future maybe a softening of those regulations to allow younger people to come in before they make a decision that pulls them away from a driving career?"

The insurance industry has a role in driver qualifications, Delaney acknowledged.

"The reason those guidelines exist is strictly actuarial. When we dig into the numbers, we realize that a huge chunk of expensive claims come from people in that 19- to 24-year bracket," he said.

"It is about risk taking. It is not about age. If you are a risk taker you shouldn't be driving around with people. It is that simple. Without any better tools to manage it, the initial reaction is to not insure those people. That is an imperfect reaction that the insurance industry has had for a long time."

The insurance industry may adopt a different view, Delaney said.

"We have seen the development of personality tests that have proven to be way more relevant to determining whether somebody is a risk taker. As those tools prove themselves effective, they will creep their way into the system. Some of these personality tests are pretty predictive as a measure of whether or not you are a risk taker."

"The other thing I would say is that some of the new technology that is coming in to monitor behaviors by telematics, along with some of the wonderful training programs that are arriving, will help us become more focused on the person than their age. We might be able to open up that pool of younger drivers," Delaney said.

Expo exhibitor MEE (Making Eligibility Easy) of Milton, Ontario, offers a Driver Safety Quotient (DSQ) survey that can be completed in 10 to 15 minutes online, said Charlie Charalambous, director of client services.

The survey measures behaviors along six trait pairs: resistant/accommodating, anxious/calm, impatient/patient, distractible/focused, impulsive/cautious and thrill-seeking/apprehensive. Individual scores can be evaluated with the positive and safety risks associated with each trait.

Charalambous said MEE is working with insurance providers to apply the DSQ to their processes.

"I work with a lot of safety managers and insurance risk managers who like the product," he said. "However, at this point, I do not have an insurance company that will provide any kind of a discount or recommendation based on the survey results. This is something we are actively trying to reach."

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MCI's new high-capacity MCI D45 CRT LE commuter coach is designed to make boarding easier and faster for all passengers, especially those using mobility devices.



MCI's redesigned J4500 has a roomier interior and the capacity to seat 60 passengers. It now offers more legroom, a larger lavatory and optional rear window.

## MCI turns 85, plans 35-foot J-coach and electric buses

SAN ANTONIO — Motor Coach Industries, which turns 85 this year, is celebrating with a groundbreaking commuter coach, a redesigned J4500, a new 35-foot J-coach and a move into electric commuter coaches.

MCI executives said during an Expo press briefing that the company sold more than 1,000 motorcoaches last year for the first time since 2008.

It captured 37.5 percent of the motorcoach market in 2016, and as

of the third quarter of 2017 enjoyed a 42 percent share.

"We are entering 2018 cautiously positive," said Patrick Sculley, MCI executive vice president of sales and marketing.

MCI's redesigned J4500 has a roomier interior and the capacity to seat 60 passengers. It now offers more legroom, a larger lavatory and optional rear window. Updated lighting throughout the interior includes an optional programmable color LED package with exten-

sive trim choices to accommodate both operator and passenger branding.

A reconfigured quieter and more efficient air intake system is behind the advancements in floor space, and drivers will particularly appreciate a high-definition instrument panel and cockpit for improved comfort, better visibility and easier access to diagnostic information.

MCI's new high-capacity MCI D45 CRT LE commuter coach is

designed to make boarding easier and faster for all passengers, especially those using mobility devices.

The CRT LE low-level entry vestibule accessible by a second door at the midpoint of the coach includes seating for five passengers, allowing for up to two secured mobility devices and an attendant, and high-capacity 54-passenger seating configuration overall, with seating for 52 when there are two passengers

using a mobility device.

A prototype of the company's 35-foot version of the J4500 is currently being tested, with production planned for January 2019. It will feature the same design and common components of its larger sibling while offering a basic 40-seat configuration with an option for 44.

MCI's all-electric series of J4500 and D45 CRT LE coaches is expected to be in production in January 2020.

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## New exhibitors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

"We also do signature cleaning for coach interiors and flooring. We are a one-stop shop for buses." Her company was founded 45 years ago and has a background as manufacturer of high-end banquet chairs and gaming stools.

### **Infinity Luxury Woven Vinyl**

This woven vinyl floor covering company is based in Dalton, Ga. "It has a high-end, luxury look and has a 10-year fade warranty," said John Michael Lloyd, director of recreational and commercial vehicle sales.

"It has a special backing that gives you anti-microbial and anti-bacterial protection and will not promote the growth of mildew or mold." He said the company has been serving the marine industry and now is moving into the bus market.

### **Transit Cooling Solutions**

Transit Cooling of Midland, Ont., manufactures aftermarket engine and transmission radiator and oil coolers. "All the manufacturing is done to our standards," said Randy Lalonde.

"We build to the exact replica, but if we determine there is an issue with the original equipment product we will build a fix into the replacement. We cover all the after-

market and are an inventory-based company. Anything in our catalog is in stock for shipment the same day it is ordered."

### **BBB Industries**

BBB Industries of Daphne, Ala., remanufactures starters, alternators and hydraulic and air brake calipers. "We have complete coverage and very high quality standards and 24-hour shipping all over the country," said Marketing Manager Greg Owens.

"We won't do a straight remanufacture if we can improve the part in the process. We take the OE unit, analyze and look at the issues like leaks or gasket issues. Then our engineers will come up with a fix."

### **Ascentium Capital**

This Irvine, Calif., company describes itself as the number one independent, non-captive lender in the country. "We are very diversified. I am working with the new motorcoach division to finance new and used motorcoaches, shuttle buses, vans, limousines and sedans," said Edmund Felix, vice president of sales.

"We can go back further than most companies can as far as collateral, to 2002, which is extremely unique in the industry."

### **Autosock**

Denver-based Autosock's product is made for buses and

semi-trucks that have to go out in the snow. "It is a high-performance polyester traction device that is legal across the United States where you are required to have a traction device under certain conditions," said Chuck Abourezk, sales manager.

"It goes on in about eight minutes and covers 100 percent of the footprint of the tire. It weighs 4.6 pounds compared to chains that can weigh 30 to 40 pounds."

### **Chemfree**

Chemfree of Norcross, Ga., sells the Smartwasher, a microbial parts washer that does not use solvents that must be discarded as hazardous waste. The washers circulate fluid through mat pads that are embedded with the same microbes used to remediate oil spills, said Kathy Brito, the company's sales and customer support representative.

"The microbes eat the oil and grease. There is a continuous cycle of self-cleaning."

### **DriverSchedule**

DriverSchedule of Hartford, Conn., sells software that fills a need for tracking driver availability and performing human resources functions for fleet operators, said Michael Lindsey, who owns the company and a limousine/bus transportation company.

"One of the biggest challenges

we face is knowing when a driver prefers to work so I can do my best to give him work when her prefers it." His company allows drivers to post their desired schedules in two-week blocks.

### **MSI Funtoro, Taiwan**

Taiwan-based MSI has been in the computer business for 30 years and does \$3.5 billion in annual global sales, but its Funtoro transit line is just entering the U.S. market, said Managing Director Scott Chen.

"We supply entertainment and telematics systems to automotive industries, including the bus industry and trucking. You can see if the driver is speeding or doing something he is not supposed to do. We can generate monthly reports on each driver."

### **BAE Systems**

BAE o Rochester, UK, provides a variety of transportation electrical systems for North America, Europe and Hong Kong. "We have 8,000 systems out across the globe," said Ross Hobson, capability manager of power and propulsion solutions.

BAE propulsion systems range from full-battery electric — vehicles without engines — to fuel cell electrics and systems matching electric drive systems with diesel or compressed natural gas engines.

### **MEE**

MEE, or Making Eligibility Easy, is a division of ISB, a Canadian company that specializes in pre-employment background checks. MEE, based in Milton, Ont., was designed to streamline all the processes involved in recruiting and qualifying commercial drivers and getting them on the road efficiently, safely and in a cost-effective manner, said Charlie Charalambous, director of client services.

### **AmeriFuel**

Richland, Wash.-based AmeriFuel is a division of R.E. Powell & SeaPort, which is one of the country's largest petroleum products distributors. AmeriFuel develops customized fueling programs that include competitive pricing, comprehensive reporting, tracking and monitoring tools, fuel cards and Cardlock options for optimal control and security.

### **ELD Solutions**

ELD Solutions of Brentwood, Tenn., offers multiple methods of meeting and exceeding regulation standards. Its packages can go beyond ELD compliance to include vehicle location tracking, IFT mileage reports, driver communication, geofencing with customized location alerts, monitoring of engine diagnostics and driver behavior and customized alert creation.

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## Escot Bus Lines co-founder Lew Scott dies in Florida

LARGO, Fla. — Lewis A. Scott, co-founder of Escot Bus Lines, passed away last month at his home here. He was 76.

Scott was born on March 14, 1941, in Utica, N.Y., to the late Lewis and Emma (Jean-Louis) Scott.

Scott graduated from Utica Free Academy in 1957 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps. On Dec. 1, 1962, he married his true love, Diane J. Zyga, who preceded him in death in 2011 after 49 years of marriage.

Scott is survived by his son Brian (Sandy) Scott of Largo; his daughter Pamela (Richard) Calisto of Seminole; two grand-dogs, Bentley and Precious; and a large extended family of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

In his younger years, Scott worked as a planner for computer and manufacturing companies, while his wife worked at Mohawk Airlines, which allowed the newlyweds to travel and explore the country. Their love of travel eventually led to their ultimate career choice as business owners.

In 1982, the Scott family relocated to the Tampa Bay area of Florida with the desire to write

their own future and not be dependent on others to make career and life changing decisions for them.

In 1983, the desire to be their own bosses culminated with the purchase of a small passenger transportation company with two minibuses. They eventually renamed the company Escot Bus Lines, which 35 years later is an 80-plus-vehicle company with multiple Florida locations.

Brian Scott, who is a member of the UMA board of directors and now runs the company, said he appreciates the sacrifices his parents made by starting all over again at mid-life to give him and his sister a better life.

"While Pam and I were not really thrilled with all the late nights and early mornings cleaning buses, driving buses, fixing buses, etc., when we were young, those are some of the fondest memories we have as a family because we all worked together to make it happen," Scott said.



## People

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Phillip Reid has joined the **United Motorcoach Association** staff as director of finance and administration.

Reid joined UMA in December and attended Expo 2018 in San Antonio to meet UMA members.

Reid came to UMA after serving as the chief financial officer for the **Emerging Markets Private Equity Association** for five years. Prior to that he served as CFO and accounting manager at a variety of associations.

He brings a depth of association knowledge and great enthusiasm for his new position.

When Reid isn't working he serves as a high school basketball referee around Virginia.

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — Nathan Wright has joined vehicle lift company **Stertil-Koni** as a marketing associate.

Wright has seven years of experience in marketing, including trade show coordination, advertising, Web content, brand development and marketing campaigns. He also has a strong technical background in industrial products, coming most recently from his work experience in the nuclear power generation industry.

Wright is a native of Lewisburg, Penn.

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