



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

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Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

Visit the Omnibus Society of America website at "www.osabus.com". At osabus.com we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meetings information, as well as membership information.

Please visit our site when you have a chance and give us your opinions and comments.

• JAN/FEB MEETINGS

The **January meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on January 6, 2012, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a digital presentation by member Melvin Bernero "CTA buses, through the years".

The **February meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on February 3, 2012, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a slide presentation by Bruce Moffat.

OSA Happenings

Melvin Bernero and William Shapotkin have been reelected to the OSA board at our December meeting.

If any members would like to receive their Green Pennant Special by email please let Melvin Bernero at mbernero@prodigy.net know and he will begin to email you The Green Pennant Special.

2012 dues for membership in the Omnibus Society of America are now being accepted. Dues for the year are \$30.00 and can be paid in person at any OSA meeting or by sending a check or money order to our post office box.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, CTA President Forrest Claypool Announce Installation of Security Cameras at 'L' stops Has Been Completed Ahead of Schedule

Superintendent McCarthy highlights new cameras as a valuable crime fighting tool for police

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) President Forrest Claypool and Chicago Police Department (CPD) Superintendent Garry McCarthy today announced that the Administration's project to install new state of the art security cameras at 'L' stops across the city has been completed six weeks ahead of schedule.

In all, nearly 1,800 additional cameras have been installed at 78 CTA rail stations during a fast-track initiative that was announced in June.

Mayor Emanuel, President Claypool and Superintendent McCarthy spoke at the Clinton Green/Pink Line station, where police recently used footage from newly installed station cameras to identify, arrest and charge an offender responsible for attacking and robbing a woman of her purse in an elevator a block away from the station. The same offender had previously appeared in surveillance footage using a stolen credit card, which connected him to a car burglary near CTA Headquarters two weeks earlier.

"The cameras have caught criminals but also serve as a deterrent, helping to ensure the highest level of security for our transit system," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "This is not just an investment in our rail system but in our neighborhoods. More security; more stations; more service: the CTA cameras are one part of our re-make of the CTA to modernize it and bring it into the 21st Century."

In the last five months, images pulled from CTA surveillance cameras have assisted CPD in the arrest of at least 47 individuals for crimes committed either on or near CTA property. Of these arrests, at least 23 offenders have been identified as participants in multi-offender attacks or crimes; at least 16 individuals have been identified for serial crimes committed on CTA property and at least 10 individuals have been identified for crimes committed off CTA property.

"These new cameras have been instrumental in helping to solve a number of crimes since we began installing them in June – including three murders that took place away from CTA property as well as a string of serial robberies, one involving a shotgun that happened on CTA property," Claypool said. "This is just what we envisioned when we set out to fast-track the installation of these additional cameras at our rail stations."

"These cameras are a critical tool for the Chicago Police Department to help keep riders safe and bring criminals to justice. Through close collaboration with the CTA we will continue to work to decrease crime and provide the greatest level of safety on our city's public transportation system," said McCarthy.

Since June, the Chicago Police Department's Public Transit Unit has conducted 286 Rail Saturation Missions that have resulted in the arrest of 123 individuals and the issuance of nearly 300 citations for minor offenses and 316 contact cards.

Today's announcement is just one of the significant investments that have been made since the Emanuel Administration took office in order to increase the safety of CTA riders as well as update the system and bring Chicago's transit into the 21st Century. Earlier this month, Mayor Emanuel and President Claypool unveiled new 5000-series rail cars, which will begin running on the Pink Line and mark the first time there has been an addition to the rail fleet since 1992. And Mayor Emanuel joined Governor Pat Quinn just days earlier to announce a more than \$1 billion investment of state, local and federal funds to repair, rebuild, and update the Red and Purple Lines. In September, the first of 400 Light Emitting Diode (LED) Bus Tracker displays were unveiled, to be installed at bus shelters across the city. In addition, a new CTA station renewal initiative was launched that takes a comprehensive, almost SWAT team approach to tackling all the outstanding issues at a station at once – cleaning, repairing and improving.

CTA, Rail Union Reach Deal to Reinstate Laid-Off Rail Car Servicers

12/1/2011

Terms Also Extend CTA Employment Program for Ex-Offenders, Others For Two Years

CTA rail car servicers laid off two years ago will return to work before the holidays, and a program to give ex-offenders and other jobless individual's entry-level job opportunities at the CTA will be extended, under an agreement reached Wednesday between the agency and its rail union, officials announced Thursday.

ATU Local 308 president Robert Kelly and CTA president Forrest Claypool announced the negotiated agreement, which settles a longstanding union grievance while also protecting the employment initiative, known as the Rail Car Servicer Apprentice Program—a priority of the administration. Individuals participating in the apprentice program include sheltered women who've suffered domestic abuse, ex-offenders who've been convicted of non-violent crime, and individuals recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, among others.

"This was a win-win situation for all involved and I am pleased that our negotiations will help return formerly laid-off CTA employees to the workplace," said Claypool.

"I am also very pleased that we will be able to continue to offer our vital apprentice program, especially in this economy, for those who so desperately need it."

"This shows that good things can happen when CTA management sits down with the Union to solve problems. The hardworking CTA employees who were laid off almost two years ago now will return to work before Christmas, and the second chance program will continue giving others an opportunity help improve their lives. At a time when so many are struggling, it was great that the Union and CTA were able to work together to make this a happy holiday for all," said President Kelly.

Since its creation in November 2007, nearly 500 individuals have gained employment through the CTA's Rail Car Servicer Apprentice Program, which provides full-time jobs for a nine month period to individuals referred from nine social service agencies. The program was set to end this year.

CTA Board Approves New Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

12/14/2011

The Chicago Transit Board today approved the installation of electric vehicle charging equipment at the Kimball/Lawrence Park & Ride lot adjacent to the Brown Line Kimball stop, the first such charging facilities at a Chicago Transit Authority station.

Four charging stations will serve vehicles used by Chicago car-sharing services I-Go and Zipcar, both of which are expanding their fleets to include electric vehicles.

The I-Go installation also includes a solar canopy, which will generate some of the electricity used for the two I-Go charging stations.

"CTA has long supported initiatives that reduce emissions and promote sustainability—two main goals of the transit services we offer," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "Car sharing is a great complement to public transit."

The Level 2 charging stations—which can fully charge a car in 4 to 8 hours, on average—are funded through a U.S. Department of Energy grant and city sources. Through the grant agreement, Los Angeles-based 350Green is installing 280 electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Chicago area. Sixty-one of those are for use by I-Go and Zipcar.

The solar canopy, funded by state grants and the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, will be 36 feet wide and nearly 22 feet deep, covering an area of about four parking spaces. The canopy, which incorporates multiple solar panels, will be the first of its kind at a CTA facility.

The charging stations and canopy are expected to be installed by late January 2012.

The board also approved three additional parking spaces at Kimball/Lawrence, two for Zipcar and one for I-Go. I-Go and Zipcar currently lease a total of 65 parking spaces at CTA rail stations or on nearby CTA-owned property.

Today's announcement marks the latest effort by CTA to promote car-sharing services as a complement to public transit. CTA began working with both I-Go and Zipcar shortly after both providers entered the market, and in 2009 launched the Chicago Card Plus/I-GO Card, which can be used to ride CTA and access I-Go vehicles.

CTA Removing 5000-Series Cars for Testing

12/16/2011

The Chicago Transit Authority has taken out of service the 5000-series rail cars after CTA inspectors identified a small number of manufacturing-quality issues on parts used to build the cars.

The 40 new rail cars, which operate along the Pink Line, were taken out of service Thursday night as a precaution, as CTA and officials from Bombardier Transit Corporation, the rail car manufacturer, further study the issue.

Service on the Pink Line will not be impacted. Cars from CTA's existing fleet will temporarily replace the 5000-Series cars, and service will remain on schedule.

In late November, CTA inspectors working at Bombardier's Plattsburgh, NY, manufacturing facility noticed a flaw in the quality of a casting used to create wheel bearing housings. The casting is molded steel that is later machined—or refined—to specific specifications. The casting was replaced and no further issues were detected until earlier this week when CTA inspectors noted a second quality issue with a casting at the Plattsburgh facility. CTA and Bombardier immediately began more inspections and discovered issues with other castings.

The parts are undergoing rigorous testing and while the testing is not complete, CTA decided as a precaution to take the 5000-Series cars out of service until more information is gathered.

"This decision demonstrates an abundance of caution on our part as we work with Bombardier to address these issues," said CTA President Forrest Claypool.

In addition to the inspections at the Bombardier plant in New York, Bombardier and CTA will also conduct inspections on all of the 52 rail cars already delivered to Chicago to determine if any further testing is needed.

All inspection and related work will be paid for by Bombardier as part of the contract warranty.

CTA ordered the new-generation rail cars in 2006, and tested the cars in 2010 and 2011. The cars went into full-time revenue service on the Pink Line in November 2011. The new cars will replace CTA's oldest rail cars, which are between 32 and 42 years old.

Restructured West Suburban Service Effective December 12

Effective Monday, December 12, change comes to a few west suburban bus routes, including new service on a pair of Call-n-Ride routes. The revised plans for service come as part of Pace's ongoing effort to restructure existing bus routes to improve service efficiency and respond to changes in community and rider demand.

One of the changes to come next week includes the combination of existing Route 301 Roosevelt Road with Route 747 DuPage Connection. Route 301 provides weekday service between Forest Park and Hillside, with an extension on Saturdays to Oak Brook. Route 747 provides weekday service between Forest Park and Wheaton via I-290 and Roosevelt Road. The new route 301 would be extended beyond Hillside to overlap the portion of Roosevelt Road served by Route 747, ending at the Wheaton Metra Station.

The all-new Wheaton-Winfield Call-n-Ride would provide weekday local service on an on-demand basis within a defined area in those two communities and scheduled trips each hour between the Wheaton Metra Station and the DuPage County Government Center.

Looking further west, Route 801 Elgin-Geneva will be revised to operate via Randall Road instead of the current alignment on Route 25. The change is designed to target stronger demand for transit service based on changes in development over recent years. It also provides easier transit access to the Kane County Courthouse and government center from the Elgin area. Routes 801 and 802 Aurora-St. Charles would no longer meet at the Charlestowne Mall, but at the Geneva Metra Station.

The all-new Geneva-St. Charles Call-n-Ride will provide service coverage in the area of Geneva and St. Charles impacted by the discontinued segments of Route 801 and 802.

Ordinance SBD #11-117 - Ordinance authorizing a contract for the purchase, manufacture and delivery of forty foot low floor diesel transit buses

Ordinance SBD #11-117 authorizes the award of a contract to ElDorado National California, Inc., for the purchase, manufacture, and delivery of forty foot low floor diesel transit buses, in an amount not to exceed \$167,974,976.00.

U.S. giving CTA \$20 million to complete repairs on Blue Line's O'Hare branch

Stimulus funds to pay for work between Damen, Belmont avenues

December 13, 2011|By Jon Hilkevitch, Chicago Tribune reporter

The Chicago Transit Authority will get a \$20 million federal grant to complete repairs of slow zones on the O'Hare branch of the Blue Line, officials announced Monday.

The economic stimulus funds will be used to eliminate slow zones on 3.6 miles of track between Damen and Belmont avenues on the Blue Line. It marks the last section of badly deteriorated track that will undergo repairs between downtown and O'Hare International Airport, officials said.

To travel safely through slow zones, CTA trains are restricted to speeds as low as 5 mph, officials said. The normal top speed is 55 mph. Track renewal typically involves replacing aging rail ties and tie plates and sometimes the whole track.

The \$20 million comes from the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER III discretionary grants program, which supports infrastructure investments.

The bulk of the elimination of slow zones on the O'Hare branch, more than 21 miles, was completed in 2008, officials said.

The grant will also help start Chicago's bicycle-sharing program, which will start next summer downtown and at other locations near CTA bus stops and rail stations, officials said. The Chicago Department of Transportation on Monday issued a request for proposals from companies seeking to secure sponsorships, partnerships and market outdoor advertising space for the bike-sharing program.

Meanwhile, the state was awarded \$10.4 million in stimulus funds to rebuild a two-mile stretch of 147th Street between Kedzie and Western avenues in Posen in the southwest suburbs. Two traffic lanes will be reconstructed in each direction separated by a median to accommodate left-turn lanes.

Also on Monday, the completion of an agreement was announced to begin building a passenger rail route between Chicago and Moline, Ill., in 2014. The agreement between the Federal Railroad Administration and the Illinois Department of Transportation allows the use of \$177 million in previously announced federal funds, officials said. The state will provide \$45 million in matching funds.

The Chicago-to-Quad Cities project is expected to create 2,000 construction jobs. Two round trips a day are planned between Chicago and Moline, with stops at Geneseo, Princeton, Mendota and Plano, officials said.

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The Future of Transit Fare Cards Is No Fare Card At All

John Lorinc Dec 09, 2011

After a complicated and lengthy tendering process, the Chicago Transit Authority consummated a 12-year, \$454 million deal to provide an "open payments" fare system for Windy City commuters. The CTA signed the agreement with the company Cubic just weeks after Philadelphia's Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority concluded its own \$129.5 million open payments contract.

In both cases, transit riders will be able to pay fares with credit or debit cards that have radio frequency identification (RFID) chips, which allow for so-called "contactless" transactions.

Open payments is considered the next stage in the evolution of fare media - a step up from the advent of reloadable proprietary cards issued by transit agencies. By allowing riders to tap bank cards and eventually smart phones on contactless readers as they board vehicles or enter subway stations, transit agencies believe they can make life simpler for harried commuters. Large financial institutions and credit card companies have pushed hard for this technology in recent years because fares represent a major new retail market previously controlled by transit agencies.

"It gets the CTA out of issuing private currency," observes Eric Reese, the CTA's general manager of business development, noting that the authority will save \$5 million a year because it will no longer have to issue and administer fare media. "You don't have to constantly buy new cards."

Other cities have experimented with something similar. Salt Lake City operates a small-scale open fare system on its bus fleet while transit authorities in New York and New Jersey have run pilots in partnership with Mastercard. Other agencies have tried to launch open payment systems, but with less success. The Toronto Transit Commission in mid-2010 put out a hastily written request for proposals but that effort attracted only a single bidder. The plan died on the vine due to changes in local political priorities. Washington's Metro system has also been pursuing an open payments strategy, but is still in the RFP stage.

With these deals signed, Chicago and Philadelphia became the first large-scale early adopters for open payments, at least in North America. The CTA carried 517 million riders in 2010 and generated over half a billion dollars in fare revenue, according to spokesman Brian Steele; SEPTA provided 235 million unlinked trips and brought in \$426 million in revenue for fiscal 2010.

In Chicago's case, CTA officials, with encouragement from Mayor Rahm Emanuel, pressed ahead with the huge contract because Cubic agreed to absorb a significant amount of the financial risk associated with the implementation, says Reese. The contract stipulates that Cubic's service charges will remain frozen for the life of the deal, which protects the CTA from price

escalation. And while ACS required an upfront payment from SEPTA for its open fare system, Cubic only gets paid once the Chicago system is installed and working, he added. "They're incentivized to push forward with having cards in the hands of customers."

Improvements slated for new CTA rail cars

Color LED signs, better protection for seat fabric among upgrades

By **Jon Hilkevitch**, Chicago Tribune reporter

December 15, 2011

Although only 40 of the 706 new rail cars the CTA ordered are in service, renovations already are planned to improve the experience for customers, transit officials said Wednesday.

Full-color LED destination signs will be added to the front and sides of all new rail cars, inside and outside, to match the corresponding color-coded rail lines, officials said.

The 40 new 5000 Series cars currently in service exclusively on the Pink Line are equipped with yellow LED signs, which can be confusing to customers. The destination signs say "Loop" or "Cermak" to designate whether the trains are inbound or outbound. But they lack other identifying information to let customers on platforms know that the trains operate on the Pink Line.

"Full-color LEDs were not commercially available when the technical specifications were written, but they are now readily available at a reasonable cost," CTA spokesman Brian Steele said.

The color LED signs (blue, brown, green, orange, pink, purple, red and yellow, for each of the eight lines) will be installed on all 706 cars by the fall, he said.

In addition, a fiber protector will be applied to all rail car cloth seats to ward off bacteria and fungi and to resist stains, officials said.

"New seat cloth with anti-stain and anti-microbial fiber protector incorporated into the fabric was not yet developed when the original specification was prepared" in 2006, Steele said.

Other improvements include modifications to audio and video equipment and federally mandated changes to high-efficiency motors on the trains, which are made in Plattsburgh, N.Y., by Bombardier Transportation, officials said.

The changes will cost about \$8.5 million, according to CTA records. But the transit agency won't pay the additional amount because credits were factored into the \$1.14 billion contract, CTA spokeswoman Molly Sullivan said.

The new rail cars feature alternating current propulsion to deliver a smoother ride, electronic route maps, security cameras and aisle-facing seats. Delivery of all

706 cars is scheduled through 2014, officials said. The new fleet will replace trains that were made between 1969 and 1978.

The new cars are also equipped with a suspension system that levels the car floor with platforms at stations so people using wheelchairs can board and exit without using ramps, officials said. The use of ramps can keep trains at stations longer, officials said.

Also on Wednesday, the CTA board approved the installation of electric vehicle chargers at the park-and-ride lot near the Brown Line Kimball station at Kimball and Lawrence avenues. Four charging stations will serve electric vehicles used by I-Go and Zipcar car-sharing services.

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Keller Transportation Takes Charter Luxury to a Whole New Level with a New, Customized MCI® J4500

SCHAUMBURG, IL — December 12, 2011 — Keller Transportation General Manager David Richardson finds that today's charter coach customer is someone who might have been a frequent flyer or long-distance driver only a few years ago. "Flying has gotten a lot more inconvenient and driving alone has gotten too expensive and time-consuming," he observes.



Of course, it helps to have an affordable transportation alternative that busy people can't refuse.

Waldorf, Maryland-based Keller has just added a customized MCI J4500 to the part of its fleet dedicated to the high-end business traveler who needs to work comfortably and productively on the road. Keller's roomy 50-seat coach is powered by a Cummins ISX clean-diesel engine and an Allison B500 transmission and features all the amenities necessary to create a rolling office, conference and meeting space — Wi-Fi, wood grain-look floors and Bosch AV equipment for in-coach programming.

The maiden voyage of the new coach — part of the company's 65-coach, all-MCI fleet — is carrying a group

of U.S. Congressional staffers to a regional meeting. "People are becoming more open-minded about coach travel once they realize that it's not the bus they had to ride in college," says Richardson. "Today, organizations can transport whole departments to meetings and conferences on a single coach and they can easily bring their work on board and get ready with their colleagues," said Richardson. As the company has refocused from public commuter transport to charter operations, he notes, "In the last two years alone, our charter business is up 65 percent."

Keller's new J4500 includes ten 110-volt back-of-seat outlets for laptops and safety features including an Amerex fire suppression system and a SmartWave® tire pressure monitoring system that come standard.

Keller Transportation's history began in 1927 when Ernest Keller began providing school bus transportation for the Charles County Public School System. The company still operates school transportation, but it began its life as a coach operator in 1968 and made its first new coach purchase an MCI MC-8 in 1978.

Keller Transportation has been all-MCI since then. "MCI is the workhorse of the motor coach industry," says Richardson. "We've watched MCI go through a lot of changes through the years, and MCI's always been loyal to us, so we've stayed loyal to MCI."

Keller's website is www.kellerbus.com.

Delaware Express Adds Two New Clean-Diesel, MCI® J4500 Coaches Equipped With Three-Point Passenger Seatbelts to Fast-Growing Fleet

SCHAUMBURG, IL — December 9, 2011 — Delaware Express began as a glimmer of an idea in the mind of President Gerry Frenze when he was an undergraduate work/study student at the University of Delaware.



Nearly 30 years later, it's one of the state's major independent transportation companies and growing fast with MCI. The Newark, Delaware-based company is adding two new MCI J4500 coaches this year and another two in 2012.

"I was working in the accounts payable department at the university, and I learned how much they were paying for bus service," said Frenze, who turned that discovery into a paid education in the transportation business.

As a senior marketing student in 1982, Frenze realized there were some favorable trends, the most important one being the federal deregulation of the transportation industry that year. He would start his company as an airport shuttle and town car business, and then added full-size coach transport after 9/11. "Right after 9/11, the shuttle business fell through the floor, and we decided to add tours and charters to even things out," said Frenze. "That's worked out very well for us. When shuttles are slow, the buses are busy" along the East Coast routes the company runs from Canada to Florida with its 20-coach fleet. The 110-employee company has 60 vehicles total, including vans and limousines.

The two new J4500s have rounded out Delaware Express's 20-coach all-MCI fleet. Marketing safety and technology for 2012, Delaware Express equipped the high end models with three-point passenger seatbelts, Wi-Fi, satellite television, power outlets, and drivecam. Standard features on the model include a smooth wide-ride suspension, Electronic Stability Control, a SmartWave® tire pressure monitoring and Amerex fire suppression system. Delaware Express also added a custom galley for snack and beverage service.

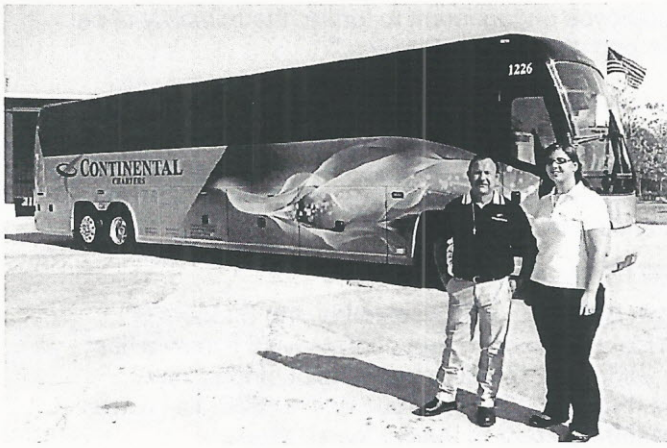
"We like MCI because the J4500 model has great curb appeal and repair and service is the best," said Frenze.

Asked what he likes best about his business, Frenze responds, "Helping to make the customers special occasions more enjoyable."

Delaware Express is a member of UMA and ABA. Its website is www.delexpress.com.

Continental Bus Lines celebrates 10th anniversary, adds another luxurious MCI® J4500 coach

SCHAUMBURG, IL — December 8, 2011 — Houston-based Continental Bus Lines has put its third MCI J4500 coach into service. The company purchased its first J4500 in 2010 and added another in May. Its newest J4500 features an upscale interior and comes equipped with the latest clean-diesel engine technology.



Jose Morales, who founded Continental in 2001 with a pre-owned MCI, has built his business to a fleet of eight motor coaches; nearly all are later models. His daughter Marylynn Alvarez, general manager, attributes the company's rapid growth to providing clients with exceptional customer service. "Our goal is to be the best," said Alvarez. "Our customers enjoy our newer fleet, especially the J4500 model — we have it out a lot."

Continental's newest J4500 features the latest model upgrades including a smooth-handling, wide-ride suspension, electronic stability control, Amerex fire suppression system, and the SmartWave® tire pressure monitoring system. Added options include three-point passenger seatbelts, Wi-Fi and power outlets at every seat. "Wi-Fi and power outlets are very popular with our passengers," said Alvarez, who noted that Continental primarily runs charters and tours throughout the continental U.S. and Canada.

In addition to superb customer service, Continental attributes its success to up-to-date marketing strategies, a new website, word-of-mouth endorsements and its pristine fleet that attracts new and long-term customers. "We're very good at communicating with our customers; it's a favorite part of my work," said Alvarez, who spent her teen years helping out at the company when time off from school allowed.

To keep pace with coach maintenance, Continental built a new building that houses a full-service and repair center featuring five maintenance bays and enough garage space for the coaches.

Royal Star extends "Aloha on Wheels" with 12 green, clean new MCI coaches

SCHAUMBURG, IL — November 15, 2011 — With its purchase of twelve new 2012 MCI® J4500s, Royal Star Hawaii is showing it's all about protecting the environment and its passengers while underscoring its motto, "Aloha on Wheels." The new MCI coaches feature the latest clean-diesel technology, three-point seatbelts for every rider and a high level of luxury.



The new Cummins engine and Allison transmission package meets 2010 EPA standards that mandate near-zero NOx and particulate-matter emissions. It's a feature that appeals especially to Royal Star, which caters to an eco-conscious clientele. The coaches' anticipated improved fuel economy is a likely draw as well.

The coaches also offer top-level amenities to passengers the moment they ascend the spiral stairway and take in the crisp LED lighting. Roomy Amaya Brasil custom upholstery seats with self-retracting footrests and fold-down armrests offer comfort, while a Bosch entertainment system pampers passengers with six 15-inch video monitors and concert-hall sound. Hostess tables allow tour leaders to more conveniently serve passengers.

Safety and performance features include automatic traction control, six-channel antilock braking, electronic steering control, a tire-monitoring system, a kneeling system and wide-ride suspension with Koni shocks, all of which come standard on the coach. Royal Star additionally opted for an electronically controlled air-suspension (ECAS) system and ASA backup camera. The coaches also feature digital destination signs, aluminum wheel hubs, conversion-style front cornering lights and dazzling custom paint and graphics that adds to the coaches' curvy good looks.

"Six coaches have already been delivered, with more on the way. Our clients love these coaches," said Marc Rubenstein, vice president and general manager of Royal Star Hawaii who provides transportation for many school group charters, airport transfers, cruise ships and optional tour companies such as Royal Star's sister company, Star of Honolulu Cruises & Events, operator of Hawaii's largest 1,500-passenger dinner cruise vessel, the Star of Honolulu, and 149-passenger Hoku Nai'a for wild dolphin watching.

The Royal Star fleet is split into two categories for deluxe and value conscious customers. "Our business strategy is to offer a choice of vehicles prices and services to fit the clients' needs," said Rubenstein. "With both

categories, all clients are ensured high-quality service; clean, safe superbly maintained vehicles; and top-notch Aloha Driven drivers. It's a strategy that works very well for both us and our clients." To learn more, visit RoyalStarHawaii.com.

MCI's 6000th unit rolls off E/J line; new J4500 to support all-MCI Shriners medical transport

SCHAUMBURG, IL — November 7, 2011 — MCI gathered employees from throughout its plants to mark the delivery of the 6,000th unit off the company's E/J assembly line. The keys went to the Shriners of British Columbia and Yukon, who will use the new J4500 to provide medical transport to children.

"Everyone at MCI has an important role in providing our customers with industry leading, quality coaches," said Bryan Couch, MCI vice president and general manager of operations. "Achieving this milestone coincides with our J4500 coach ranking as North America's best-selling intercity coach, a distinction it has enjoyed for seven years running. We take great pride in this accomplishment. We appreciate the trust our customers place in MCI models to transport their passengers in comfort, safety and reliability, and the confidence they have knowing that MCI will continue to innovate and build the coaches best suited to their needs."



"Building a 6,000th unit is a significant milestone for us, and we couldn't be happier about handing the keys to the Shriners Care Cruisers program, which we have been proud to serve since its inception," said Guy Tessier, MCI vice president of Canadian sales.

The Shriners and all MCI customers should notice a new trend of continuous improvement. Internally MCI has a number of Business Excellence programs underway including the MCI Reliability Team — a management-level taskforce emphasizing the importance and rigorous standards of quality and reliability throughout MCI's product line.

Ralph Eschenwecker, who has rejoined MCI as Vice President of Business Excellence, a new position, said: "This milestone also marks a turning point at MCI. We are fully committed to improving the entire value stream to the customer with better communication, processes

and employee engagement to further the reliability of our models and aftermarket services."

Model improvements are abundant as well. Today's MCI® J4500 features a new, smooth, wide-ride suspension, electronic stability control, fire suppression system, tire-pressure monitoring, and the newest clean-diesel engine technology.

Special riders, special needs

Based in Burnaby, British Columbia, the Shriners of British Columbia and Yukon operate what is now a fleet of five Shriners Care Cruisers; all MCI models that include three J4500s, an E4500 and a 102C. Its newest MCI J4500 was built to the Shriners' unique specifications.

The J4500s used by the Shriners Care Cruisers program require special features to transport sick children, including medical chairs that can fully recline as well as assist a patient to a standing position; wide, accessible lavatories; galleys; docking space for stretchers; hospital beds or couches; additional HVAC equipment to make sure the coach can maintain a constant 72-degree interior even in the coldest Canadian winters. The floors are also heavily carpeted so children can play during their ride.

Explains Jim Harrison, executive director of the program, Shriners Care used to provide their service by air, "but 10 years ago, the airlines cut their discount on medical transport fares, and suddenly a \$500,000 annual program became a \$2 million program," he said. "We decided to put the program on the road."

In its search for the right coach manufacturer to do the job, Harrison said MCI was the program's choice based on what they saw on the roads. "Up here, you'll see MCI coaches 20 years or older on the roads running reliably," said Harrison. "You don't see other names able to keep their equipment on the road that long, and up here, we have some pretty rugged terrain." On average, each of their MCI models travels up to 5,000 miles a month on routes as far north as the mountainous Canadian Yukon territory and as far south as Sacramento.

3,500 passengers a year

The Shriners Care Cruisers provide transportation at no cost for children with burns, orthopedic issues and spinal-cord injuries to Shriners Hospitals in Portland and Spokane as well as patients to and from Sunny Hill and BC Children's Hospital. The cruisers also transport pregnant women to the hospital. It is the dominant Shriners hospital transportation program west of the Mississippi, Harrison says, with roughly 3,500 passengers a year and each coach traveling anywhere from 300-550 miles a day six days a week.

White Knight Adds Two C2045's to Fleet

"We think of them as Limousines, with all the luxury, quality and service that implies," says Ted Littell, President of Columbia, MO, based White Knight Coaches. "We look at every passenger in the same way we see our VIP limousine customers. White Knight's drivers treat clients that way and our maintenance and our cleaning staff give coaches the same attention to detail that we use on our limousines."



White Knight was started in 1992 by brothers Tim and Ted Littell while they were still in college. They began with a single limousine in Warrensburg, MO, and in 1995 they moved to Columbia, where they added a 47-seat coach to their growing fleet.

Located in the center of the state, Columbia offered the opportunity to serve the St. Louis, Kansas City, and Springfield markets, and over the years White Knight has established facilities in each of those hubs. The fleet has grown to 45 units, including 25 motorcoaches, as well as limousines, trolley buses, minicoaches, entertainer buses and ultra-luxury coaches, providing service to college athletic teams, travel groups, and entertainers.

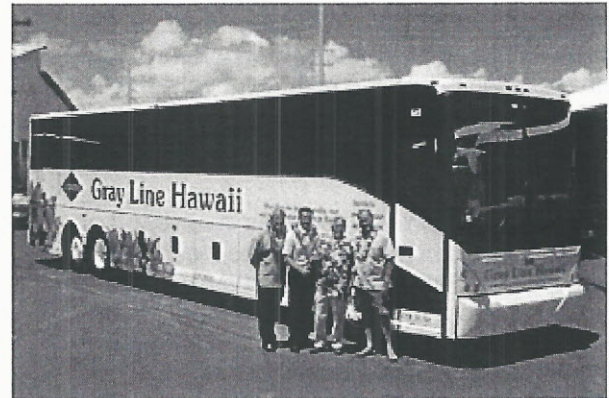
"The two beautiful black Van Hool C2045's we just added to White Knight fleet fit our corporate vision perfectly. Our clients love the unique contoured parcel rack with the REI 22" flat screen monitors. The satellite TV, wood grain flooring, WiFi, 110 volt outlets and curbside perimeter lighting reinforce the perception that these are large luxury limousines," said Littell.

In addition, the 57-passenger coaches are equipped with Alcoa Durabrite aluminum wheels, chrome mirrors, backup cameras and 3 point seat belts. They are powered by Detroit Diesel's new DD13 engine mated to Allison transmissions.

"Some unique business opportunities popped up, and we needed a supplier who could meet our special needs. ABC was able to step in and make things work for us. This is our first opportunity to work with them, and we've been delighted with the quality of service, both before and after the sale."

Polynesian Adventures Receives Five 2011 C2045's

"Hawaii is a special blend of history, spectacular scenery and a terrific climate. Each of the four major islands has a unique character and we make sure our guests experience the best of each," said Glenn Kawamura, Vice President of Honolulu based Polynesian Adventures.



"We offer luxury sightseeing and carefully crafted tours on Hawaii, Maui, Oahu and Kauai, as well as charters and airport transfers. We also recently began Hop On Hop Off Double Decker service in Honolulu."

When Don Browne and Bob George started Polynesian Adventures in Waikiki in 1977 they had no idea how big it would become. After a college career as starting point guard for Kansas State University, Bob had migrated to Honolulu and became an accomplished tour director. The two teamed up to start a sightseeing company with just two vans.

By the early 1980's the growing company had caught the attention of investors and the partners sold their interest. Bob stayed on as Director of Sales, remaining in that post today. The company (www.polyad.com) has grown to 116 motorcoaches and 52 mini buses operating out of out of 5 locations on the 4 major islands of Hawaii.

As Grayline Worldwide licensee for Hawaii and a proud member of IMG, Polynesian Adventures has managed to become one of Hawaii's largest carriers, while maintaining an enviable reputation for quality.

"We have had a long and close association with ABC Companies and value the quality, craftsmanship and good looks of the Van Hool motorcoach," pointed out Kawamura. "When we needed five new coaches, the Van Hool was a natural choice." The five 2011 C2045 coaches are equipped with Van Hool's unique new stairwell entrance, Detroit Diesel DD13 engines, Allison B500 Gen4 automatic transmissions, wheelchair lifts, 57 passenger seats with 3 point belts and an REI luxury entertainment system.

ABC's Senior Account Executive, Don Jensen said, "This is a great company to work with. Bill Meehan, their VP of Operations, manages to run a big operation out of 5 locations, without missing a step when it comes to quality. I love coming here, and not just because it is Hawaii."

A Candies Coachworks sweetens its fleet with an eighth Prevost H3-45

Sainte-Claire, Quebec | August 22, 2011

A Candies Coachworks, Inc. of Gainesville, Florida, took possession of a new 2011 H3-45 motorcoach in July. The new addition, which joins seven other H3-45s in the A Candies fleet, will be used primarily for charters. The new coach is equipped with three point seat belts, fire suppression system and tire pressure monitoring system, in addition to all of the other standard H3-45 model features.

Much of A Candies Coachworks' business involves transporting sports fans and school athletes—especially the fabled University of Florida "Gators"—throughout the southeast United States and beyond. The family-owned company, which employs 18, has seen demand for its services grow steadily since its founding 25 years ago. In fact, president and CEO Sander Kaplan recalls that A Candies needed to buy its second coach a mere three months after purchasing its first.



A Candies bought its first Prevost in 2006, Sander Kaplan said. As for the snazzy new H3-45, it's already eliciting client comments. "People say 'wow, what a nice bus,'" he noted. "The safety features on the 2011 were also huge for us," Kaplan added. "Safety is our number one priority and our clients like knowing they're on a coach equipped with the latest technology." A Candies also likes the H3-45's "greenness," which fits with the company's eco-friendly approach. Sander Kaplan is confident that coach travel will continue growing in the years ahead, helping reduce highway congestion and emissions.

It seems that Florida sports fans aren't the only ones cheering about A Candies transportation. The company was named 2006 "Business of the Year" by the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce and 2008 Best Transportation Company by LCT magazine. Sweet success indeed!

Prevost's Ultimate Commuter Coach Hits the Market

September 07, 2011

Prevost's Ultimate Commuter Coach Hits the Market

Prevost introduces the X3-45 Commuter Coach, designed from the Prevost platform known for durability, reliability, and lifetime value. The X3-45 coaches are constructed to be used in a demanding commuter application which requires reliable vehicle performance, and the coach has been 12-Year Structural Integrity Tested. Developed with a focus on transit operation concerns such as passenger safety, accessibility, low operation costs and ease of maintenance, the X3-45 Commuter features the most reliable structure in the industry which creates a smooth, comfortable ride along with excellent driving stability.

Keeping passengers safe is a priority and Prevost has packed the X3-45 Commuter Coach with many options that are designed to make these coaches the safest on the road. The Prevost Electronic Stability Program is the first system with rollover and under/over-steer protection and electronically compensates for quick reactions in adverse conditions. The Tire Pressure Monitoring System has an integrated dashboard display with real time information that helps the driver monitor tire temperature and pressure and also helps to detect inner drive tire failures. In addition, the Prevost Fire Suppression System uses a linear thermal detector and an optical infrared to monitor the engine compartment and auxiliary heater and provides audible and visual warnings to the driver in case of an incident. With a unique vertical installation of the SCR and DPF systems, the X3-45 Commuter produces less heat in the engine compartment and reduces exhaust peak temperature at the rear of the coach. Of course, every Prevost X3-45 includes three-point seat belts on a 20G rated welded rail system for an exceptionally secure passenger environment.



Passengers of the X3-45 Commuter immediately notice the large entry area through the bi-part doors with the lowest steps and shortest stairway, making it easier on mobility challenged passengers. Another feature noticed by passengers is the high interior space – a full 80" of space from floor to ceiling. Additionally, the commuter can be outfitted with Wi-Fi system, state-of-the-art sound and video, and electrical outlets at each seat to keep passengers plugged in and in touch while commuting.

Drivers appreciate the low profile which allows for easy curbside access and the ergonomically designed driver environment makes sitting behind the wheel a pleasure.

The excellent drivability and exceptional stability of the X3-45 Commuter make it a coach in demand among drivers. Even the Prevost Swap and Plug Wheelchair Lift is easy to operate and easy to move from one coach to the next as necessary.

The X3-45 coaches will include Volvo D13 engines and Allison transmissions. The Volvo D13 engine is the only engine platform in the industry that has been tested with years of real-world road conditions. Volvo's D13 engine has superior low-end performance, and a smooth, quiet operation. The D13 engine supports Prevost's long-standing policy of conserving energy and protecting natural resources. The Volvo D13 Engine with SCR exceeds 2010 EPA NOx emissions requirements, drastically lowering emission of air pollutants and offering lower fuel consumption than any previous engine. In addition, Prevost has been ISO 14001 certified since 1997, the only coach manufacturer to have achieved this world recognized environmental certification. The coach is designed for easy service and maintenance with an Advanced Multiplex System that is user-friendly and offers fast troubleshooting and quick and accurate diagnosis of vital components. Everything you need to know appears right on the dashboard display in textual format – no more code book or external readout modules. Service is simple because scheduled maintenance components are conveniently located in easy to access compartments. Of course, Prevost supports every coach they manufacture with a 24/7 emergency parts ordering and shipping program, online ordering and computerized parts catalog for immediate access to all coach assemblies, subassemblies and components. Prevost has established a network of seven Prevost service centers and more than 130 Prevost-trained and Prevost-certified Service Providers throughout North America. And Prevost's support also includes a team of regional service managers for the most knowledgeable and responsive field service team in the industry.

Broward County Transit Getting Sleek New NABI Buses

Anniston, AL. (August 19, 2011) – In order to better serve its 410 square mile service area, Broward County has placed an order for 50 new buses with North American Bus Industries (NABI), of Anniston, AL. The initial delivery, which is underway, will bring the total number of NABI buses to in Broward's fleet to 170 buses. The new buses will consist of both 40 foot and 60 foot BRT articulated buses.



"The current fleet of NABI buses in Broward County is providing the citizens of Fort Lauderdale and the surrounding area with a dependable and efficient means of transportation and we are very pleased to be increasing our commitment to Broward's future. The LFW and BRT are producing good results for our customers and the BRT buses are growing rapidly in popularity due to the highly advanced styling," says Chris Dabbs, NABI's Regional Sales Manager. All of the new buses will have cleaner burning diesel engines and many will benefit from Allison Hybrid propulsion technology. The new buses will include energy saving features such as electrified cooling and A/C componentry as well as passenger friendly seating.

In addition to using the new buses as replacements for retiring vehicles, Broward County is initiating specialized services which will use the highly styled BRT vehicles. These buses with their advanced aerodynamic style will be easily distinguishable from the regular fleet buses. Many of the new buses will have features such as Wi-Fi capability and individual charging stations for customer laptops and other devices, thereby making the commute both pleasant and productive. Attracting riders to use its buses and relieving traffic is a natural progression toward achieving the County's goal of enhancing the lives of Broward's citizens and visitors.

Timothy Garling, Director of Broward County Transit Division agrees that the new innovations and new vehicles will benefit the system and further their effort to provide the best services possible to passengers.

About Us: North American Bus Industries, Inc. produces a comprehensive line of innovative, heavy-duty transit buses from 31' to 60' (articulated) transit buses at its headquarters in Anniston, Alabama. North American Bus Industries prides itself on its environmentally responsible vehicles with CNG, hybrid-electric and clean diesel propulsion systems. North American Bus Industries is the market leader with its sleek and stylish BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) vehicles which offer cost-effective alternatives to expensive light rail.

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