

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## New UMA CEO plans to promote 'the good stuff we do'

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Stacy Tetschner had been working at the Arizona-based National Speakers Association for 25 years when he decided to launch an informal job search earlier this year.

Tetschner, who had been CEO of the NSA since 1998, said he wasn't actively looking for a new job, only "putting out feelers."

That resulted in his receiving a

variety of email notifications about openings in the association field, including one from the United Motorcoach Association seeking applicants for president and CEO.

"I kept getting emails about the UMA job and I kept deleting them," Tetschner said. "I didn't know anything about motorcoaches."

Then one day he looked at a UMA email closer and thought,

"This is interesting." So he applied.

UMA's board of directors apparently also found Tetschner interesting because it selected him from hundreds of applicants to take over as president and CEO, replacing Victor Parra, who retired at the end of March after 19 years at the helm of UMA.

"Stacy embodies the strong leadership and strategic vision that

the board of directors was hoping for in our next chief executive," said Dale Krapf, chairman of UMA and Krapf's Coaches.

Tetschner started at UMA on June 5 after driving across the country with his 175-pound St. Bernard, Oso. (His family flew).

He said was attracted to UMA because it is positioned for a great future and because the board is ac-

tively engaged in improving the association's contributions to its members and to the success of the motorcoach industry.

"The board seems to want



Stacy Tetschner

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## Bias claims upheld in Rochester City Lines transit bid



The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that there was an "impermissible appearance of bias" in the City of Rochester's 2016 process of seeking bids from companies to operate its public-transit system.

ROCHESTER, Minn. — A 5-year-old legal battle between Rochester City Lines (RCL) and the city over its public-transit bidding process recently turned in favor of the private bus company.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled last month that there was an "impermissible appearance of bias" in the City of Rochester's 2016 process of seeking bids from companies to operate its public-transit system.

That means the bidding process will have to be repeated pending an appeal of the ruling by the city to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

"We're just seeking justice," said Dan Holter, general manager of RCL. "The methods they used throughout the process have been unjust. We tried to tell them what

they were doing wrong, but they wouldn't listen to us."

The legal wrangling between RCL and Rochester began in 2012 when the city awarded a contract to national giant First Transit to provide bus service. Prior to that, the family owned RCL had provided transit service in Rochester for 46 years.

RCL sued the city over what it contended was a "biased" bidding process, and the case recently was taken to trial before a Minnesota district court after four years of appeals.

The current legal squabble that led to a May 15 appeals court ruling involves Rochester's decision late last year to award another four-year contract to First Transit. RCL also

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## Battery-electric motorcoaches slowly making inroads

With thousands of electric transit buses whirring around the world, the first production battery-powered motorcoach debuted at UMA Motorcoach Expo in St. Louis this year on the way to its first test runs.

Electricity, however, may be powering up to a third of new motorcoaches within a decade.

Several hundred electric transit buses were sold last year in

North America, said Paul Soubry, president and chief executive officer of New Flyer Industries Inc. in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"In the coach environment electric is negligible," Soubry said. "I am not sure there is ever going to be replacement of the conventional market, but clearly there is a niche where all-electric makes sense. When we get out five and 10 years, I think 25 to 30

percent of what we sell is going to be all-electric."

Chinese manufacturer BYD displayed what it called "the world's first 45-foot battery-electric over-the-road coach" at this year's Motorcoach Expo. Its batteries can power the bus 200 miles on a charge.

"The market for this is pretty much as a commuter coach," said Bobby Hill, regional sales manager

for BYD. "This type of coach will be going to the Antelope Valley (California) Transit Authority. It also is good for large corporations to use as employee shuttles, especially if they have campuses across town or bring in workers from park-and-rides 50 to 75 miles out."

New Flyer has delivered more than 6,400 electric transit buses in North America over the past two decades, said David Warren, di-

rector of sustainable transportation. These included diesel-electric hybrids, hydrogen fuel cell electrics, trolley electrics energized by overhead power lines and battery electrics.

All but diesel-electrics are considered zero-emission vehicles, he said, and New Flyer delivered 241 of them last year, up from 144 in 2015.

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# New Flyer, Alexander Dennis ending MiDi joint venture

WINNIPEG — A 5-year-old joint venture between Canadian bus manufacturer New Flyer Industries Inc. and Scottish bus maker Alexander Dennis Limited is ending.

The companies, which joined forces in 2012 to build medium-duty, low-floor 30- and 35-foot buses known as MiDi buses, announced that beginning in the fourth quarter of this year, manufacture of the buses will shift from New Flyer's St. Cloud, Minn., plant to a new Alexander Dennis facility in Nappanee, Ind.

"The decision to terminate the joint venture and transition the product to Alexander Dennis was

a mutual one," Wayne Joseph, president of Transit Bus Business at New Flyer, said in a statement.

Joseph said the shift would allow New Flyer to expand the production capacity at its St. Cloud facility for its Xcelsior heavy-duty transit bus, while Alexander Dennis plans to combine manufacturing of the MiDi bus with its double-deck Enviro500 series bus in Nappanee.

He said that since 2014, 200 Buy America-compliant MiDi buses have been deployed in community shuttle service and to corporate campuses and universities throughout North America. Since the joint venture began, MiDi buses

have been delivered to 22 operators in Canada and the United States.

With the termination of the

joint venture, the manufacture, sales, marketing and aftermarket parts sales for the bus will be trans-

sitioned to Alexander Dennis.

New Flyer said it has completed manufacturing for all firm orders and will continue to support all commitments made to existing MiDi customers for care and product support.

"It has been a privilege to partner with such a respected player in the North American market and after this promising start, now is the right time for us to take full ownership of this product," said Alexander Dennis CEO Colin Robertson.

"We are looking forward to this new chapter and to bringing the product to our own manufacturing facility in Nappanee."



New Flyer Industries Inc. and Alexander Dennis Limited are ending their five-year joint venture to build medium-duty, low-floor 30- and 35-foot buses known as MiDi buses.

# Canada planning for 30% more international visitors

OTTAWA — Canada is hoping to increase the number of international tourists visiting the country by 30 percent by 2021.

The Canadian government has developed a 20-point plan, called "New Tourism Vision," which also has a goal of doubling the number of Chinese tourists over the next four years.

Although those numbers sound ambitious, Canada has seen the number of international visitors grow by 7.5 percent in 2015, to 17.8 million, and by 11 percent in 2016, to 20 million tourists.

If those annual increases continue the 30 percent goal would be within reach.

"Through our government's

'New Tourism Vision,' we have a clear plan to build on this success and showcase our beautiful landscapes, incredible experiences and unique culture to the world," said Bardish Chaggar, Canada's Minister of Small Business and Tourism.

The plan calls for the government to increase funding for marketing, support the renewal of products

and services already offered, and make Canada easier to access for international travelers by expanding the electronic Travel Authoriza-

tion System, which exempts visitors from some countries from obtaining



Bardish Chaggar

a Temporary Resident Visa.

In addition to targeting Chinese visitors, the government will fund marketing programs to entice more Americans to visit Canada. The U.S. leisure market already is Canada's largest source of international tourists, accounting for 70 percent of overnight visitors to the country.

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# THE DOCKET

## Some owners of recalled coaches slow to fix defects

WASHINGTON — As many as 2,172 motorcoaches may be carrying passengers despite unresolved safety defects that were the subject of federal recalls in 2015 and 2016, a study of federal documents has found.

All six major bus manufacturers selling motorcoaches in North America were represented among 17 safety recalls conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration during those two years. A total of 5,676 motorcoaches were recalled.

Unresolved recall defects rarely appear as factors in fatal or injury accidents, but if they do the impact can be enormous, posing the risk of punitive as well as compensatory damages, said Paul Berne, senior vice president of Lancer Insurance.

According to quarterly reports that manufacturers are required to submit to NHTSA, 3,504 of those recalled motorcoaches had their defects “remedied” by the end of the first quarter of 2017, leaving 38 percent with defects unremedied.

Under federal regulations, the reports must be filed for six quarters after a recall is issued and list

the number of motorcoaches that have been repaired or “have been inspected and determined not to need the remedy.”

Federal law requires manufacturers to report defects and perform inspections and any needed repairs without charge to the vehicle owner. According to a federal guidance document, “vehicle manufacturers are responsible for their

vehicles and all original equipment installed on them.”

The 2015-16 motorcoach recalls included 2,351 defects that could cause control of the coach to be impaired or lost; 1,617 defects that could pose fire risks; and 653 defects that could cause sudden engine shutdowns and loss of power.

Other defects present increased

risk of injuries in the event of a collision or sudden deceleration — 1,149 involve seating and 63 involve window hardware.

Three additional safety recalls covering 842 motorcoaches have been issued in 2017. These have not yet been subject to quarterly reports.

Many of the coaches not reported as remedied may have been

inspected and repaired if needed, said Tim LaFon, vice president of regulatory affairs for the Volvo Group of North America in Greensboro, N.C. The group includes Volvo Bus and Prevost.

“A lot of customers have big service facilities,” LaFon said. “In some cases they will do the repairs but have not submitted their claims yet. We might see a lower amount (of remedied coaches reported) but it is not necessarily that the vehicle has not been repaired.”

Nonetheless, the remedied rate remains at 67 percent for motorcoaches subject to 2015 NHTSA recalls, according to the latest quarterly reports. The six recalls that year covered 806 coaches, of which 537 have been reported as remedied.

Two of the 2015 recalls achieved total compliance. Motor Coach Industries reported that “single pedestal seats” on nine 2016 J4500 motorcoaches may have been installed with one of four bolts placed in an incorrect position.

Temsa reported that some air pressure relay valves may have permitted insufficient air pressure to reach rear axle parking brakes, allowing the parking brake to engage while the vehicle was in motion. The engaged brakes could have overheated and created a fire risk. All 64 of these 2013-2016 TS45 motorcoaches were remedied.

Noncompliance with NHTSA safety recalls is a concern across motor vehicle industries. According to a March report from the Congressional Research Service, NHTSA issued recalls for 120 million vehicles from 2013 through 2015 — 45 million had not been remedied by the middle of 2016.

“Recalls rarely achieve 100 percent completion rates, leaving many defective vehicles on the road long after a recall is initiated,” stated the report, “Issues with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.”

“Safety recalls are voluntary,” LaFon said. “There is no way we can force people to come in and have their vehicles repaired.”

However, he believes Volvo’s commercial passenger vehicle operators are more diligent than other customers. “When you are carrying

## Recalled coaches insurance risks

“Wow! That is disconcerting. I wonder how many of those we insure,” said Paul Berne when told that 2,172 motorcoaches with unresolved safety defects may be on the road this weekend.

Defect recalls have long been a topic of safety presentations for customers of Lancer Insurance, said Berne, the company’s Cleveland-based senior vice president and chief claims officer.

“We speak to customers at nearly every opportunity we get and one of the things we talk about is this very issue,” he said.

“We have told them very clearly, if you receive a recall notice and you make the conscious decision to not comply with it, if you

put that vehicle on the road and that defect is a factor in a loss, then you have opened yourselves up to a potentially huge exposure, not only in terms of the compensatory damage aspect of the case but quite possibly punitive damages as well.”

Accidents implicating recalled safety defects are rare, however. Unremedied recall-related defects do not appear in a database search of motorcoach incidents investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board.

“I recall very clearly one incident from probably over 10 years ago,” Berne said. “The recall involved the placement of a safety bar across the lavatory window of

a certain manufacturer’s motorcoach. The (operator’s) company was aware of this, ordered the part but kept the bus in service.”

Before the bar was delivered, the motorcoach was dispatched.

“The group went out and an incident occurred where a passenger was ejected through that window at highway speed and received a very serious brain injury. The passenger survived and had a miraculous recovery, but it was a virtually indefensible case in terms of the operator’s liability,” Berne said

“It was a very unusual set of circumstances but an occurrence of exactly what the safety bar was

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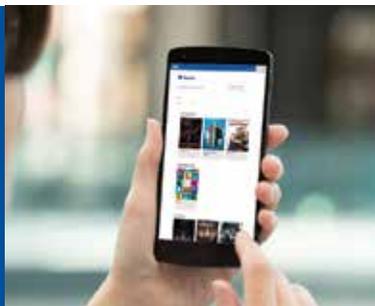
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# States taking initiative in raising fuel taxes, fees

Even though the Trump administration is promising to unveil its \$1 trillion national infrastructure-funding plan as early as this month, many states are pushing ahead with their own proposals to pay for transportation improvements.

South Carolina became the latest state to raise fuel taxes when the legislature overrode Gov. Henry McMaster's veto of the fuel tax increase last month.

Beginning this year, South Carolina fuel taxes will increase by 2 cents a gallon every July through 2022, for a total increase of 12 cents, to pay for infrastructure projects.

The state's current fuel tax is 16 cents on both gasoline and diesel and will increase to 28 cents

over six years.

Other states that have passed or are considering fuel-tax increases, vehicle-fee increases or bond packages to fund infrastructure include Tennessee, California, Indiana and Montana.

Some state officials say they doubt the Trump plan will make a big dent in their need for road and bridge repairs and replacements, while others are reluctant to rely on public-private partnerships — likely a cornerstone of the Trump plan.

Private investment in infrastructure could include tax incentives for private parties that subsidize big-ticket projects, with those investors recouping their costs through tolls or fares on roads,

bridges, rail systems and airports. Tolls are unpopular in many states, especially rural ones.

The U.S. has an \$836 billion backlog of needed repairs and improvements to roads and bridges, plus an additional \$90 billion backlog for public-transit systems, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

Those needs have grown as the money available from the Federal Highway Trust Fund for states fell by more than 9 percent from 2010 to 2015, according to an Associated Press analysis of the most recent figures from the highway administration.

The federal gasoline tax has remained at 18.3 cents a gallon since 1993, the longest gap be-

tween increases. Trump recently said he would consider higher fuel taxes as part of his infrastructure plan, but such a move likely would meet resistance from Congress.

As a result, several states have adopted higher fuel or sales taxes to pay for transportation improvements.

They include:

- Tennessee, where Republican Gov. Bill Haslam signed a bill in April to phase in a 6-cent hike in the gas tax and a 10-cent diesel tax increase

- Indiana, where a transportation plan raises an average of \$1.2 billion annually by increasing gas taxes and vehicle fees and gradually shifting fuel sales taxes from the state's general fund to infrastructure

- California, where a \$5 billion annual plan raises fuel taxes and vehicle fees to pay for repairs to state and local roads, while also providing money for public transit and biking and walking trails

- Montana, which recently approved its first fuel tax increase in nearly 25 years

- Wyoming, which earlier this year enacted a law that doubles vehicle and driver's license fees

- Idaho, Utah and West Virginia, all of which approved transportation bonding measures, with West Virginia's proposal contingent on voter approval later this year

Transportation funding measures also are pending in Louisiana, Minnesota, Oklahoma and Oregon.

## State police issuing traffic tickets to NYC drivers

NEW YORK CITY — Motorcoach drivers traveling in New York City have something new to keep an eye out for: state troopers.

New York State Police, normally known for patrolling upstate highways, have stepped up their traffic enforcement in New York

City.

Critics say state troopers handed out 14,542 summonses to New York City motorists in the first four months of this year — a 759 percent increase from all of last year, when they wrote 1,692 tickets.

Troopers wrote only four tick-

ets in 2015 and none in 2014.

Most of the tickets issued by troopers this year have been for speeding and cellphone use.

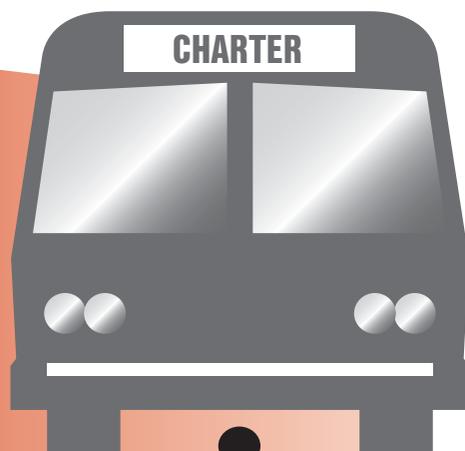
There is speculation that by deploying 150 more troopers to patrol city highways, bridges and tunnel crossings in December, Gov. Andrew Cuomo was seeking

to increase state revenue and to take a political jab at New York Mayor Bill de Blasio.

"This is a good old-fashioned turf war," a city elected official told the *New York Post*. "This is the governor trying to show the mayor that all of New York is the governor's turf."

The governor's office said the additional troopers were deployed in December to patrol state-owned bridges and tunnels with the crossings transitioning to cashless tolls. They provide extra security amid worldwide terror threats targeting infrastructure and to catch toll scofflaws.

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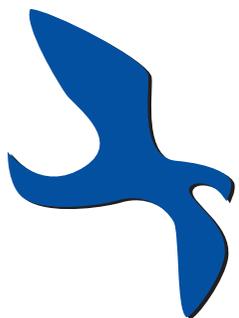
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# Making a case for 18-year-old bus, motorcoach drivers

By Pierre Brenenstuhl

Because of our aging work force and the lure of high-tech jobs — coupled with a multitude of counter-productive restrictions and outdated mindsets — the transportation industry is experiencing an unnecessary critical shortage of next-generation driver applicants.

Why unnecessary?

Because we are thinking in a tight box and doing the same things over and over. We are looking under rocks for applicants, making compromises in our hiring criteria and relaxing our professional performance standards for current drivers who would have been terminated if a replacement were available.

Sound familiar?

So, thinking outside of the box is the most logical solution and it's staring us right in the face: 18- to 20-year-olds, a long-overlooked source of labor.

That is the most logical answer, unless you are an insurance company.

## Apples and oranges

Insurance companies tend to look at 18- to 20-year-olds and see high claims statistics. But that's comparing apples and oranges. The youth demographic they are basing their restrictions on are the untrained and immature with little direction.

After all, the military has success with putting 18 year olds behind the wheels of a variety of vehicles, ships and aircraft.

They accomplish that by vetting and training their young recruits. And that is the same thing the bus industry can and should do.

In fact, it has been done and it was successful. I did it myself sev-

eral years ago for a client in Maryland.

The owner of a midsized charter and tour bus company who was experiencing a high applicant rejection rate from the available work pool told me that he understood that 18-year-olds can drive charter buses in intrastate service. He had a 17-year-old employee working on the wash crew who he thought would be a great driver candidate when he turned 18 and wanted to hire him before he found another profession.

## Four-week course

After an extensive interview and vetting, I agreed to start training the young man (I'll call him Doug) in our four-week Professional Bus Driver Training Program, which includes classroom theory, driving range vehicle handling skills, behind-the-wheel defensive driving and accident avoidance training.

I then placed him with a carefully selected mentor for two weeks of in-service passenger training.

To make a long story short, Doug became a very reliable and successful incident- and accident-free in-state charter driver until he turned 21, when he was moved up to interstate status and continued to be an in-demand driver for the company's long-distance multi-state tours.

Doug continued his charter-bus career for several years until he was invited by Tommy Dorsey to become his full-time tour-bus driver, which he did for the next 10 years until he retired from the open road and became a successful car dealer in Florida.

The problem with the requirement that drivers be at least 21 is that by the time our young people reach that age they have been lured

into other professions such as something they have been training for and exposed to all their lives — electronics.

So, as an industry we have a big job to do and that is to convince the insurance industry and ourselves that with proper vetting and training 18- to 20-year-olds should be considered as one of the solutions to replenishing the shrinking driver pool.

Currently, many organizations and employers such as those in the retail and health-care fields are investing in our nation's youth. There also are youth organizations like the Explorer Scouts, public-service cadets, the Civil Air Patrol, the Experimental Aircraft Association, and the Air Force Combat-ives Program.

They all are preparing our young adults for careers in many fields, except transportation. Membership in these organizations could be a component in our vetting process.

## Training is key

The most important element here is the training program, which must contain an approved curriculum and be conducted by experienced bus transportation training professionals.

It cannot be conducted by a truck school, lead driver or management-appointed person for the simple reason that you don't know what they don't know, and that applies to most any driver in the industry who has not been professionally trained. Again, they don't know what they don't know.

The training curriculum for motorcoach operators must mirror the United Nations-sanctioned European "Certificate Of Proficiency" program, which all commercial drivers in Europe must obtain

in order to travel inter-country.

## Rigorous program

The program is akin to obtaining a pilot's license as it contains a lengthy ground school classroom training in theory, laws of motion, map reading and contingency planning, as well as many hours of behind-the-wheel-vehicle handling and defensive driver training.

The certificate is good for five years, at which time a refresher course must be completed.

Contrast that with this country's minimal qualification requirements of passing a CDL test with very little theory and a road test that many times is conducted in a school bus.

This was not the plan when Congress passed the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986. The original draft called for mandatory formal training for all new CDL applicants.

However, loud cries of "foul" and extensive lobbying by our transportation industry resulted in a political firestorm that caused the training requirement to be dumped and the grandfather clause to be substituted.

Thousands of nonqualified drivers now had CDLs.

One other important factor in the shrinking driver pool is the lack of exposure to our industry by the nation's youth.

Think about it. When is the last time you saw a movie or TV show or even a commercial that featured a bus or motorcoach? Even the Greyhound commercials are gone.

So what can we do as an industry and individual operators to get the exposure needed to get the attention of our nation and the public as a whole?

Do what other industries do:

- Hold an open house, put

coaches on display, and have drivers talk up their jobs to generate interest.

- Have drivers visit schools and give career talks to classes.

- Get your buses into commercials. Talk to local TV stations about trading your bus for staff transport in return for on-air exposure, or pay for a short commercial.

- Hire youth interns for the summer to expose them to our industry.

Eighteen- to 20-year-olds need to be attracted to the industry, and insurance company minimum age requirements for drivers need to be relaxed.

Bus company owners also need to be trained as to what really qualifies a driver to be called a professional because many bus people don't know what they don't know.

You can dress a person in a spiffy uniform and place him or her behind the wheel of a great looking, expensive commercial vehicle. But that doesn't make him or her a professional driver.

In fact, I can say that in general many of our so-called professional drivers are aware that they are not fully trained professionals and some are aware that they don't know what they don't know.

They are thirsty for professional training, as I find when I hold in-service training classes. The students are still asking questions as I try to leave and they tell me they have a new sense of pride because they now have the knowledge to be truly professional and safe drivers.

*Pierre Brenenstuhl is CEO of Prodrive Safety, which provides safety, training and support services to motorcoach operators and also conducts accident investigations. He can be reached at prodrivesafety@gmail.com.*

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# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

ISSUE NO. 332

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

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# Leading without managing can run a company off the road

By Dave Millhouser

“What’s the matter? Afraid of the dark?”

After driving 24 hours or so, I had just whined to my boss, Joe, that I was getting a bit weary and was hoping for a relief driver.

There were only another 200 or so miles left on this jaunt east from Colorado, and golly gee whiz, we didn’t have any spare drivers.

Joe himself had been awake for 36 hours dealing with crises sprinkled across the interstates, so he was implying that I should “man up” and finish the trip.

This was in the 1960s and we were an ICC-exempt nonprofit hauling high school kids cross-country to Christian camps. We were “lawful” if not wise, and operated in a way that would be seriously illegal today.

In a mostly irrelevant aside, in the years we operated, the only injury related to millions of passenger miles was a broken toe. One girl was waving goodbye to the driver after a trip, and somehow didn’t notice the drive wheel until it squished her toe.

Our drivers were highly moti-

vated, young and either lucky or blessed.

We managed to pull this off, for a couple of years, because we were extremely well led. Joe outworked us and never asked us to do anything that he wouldn’t do himself.

He always had our back and, as a result, we would do anything for him.

In addition, it was sort of a handpicked crew. Virtually every one was a leader, too.

We trusted each other almost to a fault, and 50 years later many of us are still close (and at least a dozen of us infested the bus industry for years). Our gang was a picture postcard of inspired leadership.

And we failed.

Ultimately the parent organization came to the conclusion that we would never be economically viable, so they sold the buses and began using charter companies.

Pardon the misplaced metaphor, but we missed the boat by not understanding the difference between leadership and management.

We had terrific people, but lacked the system to manage them and to make sure they and the

equipment were consistently in the right place. Our solution to most problems was to work harder, which only carried us so far (pun intended).

Ten years later, while working for a coach manufacturer, I saw the same dichotomy rear its ugly head again.

We had some of the best tech reps in the industry, and their response to emergencies was phenomenal. They were allowed to pull parts off the assembly line when necessary and flew people and parts all over the country — anything to get a customer up and running.

The president himself once worked an entire Sunday to solve an electrical problem on a new coach.

The trouble was, we had a flawed system in place to manage support. Parts were often back-ordered and minor service issues languished in the bureaucracy until they became catastrophic.

The aftermarket parts manager figured he could keep his inventory expense artificially low by using the assembly line as his piggy bank.

Customers quickly learned they couldn’t trust our system, but they could trust our people, so every problem became a “crisis.”

Our biggest competitor had a support system that ground slowly, but reliably. Customers could count on them and didn’t declare an emergency every time they blew a light bulb.

They’re still in business.

There’s a necessary balance between leadership/personal initiative and managing through a system. You can have the best people in the world and lead them well, but without a system they will eventually fail.

It works the other way too. Coloring books have made a comeback, but filling in the spaces with the correct crayon doesn’t make you an artist.

Slavish commitment to managing through a system won’t work either. Doubt it? Think back to the last time you were at the registry. Customers don’t like being mashed into conformity.

The trick seems to be designing a mechanism that reliably handles normal tasks but allows your people to use initiative when mechani-

cal, often defensive, actions get in the way.

Leadership and management are two different but overlapping disciplines. Neither is a goal, but rather a tool used to move toward what is best for your business.

In 1967 my boss let me pull on my bussy big boy pants for the first time and drive a bus alone from Atlantic City to Baltimore.

Seated behind me were 40 trusting kids. Heading out of town, I smoothly accelerated onto the Garden State Parkway, rolling confidently south. I got all the way to the end before realizing that I should have taken the turnpike.

I led/drove those kids safely to Cape May. My driving skills passed muster, but managing the trip better (in the form of reading the map) might have gotten them where they wanted to go — Baltimore.

*Dave Millhouser is a bus industry marketing consultant and freelance writer. Contact him by email at Davemillhouser@gmail.com.*



Dave Millhouser



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# An ounce of proactive marketing is worth a ton of business

By Christian Riddell  
Motorcoach Marketing Council



Christian Riddell

The difference between doing something proactively and doing it reactively is obvious.

From vehicle maintenance to our own personal health, there are myriad reasons why one may spend time on proactive prevention instead of dealing with the results of procrastination.

Perhaps Benjamin Franklin said it best when he said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

If we were going to talk about vehicle maintenance, you would probably roll your eyes and move on to the next article. (Obviously you know and appreciate the need for preventative maintenance and being proactive in the longevity of your fleet.)

If we started discussing personal health you would, in all likelihood, again roll your eyes be-

cause you already know that eating well, exercising and getting adequate sleep are essential aspects of good health.

Another example of preventive medicine, a proactive step, is trying to control the outcome of your future health.

Good news, though: we are not going to be talking about any of those things. We are here to talk marketing. Proactive marketing.

If an ounce of prevention is indeed worth a pound of cure, then in this case, an ounce of proactive marketing is worth a full dispatch sheet.

## Overlooked practice

Proactive marketing is probably one of the single most overlooked aspects in the motorcoach industry today.

While we are, as a group, remarkably good at taking phone calls and doing on-demand sales and quotes, most of us drop the proverbial ball when it comes to looking beyond the "right now" and finding ways to boost our sales numbers.

One of the quickest ways to

## Marketing Minute GoMotorcoach It's the Smart Move

make this happen is to look back and make sure we book as much repeat business as we possibly can.

Consumers are a fickle bunch. Just ask United Airlines after one little video gets posted on YouTube.

Sometimes, as in that case, consumers take information and make buying decisions based on it ("I would prefer to choose an airline that probably won't drag me off a flight on which I am already seated, so I will book with another airline").

Other times they are less sophisticated and make buying decisions based on things that, from the outside looking in, make no logical sense to the people trying to sell them a service.

Take, for example, the "Google factor." While Google knows nothing about motorcoach travel, safety ratings, customer service, main-

tenance, vehicle fleet age or other factors related to being a good operator, it still determines which companies get most of the traffic from people searching for our service in any given market.

How? More than 75 percent of the total clicks go to the top three search results. While this makes little sense, we are all guilty of this in our day-to-day lives, as we look to Google when we're searching online for recommendations of providers, services or products.

Some years ago my family was driving through Idaho on our way for a summer visit to my grandparents. We stopped at a truck stop and I saw a truck driver up on the back of his semi-truck tying down his tarps over a full load of potatoes.

I remember watching him as he was carefully checking each tie down to make sure not even one potato could jump out the top of the truck.

## Bouncing potatoes

As he was exiting the parking lot, his tire hit a curb and the truck jolted a bit as it fell back down to the road. When this happened, a

little door opened on the back of the truck and potatoes started pouring out.

As he drove away, he left a line of bouncing potatoes behind him. I am sure, to this day, that all the while as he drove down the road losing potatoes, he felt assured that his tarp was secure and nothing was being lost.

Like this truck driver, we in this industry spend a lot of time believing that our tarp is secure. We believe that customers who have used us in the past are, to their dying breath, loyal to us, and that if they have transportation needs we will be their first call.

But like in the case of the potato hauler, that confidence can often be misplaced and simply equate to a false sense of security as we line some backcountry road with our truckload of potatoes.

So, you may ask, how do we patch the holes and make sure that all of our potatoes get to the factory and come out as delicious tater tots? Great question.

It is important that we do two things as providers of services to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►

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## New CEO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to get involved with setting strategy and turning it over to the team to implement that strategy for the benefit of members,” Tetschner said. “I was able to do that well at NSA and I’m looking forward to doing that here.”

Tetschner, 49, joined NSA in 1992 after a brief career as a restaurant manager and two years working in membership sales for the California Restaurant Association.

“I was trying to hone my sales skills and I became intrigued with the whole association world,” he said. “It was a great transition to the association industry.”

Tetschner’s first job at NSA was as membership and chapter relations manager. At the time the association, whose members are professional speakers, was undergoing major changes, including doubling its dues, and he was charged with growing membership.

Tetschner later was promoted to a job helping develop a new conference center at NSA. Then, only six years after he joined the association, there was a leadership shakeup that resulted in the hiring of a new CEO. However, she only lasted 90 days on the job.

Tetschner said he felt at the time that he was qualified to do the job, but the board thought that at 30 years old he was too young. But the board decided to give him a chance and offered him a one-year contract to head NSA, after which his performance would be evaluated.

“They liked what I was doing and I loved what I was doing,” Tetschner said, so he was promoted to CEO. “It was a pretty rapid advance, but I was at the right place at the right time.”

During Tetschner’s tenure as CEO, NSA improved the quality of its educational programs for its 3,500 members and generally raised the professionalism of the organization. Member communications also were improved with the development of a magazine, podcasts and videos.

“We established metrics to build speaking careers and got professionals to come together and build a support structure,” Tetschner said. “It’s all about helping members make more money.”

He said he also plans to work on developing more educational programs at UMA, improving communications and engagement with members, and “getting the word out about the good stuff we do. And the good stuff we do is the best there is. We’re delivering benefits at the highest level.”

Tetschner also can leverage his connections in the trade associa-

tion world and the convention and meetings industry. He is an active member of the American Society of Association Executives, where he has served on the board and as vice chairman of ASAE and the Center for Association Leadership. He also has served as chairman of the board and as a director for the Convention Industry Council.

Tetschner said his philosophy

on running a trade association is an outgrowth of his relationship with his youngest son, Raymond, a Native American child who has Down syndrome.

Tetschner and his wife, Michelle, adopted Raymond after serving as his foster parents. They also have two other sons, ages 23 and 26.

The couple read all the books

they could find about Down syndrome but “didn’t find anything positive,” Tetschner said.

So they decided to publish their own book, “Windows Into Heaven: Stories Celebrating Down Syndrome,” a compilation of positive stories they gathered and edited.

“Native Americans believe that people with Down syndrome and other disabilities have a special

window to the Great Spirit,” Tetschner said. “That’s why the book is titled ‘Windows Into Heaven.’”

“I see things through Raymond’s eyes and that has affected my view of associations. We have to value different approaches,” he said.

“Associations exist to serve all members, not just the ones who do things a certain way.”

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## Marketing Minute

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

the buying public. First, it is critical that we do what we say we are going to do. That is a given.

If you say you are a luxury transportation provider, be one. If you promise world-class service, provide it. No amount of marketing or sales can overcome a bad experience for your buying public.

### Short memories

Second, assume that no customers will ever remember you and work hard to get them to buy from you again.

I think the “biggest hole in the truck” of our industry is the assumption that if someone used us once, they will automatically use us again. The truth is a bit more humorous than it is sinister, but consumers don’t remember that kind of thing.

Chances are they found you in a Web search or somebody over coffee said to call you. They called and booked their family reunion and you did a one-day move for them two years ago.

When they have another need today, they’ll go right back to the beginning and start with a Google search for “bus rentals” or “charter buses” in your local market.

Most companies I talk to do very little to stay in front of their buying public. An occasional email or a few social media posts are about the extent of most companies’ plans to get in front of those who have purchased from them in the past.

The truth is that it is six times more expensive to get a new customer than it is to retain an old customer. This is, in large part, because you already know where the person who bought from you is, you know how to get in touch with them and they have already experienced your product or service.

So, what do you need to do to close that little door and keep those potatoes in the truck? It’s actually pretty simple. I recommend two things.

First, build a viable outreach

program to your buying public. Use email and direct mail to keep your brand at the top of their minds on at least a quarterly basis (monthly would be better, but don’t let more than a quarter go by without getting in front of them).

The second—and perhaps the most important piece of the puzzle for booking more charters in the short term—is look where you have been in order to go forward more effectively. Print out your bookings for the next three months, as well as your bookings over the last three years. I know this is a big list for some, but with an hour or so of time it can be a gold mine.

Next, sit down and look at the list. Highlight any bookings that could (or should) be recurring activities (family reunions, parking lot shuttles, employee outings,

corporate retreats or large events are all good candidates).

### Outreach campaign

Once you have the list, start your outreach campaign. Phone calls, personal emails, and even handwritten notes mailed the old-fashioned way will go a long way to stopping the inevitable “search” this year when people are looking for your services.

These simple efforts will put potentially lost bookings back on your dispatch sheets where they belong.

We need to assume less when it comes to consumers. We can’t believe they remember us and will book with us again, and we certainly can’t simply hope that the phone will ring.

We must look for ways to shut

that proverbial potato-spilling door and plug the holes that are costing us valuable bookings. Our ability to reach out and touch the people who could, should or would book with us again will go a long way toward keeping our bookings up and our customers loyal.

Selling more charters, to more people, for more money starts with little decisions to be better at marketing what we have to those who need what we are selling. This ounce of prevention will help drive profits up and create a customer base of people who are loyal and less sensitive to price.

These are the folks that end up booking with us again and again.

For more information about the Motorcoach Marketing Council and its programs, go to [www.motorcoachmarketing.org](http://www.motorcoachmarketing.org).

## Calendar

### June 2017

**20-23 Pennsylvania Bus Association Annual Meeting**, Radisson, Corning, N.Y. Info: [www.pabus.org](http://www.pabus.org)

**22-25 New England Bus Assoc. Annual Meeting**, Sea Crest Beach Hotel, Cape Cod, Mass. Info: [www.newenglandbus.org](http://www.newenglandbus.org)

### July 2017

**29-Aug 2 SCMA-GMOA-AMA Regional Meeting 2017**, Sheraton Arlington, Arlington, Texas, Info: [www.southcentral-motorcoach.org](http://www.southcentral-motorcoach.org)

### August 2017

**6-9 IMG Strategic Alliance Meeting**, Nashville, Tenn. Info: [www.imgcoach.com](http://www.imgcoach.com)

**14-15 Midwest Bus & Motor-**

**coach Association Annual Convention and Rodeo**, Traverse City, Mich. Info: [www.mbmca.org/convention](http://www.mbmca.org/convention)

**17-20 National Association of Motorcoach Operators Annual Conference**, Alexandria, Va. Info: [www.namocoaches.org](http://www.namocoaches.org)

**25-29 Student & Youth Travel Association Annual Conference**, Albuquerque, Info: [www.sytaevents.org/conference2017](http://www.sytaevents.org/conference2017)

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## Rochester City Lines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

challenged that bidding process as biased.

The current court fight began when Rochester issued a request for proposals (RFP) in June 2016 to operate its public-transit service from 2017 to 2021.

RCL, which submitted a bid to provide the service, issued a pre-bid protest to the city claiming the bidding process was biased because five of the eight members of the RFP evaluation committee also had been members of the 2012 RFP evaluation committee.

The bus company had claimed in its earlier suit that the 2012 committee was “tainted by participation in an evaluation process that the evidence shows relied upon a collusive agreement between the City and First Transit to rig the proposal evaluation process, with respect to interviews and scoring.”

In its 2016 pre-bid protest, RCL argued that the city’s inclusion of five of these “tainted” individuals on the 2016 evaluation committee undermined the fairness and impartiality of that committee and rendered the 2016 RFP process “inherently unfair.”

But the city moderator over-



The legal wrangling between RCL and Rochester began in 2012 when the city awarded a contract to national giant First Transit to provide bus service. Prior to that, the family owned RCL had provided transit service in Rochester for 46 years.

seeing the RFP process rejected RCL’s protest in August. The city then awarded the four-year contract to First Transit in November.

RCL petitioned the Minnesota Court of Appeals seeking review of the moderator’s denial of its pre-bid protest, and on May 15 the court agreed with RCL and reversed the moderator’s rejection of the protest.

The appeals court said in its

ruling that although there was no proof of actual bias on the part of the RFP evaluation committee, there was an “impermissible appearance of bias” resulting from the inclusion of the five holdover members on the 2016 committee.

“We reverse the moderator’s denial of RCL’s pre-bid process and hold that the 2016 RFP process and any contract awarded through that process are invalid,”

the court ruled.

The Rochester City Council has voted unanimously to ask the Minnesota Supreme Court to review the appeals court ruling.

Meanwhile, the original 2012 lawsuit by RCL was the subject of a trial that began in late May.

The basis of that suit was that Rochester’s RFP process was unfair and biased in favor of First Transit and that the city ignored a

conflict of interest.

Holter said that two of his own managers who represented RCL during the interview process had — unbeknownst to him — applied for jobs with First Transit. He said the city was aware of the job offers but did not disclose the information to him.

RCL also filed an action with the Federal Transit Administration, maintaining that the city violated federal regulations requiring a government entity using federal transit funds to compete with a private carrier to pay just compensation to the affected business.

The FTA rejected the claim and the lawsuit against Rochester bounced around the court system for five years before the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that there was sufficient cause to order the case to trial in district court.

That trial began in late May and was expected to last several weeks. Steven Diaz, a Washington, D.C., lawyer who represents RCL, said if RCL prevails, the company would ask for monetary damages based on its loss of business. He said there also is a chance that the FTA, which provided federal funding to Rochester to subsidize its public-transit system, could request that the city reimburse the government.

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## Electric coaches

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Paul Soubry

BYD was founded in 1995 to manufacture batteries and employs 180,000 people around the world.

“Batteries are our bread and butter,” Hill said. “They got into building vehicles to showcase the battery technology.”

BYD has built more than 5,000 electric buses globally, making it “by far the most popular electric transit vehicle on the planet,” according to a company press release.

BYD’s North American operations are headquartered in Los Angeles. It manufactures batteries and buses in Lancaster, Calif.

Companies selling motorcoaches in North America almost universally claim to be developing electric versions of their vehicles.

Temsa will be ready to receive orders by the end of 2017 with its four different electric models designed for transit and intercity transport purposes, said Deniz Cetin, an account manager at the

company headquarters in Adana, Turkey.

“Some of those transit vehicles have already started servicing as a test unit in Turkey’s local municipalities,” Cetin said.

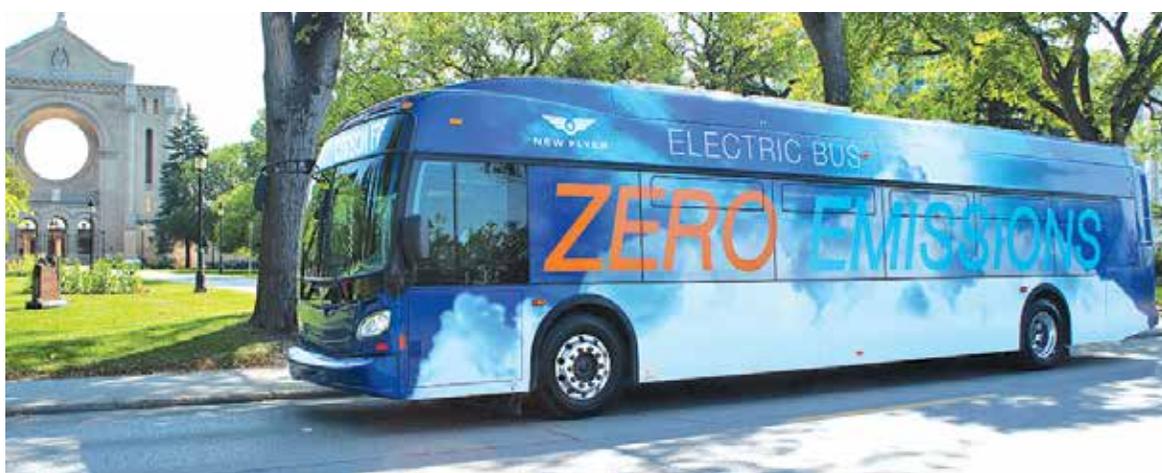
Temsa’s three electric transit buses have specified ranges of 37 to 155 miles. The intercity bus has a 155-mile range.

“We are planning to get one or two of our electric vehicle models Americanized within the next two or three years,” Cetin said.

Motor Coach Industries (MCI), a subsidiary of New Flyer, announced in January that it is developing an electric version of its J4500 model for the commuter shuttle market. MCI also offers its D-Series coaches with compressed natural gas and diesel-electric power.

ABC Companies also is looking at manufacturing fully electric motorcoaches in the future, possibly in another year and a half, ABC President and CEO Dane Cornell said.

Spanish coachbuilder Irizar has been manufacturing electric transit buses for the past couple years for use in European cities, and it is possible the company will someday introduce them in the U.S.



New Flyer Industries has delivered more than 6,400 electric transit buses in North America over the past two decades. They include the Xcelsior battery-electric bus (pictured), diesel-electric hybrids, hydrogen fuel cell electrics and trolley electrics energized by overhead power lines.

Battery-electric power for motorcoaches “is still at the very early stage in research-and-development-trial environments,” Soubry said.

With New Flyer’s experience and its acquisition of MCI in late 2015, he said, “We think we are a natural to come in. We are taking what we have learned at New Flyer and applying it to a motorcoach. Our ability to cooperate and collaborate has been fantastic.”

Electric motor technology was quite refined by the end of the 19th century. Battery-powered automobiles were popular until superior gasoline engines were developed

in the first decade of the 20th century. Battery buses and delivery trucks were common into the 1910s.

Even on a bus, “The torque of the motor is instantaneous,” said BYD’s Hill, “almost jet-fighter exhilaration.”

Limited battery storage capacity and a high weight-to-energy ratio stalled development of over-the-road electrics until petroleum prices and occasional shortages rose toward the end of the 20th century. Battery capacity continues to define the bus-motorcoach category.

“The most logical place to start

was transit,” Soubry said. “You know where you are going, how many people you’re carrying, the pace and the range.”

For long-distance coach travel, he said, “I think we are going to see the continued development of diesel and some niche areas where natural gas might make sense.”

But battery technology is well matched for transit and commuter coach service.

“There is a range of operators that have very unique, defined profiles. Look at the San Francisco Bay area where they are shuttling employees,” he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 ►



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## Electric coaches

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

“They have a defined route and dwell times that are quite large — in between and after runs and overnight — for charging batteries. With the lack of need for a baggage area, that allows us to be very creative with the size of the batteries and the charging strategy.”

Hill said battery technology is changing all the time. “It seems we get an increase every three or four months. Several years ago the 40-foot BYD bus had a range of about 116 miles. Now that bus is right at 200 miles.”

Higher battery efficiency could overcome the weight burden of extending range by adding batteries. With current technology, the specifications for a 40-foot New Flyer Xcelsior transit bus list a curb weight of 31,000 pounds for the electric model, 5,000 pounds more than the diesel version.

Charging technologies also could enable electric motorcoaches to roam farther.

“Maybe we won’t see charging like we originally thought we would, where we drive-charge, drive-charge,” Soubry said. “We are starting to play with range extenders, whether it be a fuel cell or



Chinese manufacturer BYD displayed what it called “the world’s first 45-foot battery-electric over-the-road coach” at this year’s Motorcoach Expo. Its batteries can power the bus 200 miles on a charge.

a small diesel or gasoline engine that allows the vehicle to charge on the fly. Then we rely mostly on charging at the base depot overnight where electricity is off-peak and low-cost.”

Wide deployment of charging infrastructure will extend range, too, Hill said.

“It will take infrastructure to put charging ports and devices at truck

stops along the highway, major hotel chains and places that charter groups typically stop,” he said.

Warren from New Flyer said the company’s battery-electric buses can be quick-charged at an equipped bus stop.

“This capability requires only six minutes of re-charge for every hour of service operation,” he said. “Buses can operate continuously

around the clock where charging infrastructure is placed directly on-route.”

Another mileage extender is wireless on-the-fly charging through induction coils embedded in the pavement and the bottom of the bus or coach. An inductive charging system was installed last year in a Scania bus and at a bus terminal in Sweden.

Suppliers said the batteries on the transit bus could provide up to 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) of travel and be recharged in six to seven minutes while parked above the coil.

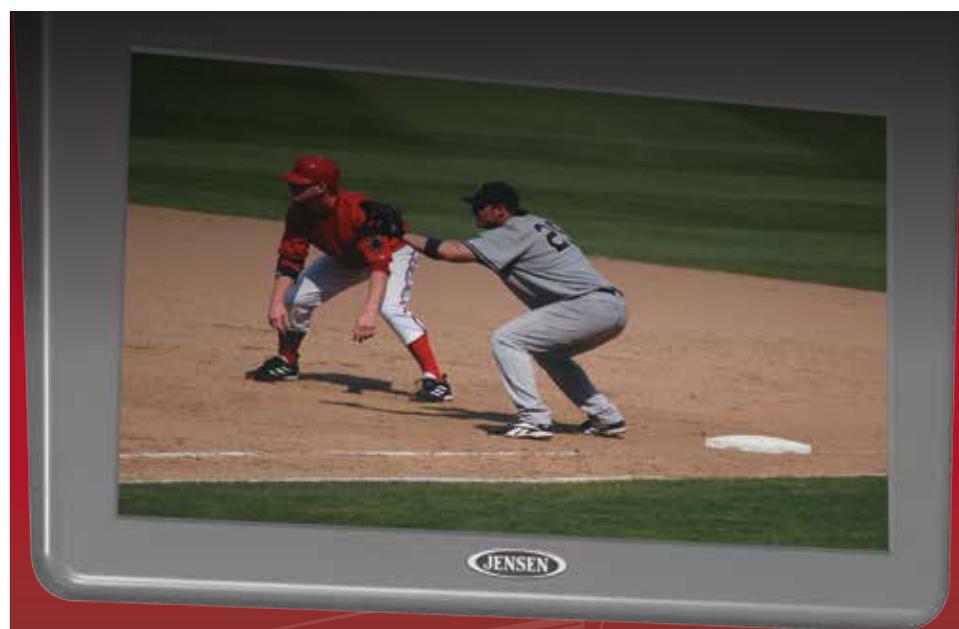
A converted Volvo bus was tested in the Netherlands in 2012. Its batteries received overnight charges that were supplemented by “top-up” charges each time it visited an inductive charging station, giving it a daily range of 288 kilometers (179 miles).

A new electric bus currently costs \$250,000 to \$350,000 more than a comparable diesel bus, Warren said. However, he said, “Under certain conditions New Flyer does project up to \$400,000 in energy savings compared to diesel over the 12-year life of the bus.”

Operating savings also are substantial, he said.

“The maintenance advantages of battery-electric buses are primarily attributed to the elimination of engine and oil filter changes, no emission system, no transmission and less brake wear due to the electric motor’s regenerative braking capability,” Warren said.

“New Flyer projects \$100,000 to \$200,000 maintenance savings over the 12-year life of the bus, depending on the duty cycle.”



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COMPLETE COACH WORKS

# NHTSA files provide overview of recent coach recalls

The following is a summary of NHTSA motorcoach recalls since the beginning of 2015:

## Fire hazards

An exhaust clamp at the turbocharger could prematurely fail on some 2009-2013 Volvo 9700 motorcoaches, allowing hot exhaust gases to leak and potentially ignite materials inside the engine compartment.

A missing coolant line clip in various 2011-2016 Prevost models could permit the coolant line to rub against a braided fuel line.

## Loss of control

On a range of 2010-2016 Van Hool coaches, front steering knuckle carriers from certain production batches did not meet minimum strength requirements and could crack and “lose functionality.” A total failure could cause a wheel to separate from the coach. Remedies depend upon each part’s production batch and ultrasonic testing.

Seven 2016 Prevost H3-45, H3-VIP, and X3-45VIP coaches with independent front suspension

were fitted with grade 8.8 mounting studs from a supplier that “may not meet their ISO specification. The bolts have an ultimate yield lower than required by the design specification. If the studs fail, the wheel may pivot in the direction of braking force moment, which may increase the risk of a crash.”

The front sway bar on certain 2014-2016 MCI J4500 coaches may potentially fail, cracking at one of the bushing/clamp locations and adversely affecting vehicle handling.

Steering gearbox bracket fasteners could become loose on some 2018-2016 Temsa TS35C coaches. As a result, control of the vehicle could “become difficult or lost.”

Some 2016 Temsa TS35C coaches were assembled with defective front axle control arm bushings. “Hot crimping which connects tube ends with solid shafts of front axle control arm joint housings may crack and tube may separate from shaft. Control of vehicle may become difficult or lost.”



Due to incorrect wheel spacing, some 2015-2017 Temsa TS45 coaches had insufficient clearance between the rear twin tires, which could cause tire rubbing and premature tire failure. Wheels on all 13 affected coaches were replaced.

## Brakes

For certain 2017 J4500 coaches, MCI reported that, “Due to a multiplexing system program error, an audible or visible warning may not alert to a low air pressure condition in the vehicle’s primary service brake air reservoir system. Parking brakes could be applied automatically and without warning.”

On some 2013-2016 Temsa TS45 coaches, output pressure from an “inversion relay valve” could change and result in insufficient air pressure for the rear axle parking brake. The parking brake

could become engaged while the vehicle is in motion.

## Loss of power

Engine and transmission electrical relays on some 2008-2017 Volvo 9700 coaches were undersized and could fail, resulting in an engine shutdown and disabling the bus.

A ground cable on some 2016-2017 Volvo 9700 coaches may have been installed in the wrong location, causing an inadequate electrical contact that could cause a relay to fail, resulting in an engine shutdown and disabling the bus.

## Seating

A possible bracket weld defect on Recaro Ergo-M operator’s seats led to a recall of a variety of MCI motorcoaches from the 2011 through 2016 model years; a Setra recall of some 2011-2012 coaches; and a Van Hool recall of several models manufactured for the 2011-2016 model years.

Some American Seating sliding passenger seats fitted to 2015-2016 Prevost X3-45 coaches developed fissure cracks at a

mounting point and were replaced with redesigned components.

Kiel passenger seats in nine 2016 MCI J4500 motorcoaches may have been installed with one of four mounting bolts in an incorrect position.

## Other

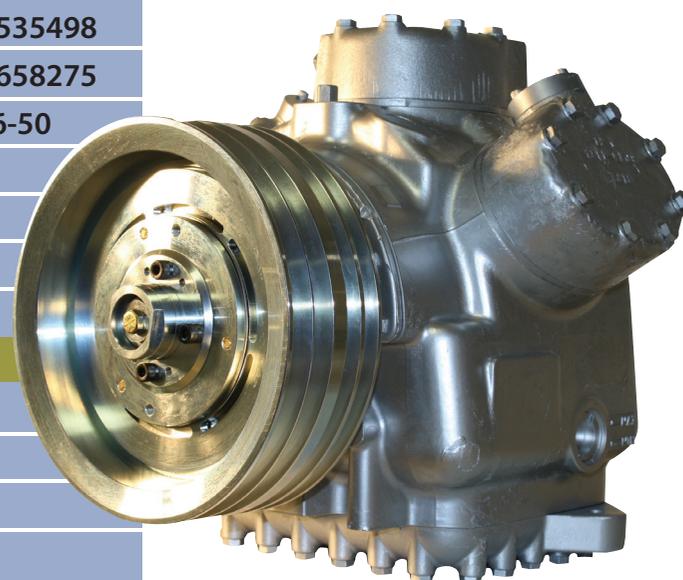
Van Hool reported that the air brake release time on 48 motorcoaches — 2015 and 2016 TD925 and TDX models — did not meet federal specifications. Van Hool believed this did not pose a safety risk but NHTSA directed a recall.

Window mounting hardware on certain 2015 and 2016 MCI J4500 coaches with single-pane passenger windows may not have been properly installed, allowing bolts to become loose and potentially permit the upper mounting bracket to detach in the event of a collision or contact with the window.

A supplier reported that cracks or fractures could develop on certain windshield wiper arms fitted on 2016-2017 Prevost H3-45s. The cracks could cause the arms to detach. The wipers were replaced with modified castings.

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47,009,0007	Pulley 2xB/2xA	02.126
47,009,0008	Pulley 2xA/2xB	02.129
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022,0004	Bearing	33.010
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## Coach recalls

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

people instead of goods, you are going to be extremely careful," he said.

MCI cooperates with NHTSA to release bulletins and diligently works with customers to update the affected vehicles, a spokesman for the coach manufacturer said.

Officials at Temsa and Van Hool failed to respond to requests for information.

The recent recall rates for motorcoaches are similar to rates for other motor vehicles.

"On average only about 70 percent of vehicles subject to recall are fixed within the 18-month period during which manufacturers provide recall completion data," said a 2011 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report to Congress.

GAO called on NHTSA and Congress to strengthen regulations that would increase the remedy rates for recalled vehicles, including "developing national standards that would categorize the severity of a recall and whether a vehicle should be operated." Such advances could include authority to declare a vehicle an "imminent hazard."

The 11 motorcoach recalls handled by NHTSA in 2016 accounted for 1.1 percent of the 927 motor vehicle recalls that year affecting 53.2 million units.

The agency listed 864 recalls as "uninfluenced," meaning they were self-reported by manufacturers. It classifies an action as "influenced" if prompted by NHTSA investigations or ordered by NHTSA via the courts.

All motorcoach recalls since the beginning of 2015 appear to have been self-reported by manufacturers.

"Obviously things are going to happen from time to time, but we are trying to improve on making sure we have early notification," Volvo's LaFon said. "On the bus and truck side I have worked on over 100 recalls in the past 16 years. What we have done is identify items quickly and take action. What you will see in most cases — which is probably the case for other manufacturers, too — we are taking action before there is an accident."

One of the largest recent recalls in the commercial vehicle industry was prompted by MCI

when its certification procedures found that some Recaro Ergo M operator's seats "did not hold the requisite load when tested" because some of the five required welds on a bracket were missing.

The issue was reported to the seat manufacturer, which found the defect present on some seats because a metal part supplier "had deviated from the welding control plan without approval."

It was estimated that the defect affected 1 percent of seats but led to a recall of 17,280 Ergo M seats, which the company markets for

bus, motorcoach, truck, off-road, military and motorhome applications.

The 2015 seat recall required three motorcoach manufacturers to recall vehicles for inspections of seat welds. Affected were 607 MCI coaches from the 2011 to 2016 model years; 91 Setras from 2011 to 2012; and 205 Van Hools from 2011 through 2016.

A truck recall last year showed how successful compliance could be when regulators, manufacturers and operators work together.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration joined forces with NHTSA and Volvo Truck for an enhanced recall effort that produced total compliance, within nine months, of a safety recall affecting nearly 16,000 heavy trucks.

The recall was issued on Feb. 16 "due to a steering shaft defect that potentially could have caused the truck driver to unexpectedly and suddenly experience a complete loss of steering."

"Acting immediately, NHTSA took the unprecedented step of reaching out to its sister agency and requested FMCSA to assist in getting the recalled commercial vehicles brought to a stop," stated an NHTSA press release.

## Insurance risk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

supposed to remedy."

Claims arising from recalled safety defects also arise rarely among carriers insured by National Interstate Insurance of Richfield, Ohio, said Michelle Wiltgen, assistant vice president and national marketing manager.

"I'm sure we've had claims that have involved manufacturers' defects. We will adjust the claims, as we would any other claim, and then subrogate against the manufacturer for the amount we paid based on their negligence," she said.

Identifying responsibility for a property damage claim may be difficult, Wiltgen said.

"Subrogation isn't always easy as the liability isn't always clear," she said. "For example, if a bus catches on fire and it is determined that the cause of the fire was a blown turbo, that might sound like clear liability. But it may not be if the operator didn't maintain the system and due to (the operator's) negligence, the fire happened."

Berne acknowledged the pressures facing carriers to keep a motorcoach in revenue service.

"I have said to operators, 'I fully understand that it can be a

very tough business decision. You have a coach that is ready to go and the day before the trip you get a recall notice. You have got to decide whether you are going to pull that vehicle out of service and perform the recall or go forward with the trip," he said.

"My job is to tell you what happens if you go forward with the trip and what the consequences will be if something bad happens. Any time you see the key words 'fuel line,' 'brakes,' 'fire' or 'ejection hazard,' you have to make the tough decision to do what is necessary to get the remedial repairs done (before) you put the vehicle in service."

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## People

ONEONTA, N.Y. — *Camilla "Cam" Morris*, who spent 28 years with **Oneonta Bus Lines**, has taken a position as manager of **Hale Transportation's** new Oneonta division.

"Hale Transportation decided that an additional division would be a great addition to their company," Morris said.

"I am excited for this new challenge, looking forward to new avenues of motorcoach travel and am thrilled to be working with young

professionals that will one day form our industry leadership."

Morris serves as president of the Bus Association of New York State.

DES PLAINES, Ill. — *Jason Rounsaville* has joined **Motor Coach Industries** as Rocky Mountain pre-owned coach regional manager.

Rounsaville previously was a pre-owned vehicle sales manager at a large northern California motorcoach charter operator and at **A to Z Bus Sales** in Sacramento.

At MCI, Rounsaville is re-

sponsible for customers in Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. He reports to *Mitch Guralnick*, vice president of MCI pre-owned sales.

"With (MCI owner) New Flyer allowing us to expand our sales regions, we took the opportunity to hire Jason," Guralnick said. "He is a highly experienced sales professional on the West Coast who has his own following of operators who trust him to help with their transportation needs.

"He is a good match for MCI because he knows the MCI and Setra brand very well, and he's

well positioned in a region where there is an opportunity for greater growth."

MCI will offer pre-owned inventory at its new sales and service center opening this fall in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Rounsaville got his first exposure to the motorcoach industry as an entertainer.

A talented vocalist, lyricist and musician who plays seven instruments, he was part of a gospel music group for 23 years that traveled cross-country in converted Eagles and other buses.

Rounsaville and his wife also

founded and ran **Chariot Coach**, an entertainer-coach leasing business in Nashville.

"I bring a lifetime of bus industry knowledge to the position," Rounsaville said. "I specifically wanted to join MCI because of its leadership legacy and to continue to grow relationships with operators in the region adjacent to MCI's forthcoming San Francisco location."



*Jason Rounsaville*

# SeaWorld planning new Orlando Sesame Street attraction

ORLANDO — SeaWorld is moving further away from its controversial killer whale shows and closer to the more kid-friendly Sesame Street neighborhood.

SeaWorld Entertainment Inc. and Sesame Workshop, the non-profit behind the long-running "Sesame Street" children's educational show on PBS, have announced they plan to build a second theme park in Orlando by 2022.

They also said they are considering adding more parks in the future.

SeaWorld already has one Sesame Place theme park at its Langhorne, Pa., location near Philadelphia that offers roller coasters, water rides, shows, parades, games and interactions with Sesame Street mascots.

The company also has smaller Sesame Street Bay of Play kiddie areas in its San Diego, San Antonio and Tampa theme parks.



SeaWorld Entertainment Inc. and Sesame Workshop have announced they plan to build a second Sesame Place theme park in Orlando by 2022. SeaWorld already operates a Sesame Place in Langhorne, Pa. (pictured).

SeaWorld's current licensing agreement with Sesame Street allows it to use Sesame Street characters in its parks. It had been set to expire in 2021. The new agree-

ment extends the partnership through 2031.

By expanding its licensing agreement with Sesame Street, SeaWorld continues to move away

from the controversy over its orca shows that attracted intense animal rights protests and an a critical documentary, "Blackfish."

The company ended its orca-

breeding program last year after years of declining attendance and pressure from activists following the 2013 release of the documentary, which chronicled the life of an orca that killed a SeaWorld trainer during a performance in Orlando in 2010.

"We do want to continue to diversify, and strategically, I think that's the main point," Joel Manby, president and CEO of SeaWorld Entertainment, told the Associated Press.

"Sesame Street as it exists today only exists on television," Manby said. "We'd like to build the actual Sesame Street that kids can be on and walk down. We will have hopefully a Sesame parade, rides (and a) show where they can see and meet the Sesame characters."

The new attraction at Orlando's SeaWorld will be an overhaul of the Shamu's Happy Harbor play area, which has children's rides and a net climb.

For Sesame Workshop, the park expansion allows it to spread its brand via theme parks during a time of intense competition for children's viewing attention.

"I think it occurred to us that there was a market opportunity to build more of them," said Jeffrey Dunn, CEO of Sesame Workshop. "At Sesame, we know that the theme parks are a great way to deeply engage our fans with the characters that they love."

SeaWorld and Sesame Street haven't decided where the next Sesame Place theme park after Orlando will be located, but they say they want to go to an underserved market.

SeaWorld operates parks under the SeaWorld, Busch Gardens, Aquatica, Discovery Cove, Water Country USA and Adventure Island brands. Manby said it's possible that someday Sesame Place parks might outnumber the other brands.

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