



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2012

RUN 05/2012

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.

• SEPT./OCT. MEETINGS

The September meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on September 7, 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 presentation by John Beau. John received Vince Dawson's slide collection and the program will be in his honor.

The October meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on October 5, 2012, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening has not been finalized at this time.

CTA to Test the Extension of #35 31st/35th Bus Service to Part of 31st Street

8/8/2012

Buses to serve 31st Street between Kedzie and Cicero beginning this fall

The Chicago Transit Board today approved an experimental service enhancement for the #35 31st/35th bus route that will extend service to include 31st Street between Kedzie and Cicero avenues. The extension of #35 bus service is part of a 180-day experiment beginning this fall, and is based on increased potential ridership demand in the corridor.

"This extension of service not only addresses a need for east/west public transit service in the area, it also strengthens the connection to an existing transportation network that serves the Chicagoland region through the combination of CTA, Pace and Metra services," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "Experimental service

enhancements such as this serve as a stepping stone in identifying the best plans to improve our existing system while maintaining operational efficiency."

As a result of this route extension, customers will have improved connections and will require fewer connecting trips to access CTA's Red, Green and Orange lines; other CTA or Pace bus routes and Metra's Cicero station on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line.

"The Little Village neighborhood is a growing community and Mayor Rahm Emanuel's new team at the CTA, led by Forrest Claypool, are addressing the concerns of the community," said State Senator Martin Sandoval (12th District). "The Illinois General Assembly must play a greater role in providing resources for service expansions in the future."

Currently, the existing #35 buses travel west from 35th Street/Cottage Grove to 36th Street/Kedzie. Once the service enhancement is implemented this fall, westbound #35 31st/35th buses will travel over the regular route to 36th Street/Kedzie and then continue north on Kedzie to 31st Street, west on 31st Street to Cicero Avenue, north on Cicero to the existing CTA bus terminal at 24th Place.

Service along the route extension will be provided seven days a week, between the hours of 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. and at a frequency of 10-20 minutes – depending on the time of day. Hours of service along the #35 route east of Kedzie will remain the same from approximately 4 a.m. until 12:30 a.m. seven days a week.

Federal funds from a Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant along with local matching funds will be used to help support operational costs of the experimental service enhancement. For the 180-day experiment, CTA operating costs will be approximately \$600,000. If continued, the total operating cost would be \$1.2 million for the first full year of operation.

Public input helping shape Red Line South reconstruction project

8/16/2012

CTA incorporates feedback, suggestions into plans

Public feedback received at a series of recent community meetings is helping shape and improve the CTA's plans for the Red Line South reconstruction project in 2013.

Feedback from CTA riders and community residents has been incorporated into plans for several elements of the project, from service levels to community outreach. Since announcing the Red Line South project in early June, the CTA has held three large-scale public hearings along with

numerous smaller community meetings in neighborhoods throughout the project area. CTA has also worked closely with elected officials to solicit community feedback and better understand concerns.

"The Red Line South is an investment in our future that will revitalize communities and create jobs," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "It is crucial that the voices of South Side residents are heard throughout this process and I'm encouraged by the incredible turnout we have seen thus far."

"These meetings have provided a productive forum for everyone who will be impacted by the work to ask questions, share their concerns and offer suggestions," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "We very much appreciate the ideas and thoughts we've received. We've listened closely, and we're using all the feedback we've received to refine our plans to make sure the project proceeds as smoothly as possible."

Among the areas where CTA will be developing or expanding plans based on feedback:

Shuttle bus service – CTA has added a shuttle bus between Roosevelt and Cermak/Chinatown to better facilitate travel between those stations

Expanded bus service – CTA plans to further augment plans for additional bus service along some major bus routes, such as the #24 Wentworth, #9 Ashland, #44 Wallace/Racine, #3 King Drive and #4 Cottage Grove. Additionally, some operating hours will be lengthened.

Changes to bus routes -- #8A will extend to the Halsted Green Line station and #71 71st South Shore will extend to Garfield Green Line station, providing more convenient connections

Safety/security – CTA is developing a comprehensive public safety plan for rail and bus service during the reconstruction period, working closely the Chicago Police Department and Office of Emergency Management and Communications.

Supervision – CTA will implement 24-hour supervision of the free bus shuttles, resulting in smoother service and better assistance to customers

Traffic management – to help ensure smooth traffic flow, CTA will work to develop a strong traffic-management plan for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Community outreach – CTA is expanding its community outreach plan to provide project information to businesses, chambers of commerce, and others groups and organizations. Information will be tailored to specific areas.

"As we said when we first announced the Red Line South reconstruction, we understand the impact this project will have on Red Line riders and the communities the line serves," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Terry Peterson. "We pledged then to do everything we can to minimize the impact during this historic

construction project. We remain committed to that, and appreciate all the helpful suggestions we've received so far."

Community meetings will continue throughout the remainder of 2012, providing the opportunity for additional feedback and suggestions about the project.

Beginning in May 2013, the Red Line South project will completely rebuild the 10 miles of the line from just north of Cermak-Chinatown to 95th Street. The project will provide a brand-new railroad—offering faster commutes, a smoother ride and more reliable service.

To complete the project in the shortest amount of time and at the lowest cost, the south Red Line will completely close for five months. During the closure, CTA is planning extensive alternative service, including free shuttle buses from closed stations south of 63rd Street, Red Line trains using Green Line tracks, and significantly expanded bus service on existing bus routes.

Mayor Emanuel and President Claypool Announce 16 Consecutive Months of CTA Ridership Growth

8/14/2012

Announcement Made at Newly Rehabilitated Morse Red Line Station

Mayor Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool announced today that ridership on the Chicago Transit Authority continued its upward trend in the first six months of 2012—with June marking the 16th consecutive month of ridership increases.

The announcement was made at the introduction of the newly rehabilitated Morse Red Line station – one of seven stations included in the \$86 million Red North Interim Improvement project and a component of Mayor Emanuel's Building a New Chicago program, which is updating infrastructure that's critical to the city. Combined bus and rail ridership is up four percent for the first half of 2012 with nearly 10.5 million more rides than the same time period in 2011. The increase follows a similar ridership jump in 2011, when CTA reached the highest ridership total in 20 years—more than 532 million.

"These numbers demonstrate that a firm commitment to improving our infrastructure will help improve quality of life for all Chicagoans," said Mayor Emanuel. "Our residents are taking the CTA now more than ever and as we improve the stations and the infrastructure of the system as a whole, these trends will continue, creating jobs throughout Chicago and improving the prospects of Chicagoans from every neighborhood."

Ridership has seen some of its sharpest increases during the tenure of Mayor Emanuel. From June 2011-June 2012, ridership rose 4.3 percent, about 22 million rides,

compared to the same time period in 2010-2011.

Impressively, the number of recorded rides on the rail system has seen 51 months of consecutive growth. For the first half of 2012, there were nearly 114 million rides taken on CTA trains—an increase of 6.2 percent.

From January-June 2012, bus ridership is 2.6 percent higher than the same period last year, and increase of 3.9 million rides.

“While we cannot attribute one particular factor to changes we’re seeing in ridership trends, it is clear that the investments we’ve made to improve both the bus and rail system over the past year have contributed to our continued growth in ridership,” said Claypool.

Since summer 2011, CTA has undertaken and announced several large capital investment projects and system upgrades all aimed at improving the safety and experience for customers, employees and surrounding communities, including:

- Station Renewal—Renew Crews making improvements at 100 rail stations
- Red North 7 station renewal program
- Loop Track renewal project
- Completion of Security Camera Installations
- Introduction of 5000-series rail cars to the Pink and Green Lines
- Track work and slow-zone improvements

The Morse station is part of the North Red Interim Station Improvement project and provides much-needed capital maintenance work at seven rail stations on the North Branch of the Red Line. These stations are some of the oldest on the system, with most being built in the early 1900s and in need of being rebuilt from the ground up.

The continued ridership growth, Claypool added, emphasizes the need for continued capital investment in both bus and rail infrastructure. CTA recently announced a number of projects designed to modernize the system and improve service, including the reconstruction of the South Red Line, the purchase of 425 new buses and complete overhaul of 1,000 others, and a new Red Line terminal at 95th Street.

“This is the biggest investment and most comprehensive work performed along the North Red Line branch since they were constructed in the early 1900s,” said Claypool. “We understand the value that each of these stations offers – they attract businesses and residents and serve as the gateway to the surrounding community – which is why we are making these life-extending repairs that will last for many years until a more comprehensive reconstruction plan is approved and fully funded.”

The Morse station was temporarily closed for six weeks to allow crews to perform approximately \$11 million in repairs to the station house, adjacent retail spaces and surrounding infrastructure. Specific enhancements to the station include:

- Concrete repairs, painting and sealing/coating of the viaduct
- New waterproofing and drainage system on the viaduct
- Upgraded lighting under the viaduct
- New trackbed, ties and rails on the viaduct and through the station area
- Masonry repairs and new tuck pointing on the station house exterior
- New windows, doors and exterior lighting on the station house
- New station house interior finishes (i.e. walls, flooring, ceiling), lighting and signage
- Improved station house interior layout/circulation
- Sidewalk repairs and new bike racks outside of the station house
- New platform foundations, decking, fixtures and furnishings
- Refurbished canopy structure

The Morse station is the second of seven stations to undergo rehabilitation and re-open as part of the Red North Interim Improvement project. Work requiring the temporary closure of the remaining five stations – Thorndale, Argyle, Berwyn, Lawrence and Jarvis – is expected to be complete by the end of 2012, with all remaining station and track work to be completed by early-2013.

Also, in an effort to reduce future expenses and avoid additional impacts to rail service, the Chicago Transit Board recently approved an amendment – with a maximum value of \$15 million – to extend the scope of work to address additional slow zones, viaduct repairs and other station structure repairs. As a result of this amendment, customers will experience fewer service disruptions and a reduction of 2-3 minutes in travel times following the removal of approximately 7,000 feet of slow zones.

Kendall board supports Metra extension to Oswego

By Steve Lord slord@stmedianetwork.com August 13, 2012 5:48PM

YORKVILLE — The Kendall County Board has voted its support — except for one member — for the extension

of Metra commuter rail into Oswego and other parts of the county.

The resolution of support comes as no surprise, because county officials have long backed building a Metra station in Oswego, near Mill and Orchard roads.

County officials have been working with Metra on the station since 2000.

The board decided to show its support recently because Metra is in the midst of developing its first strategic plan in several decades. The rail board is gathering information from riders, the public and elected officials for the plan, which will guide the spending of capital dollars on Metra.

The resolution supports both the strategic plan and building Metra locations in Oswego and in other parts of the county.

The only board member to vote in opposition was Robert Davidson of Yorkville.

Davidson said that to get Metra into Kendall County, the county would have to belong to the Regional Transportation Authority. Joining the RTA means a referendum must be passed by county voters.

"If they come into the county, it will mean more taxes," he said.

Board member Nancy Martin said it could mean more taxes, "but it doesn't necessarily have to be."

Cicero Metra station to undergo renovation

Project to cost \$4.5 million

By Richard Wronski, Chicago Tribune reporter

August 8, 2012

The Cicero station on Metra's BNSF Line, considered one of the systems most decrepit, is getting rebuilt and will include a feature many long-suffering commuters should appreciate — enclosed waiting areas.

The station, built in the 1970s, has open platforms with a rusty, corrugated metal canopy and deteriorating concrete.

"Look at this station," Metra CEO Alex Clifford said during groundbreaking for the project Tuesday. "Is there any doubt in your minds that this station needs to be replaced?"

Construction will be funded through Metra with \$4.5 million provided by the state's ongoing \$31 billion bond program to finance capital projects.

In addition to the new heated waiting area on the inbound platform, the station will feature an enclosed warming area on the outbound side, high-intensity lighting and landscaping. A new parking lot will accommodate 136 cars.

The facility is used by about 250 riders a day, comparable to other close-in BNSF Line stops but far

below the ridership on more outlying stations, according to Metra.

Officials from Cicero, Metra and the Regional Transportation Authority, as well as state legislators, were on hand for the groundbreaking.

State Sen. Martin Sandoval, D-Cicero, called the current facility "the oldest, most tired Metra station in the whole network."

When the capital program measure was before the General Assembly in 2009, Sandoval and other legislators made the station the poster child for aging, worn-out transportation facilities.

Town President Larry Dominick said Cicero has been pushing to rehabilitate the station since 2005.

The community hopes to develop adjacent vacant property into shops and condominiums, he said.

The project will take about 18 months. Metra awarded the contract to John Burns Construction Co. of Orland Park.

Metra to Retrofit Passenger Cars for the iPad, iPhone Era

Kathy Catrambone Geneva Patch

The passenger car rehab program will help Metra riders recharge their electronic devices. Renovated cars will include power outlets and other rider-friendly features.

As part of a multiyear, multimillion-dollar program to renovate its rail cars, Metra is installing a variety of new features to improve the passenger experience—perhaps most noticeably by adding power outlets so riders can charge their electrical devices.

In a major cost-saving measure, the cars are being refurbished in-house by Metra workers.

The program aims to rehabilitate 176 cars that were built by Amerail (originally Morrison Knudsen) between 1995 and 1998. The car shells were built in Japan but the cars were assembled in Chicago. Forty cars have been completed so far and 60 should be completed by the end of the year. The entire Amerail fleet, which includes 79 cab cars and 97 trailer cars, should be done by the end of 2016, according to a prepared Metra statement.

There is a Metra public hearing coming up in Geneva, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 24 at Geneva City Hall, 22 S. First St.

The work will cost about \$650,000 in materials and labor per car, or \$115 million for the entire project, according to Metra estimates. Contrast that with the going rate for a new car, which is \$2.5 million to \$3 million, and that's a savings of about 75 percent or more, Metra officials said.

In each car, 19 outlets will be spaced throughout the seating area on the lower level of the car to power phones, computers, iPods and similar music devices, iPads and similar tablet computers and other gadgets that commuters cannot commute without.

However, when the renovations are complete, Metra will ban certain electric devices, such as hair dryers, curling irons, fans, electric razors, toasters, extension cords and power strip plugs.

Hearing Mulls 25-Cent Fare For Niles Free Bus

Posted: Thursday, August 16, 2012 3:30 am

**Hearing Mulls 25-Cent Fare For Niles Free Bus By
TOM ROBB Journal & Topics Reporter |**

Niles officials and Pace Bus representatives gathered at village hall last week for two public hearings on proposed changes to the Niles Free Bus system. One of those proposed changes would make the free bus not so free by imposing a 25-cent regular fare and 10-cent senior and child reduced fare.

Village trustees are expected to vote on imposing a fare and cutting service on weekends and holidays at their September meeting.

About 25 people spoke at the afternoon hearing Thursday. An additional five spoke at a second hearing Thursday evening.

Many of those speaking were disabled residents or senior citizens. Some said they moved to Niles years ago in large part because of the free bus. Others lamented how the proposed cuts and fares would affect them.

Pace spokesman Patrick Wilmot said Pace officials worked with the village to identify slow route points and times that could be cut with the least impact.

At least one at the hearing favored the new proposed fares saying the state cannot afford a free bus. Pace and the village split operating expenses.

After the meeting, Village Manager George Van Geem discussed the idea of creating fare cards with Pace officials.

The evening hearing was facilitated by Assistant Village Manager Steve Vinezeano and was attended by Mayor Robert Callero, trustees Rosemary Palicki, Jim Hynes and Chris Hanusiak, Van Geem and several other village employees.

Pace tweaks bus routes, schedules

NEWS-SUN STAFF REPORT August 14, 2012 4:48PM

WAUKEGAN — Pace will implement a series of service changes to its Waukegan area bus routes Aug. 19 in response to new school arrival and dismissal times, and as an effort to boost the on-time performance of bus service.

Officials said that while the majority of routes impacted will only have schedules changing by a few minutes, all routes in the area will be modified. Besides the timing changes, three routes will be realigned from their existing routing. There are no fare changes associated with the service changes.

"If we don't make periodic changes like these to our bus routes and schedules, we're not doing all that we can to provide our customers with the best service possible," said Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski. "For the most part, these service changes are relatively minor, but on-time performance is a major issue to the people we serve."

New schedules are in production and will soon be available on buses, Pace officials said, are already available online at www.pacebus.com and posted with the passenger notice for each route. The changes include:

Route 561/Castlecrest via McAree Road will no longer serve the loop located north and east of the intersection of Yorkhouse Road and Lewis Avenue. Minor schedule adjustments will also occur.

Route 573/Green Bay Road will serve the former Route 561 loop during rush hours, and the schedule will change. Also, the new south terminus will be Woodland Village.

Route 564/Jackson Street and 14th Street eastbound will travel via Belvidere Street and Sheridan Road en route to downtown Waukegan. It will no longer use Genesee or Washington streets and the schedule will change.

Routes 566/McAree-Keller and 569/Lewis will have no routing changes, but the schedule will change by up to 10 minutes on some trips.

Routes 562, 563, 565, 568, 571, and 572 will have no routing changes, but the schedules will have some changes of up to five minutes.

MCI completes delivery of 36

Commuter Coaches to GO Transit

SCHAUMBURG, IL — August 13, 2012 — Motor Coach Industries (MCI) has delivered 18 Commuter Coach models to GO Transit, the Province of Ontario's public transit system serving the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. The delivery completes a 36-coach order for 2012.

GO Transit's latest models are powered by the newest Cummins clean-diesel engines and Allison transmission for near-zero emissions. The new coaches feature 57 comfortable forward-facing seats by Amaya, a Braun wheelchair lift, overhead airflow controls, LED interior lighting including reading lights, and other comforts designed to attract suburban and other distance commuters.

The MCI Commuter Coach's standard features include the latest-generation ACTIA multiplex system with an ergonomic driver dash, as well as Electronic Stability Control, a tire pressure monitoring system and the Amerex fire suppression system. GO Transit added an optional Axion destination sign and an Alpha-Tron Altra capacitor that aids in cold-weather starts.

The MCI Commuter Coach, which is based on the popular D4500, is known for its overall build quality and low cost of operation.



GO Transit's fleet of 436 vehicles, 414 are made by MCI, carry about 37,000 bus riders a day. A division of Metrolinx, GO Transit, Canada's first provincially created and funded transit agency, serves a population of six million and carries more than 217,000 riders a day on trains and buses combined, with 62 million riders annually.

Clark Travel refreshes fleet with 10 new MCI® J4500 coaches

SCHAUMBURG, IL — July 24, 2012 — With a newer fleet of MCI J4500 coaches and an innovative sales strategy, Clark Travel is capturing more business than ever. The Taylor, Texas, charter company recently took delivery of 10 new MCI J4500 coaches equipped with the latest engine technology for near-zero emissions, a high-end entertainment system, Satellite TV, Wi-Fi and 110-volt outlets, bringing its fleet to 26 MCI coaches.



To keep its fleet on the go all week long, the company works closely with its clients, offering discounts on charter trips during slower periods. "Our goal is to capitalize on our current equipment and double our revenues," said Victoria Clark, Executive Vice President and granddaughter of CEO Morris Clark, who founded the company in 1981. "It's all about scheduling. We are strictly a charter company, and many of our clients are

flexible with travel dates. The newer coaches also allow us to offer a better product, with complimentary TV and Wi-Fi to keep kids entertained."

Clark, now 23 years old, has been associated with the bus business all her life. "It's all I know. My first words were 'good morning, Clark Travel,'" said Clark, who took her first cross-country tour at the age of eight and recalls cleaning and picking up footrests before joining the company full-time when she turned 18.

"I still learn from Grandfather every day," she said. "I am incorporating his ways with mine. You couldn't have new ways without the old ways. We're more technology driven, and uphold our reputation for exceptional service and a dedicated staff."

Clark Travel employs nearly 55 people and serves many area schools, colleges and youth groups. The company recently consolidated its locations, opening a new, massive, nine-acre, 13,500-square-foot facility in Taylor, near Austin, that includes an environmentally friendly bus wash, three-bay maintenance area and space for fueling capabilities. To learn more, visit www.clarktravel.net.

Palmetto Breeze serves Lowcountry ridership with ninth MCI 40-ft Commuter Coach

SCHAUMBURG, IL — July 02, 2012 — Getting commuters to their jobs and appointments comfortably, safely and reliably has been the goal of Palmetto Breeze's Executive Director Rochelle Ferguson since she arrived at Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority, Bluffton, South Carolina, in 2001. That's when the agency decided to replace older school bus-style models, which were breaking down at a rate of one every other day, with several MCI Commuter Coaches formerly owned by New Jersey Transit.



"The used coaches were going to be a short-term solution, but they proved to be operationally beneficial," said Ferguson. "When these coaches finally needed to be replaced, the last set was 20 years old; our board members were sold on continuing this type of passenger

safety and comfort. MCI has proven to be a safe and reliable product."

Palmetto Breeze's first four new Commuter Coaches arrived in 2006. Four more were added in 2007. Its newest MCI Commuter Coach, delivered on July 20, features the latest clean-diesel engine technology for near-zero emissions and a new, fourth-generation multiplex system for simplified diagnostics.

Palmetto Breeze uses its MCI Commuter Coaches, all equipped with audio and video entertainment systems, on long-distance routes including the 150-mile trip to Allendale. Ridership tends to be workers employed by resort hotels in the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton areas.

All together, Palmetto Breeze has a mixed fleet of 31 vehicles, providing 150,000 one-way trips annually, and serves seven Lowcountry counties. To learn more, visit www.PalmettoBreezeTransit.com.

Tour West America ropes first MCI® J4500

SCHAUMBURG, IL — July 12, 2012 — With its spirited horse-head logo, Tour West America has discovered why its new MCI J4500 coach is a perfect match. The company's first-ever J4500 coach has been charging ahead from day one.



"Passengers are pleased with their coach experience. I am especially pleased with the reliability of the coach," said Peter Shelbo, President of Tour West America, Inc. "After much consideration, we thought it was time to move to MCI. After six months I am confident we made the correct choice. We needed a coach that would help us deliver to our customers our pledge of *Reliable Transportation — Outstanding Service*."

Tour West America's new J4500 comes equipped with a Cummins engine featuring clean-diesel technology and an Allison transmission for near-zero emissions. The J4500 also has electronic stability control, fire suppression equipment and tire monitoring system. Tour West America added optional three-point passenger seatbelts.

Founded in 1983 in Yuma, Arizona, Tour West America got its start running fun coach trips for the increasing

number of winter visitors enjoying the desert southwest. Three years later Shelbo and BJ Brooks acquired the company, eventually moving its headquarters to Phoenix and building the business to a fleet of 15 coaches, two mini-coaches and a shuttle bus.

"Charter service has outpaced our coach tours since those early years," Shelbo said. "We enjoy steady growth among all charter segments. Contract service is a recent addition to our service mix."

Shelbo also attributes the move to MCI to the professionalism of Dave Dorr, MCI's West Coast regional sales representative. "His approach was steady, keeping me up to date, and when the time was right, he was right there for us."

Also right for the company was a new spirited logo inspired by Brooks. Shelbo adds, "BJ is an Arizona native and she loves horses as much as I love buses! It was fitting that a company born in the Arizona desert be recognized by Arizona's first reliable transportation and a well know western icon."

Tour West America is a member of UMA, ABA and SYTA. Shelbo is a board member of the Motor Coach Marketing Council. The company also participates in a Spader 20 group. To learn more, visit www.TourWestAmerica.com.

Idaho National Laboratory's 52 new J4500 coaches prove fuel efficient, eco-friendly, Wi-Fi ready

Bus Operations system celebrates 60 years of service

SCHAUMBURG, IL — June 8, 2012 — Experts in nuclear energy research, Idaho National Laboratory (INL) could prove the authority on MCI motor coaches as well. All together, INL Bus Operations operates 103 MCI coaches to transport employees to its testing labs and campus locations. Its newest MCI models, 52 J4500 coaches, delivered last month, are the first in its fleet to feature Wi-Fi connectivity and power outlets that allow passengers to use and charge digital devices. In addition, the coaches come equipped with fuel-efficient Cummins engines featuring EPA-mandated lower-emission, clean-diesel technology. INL runs its coach fleet using B20 biodiesel fuel made from 80 percent petroleum products and 20 percent oil from renewable plant sources.

"We're moving to a greener, cleaner fleet, and the results are impressive," said Carlo Melbiness, Director of Facilities and Site Services, who has oversight of INL's bus system. "In recent years, coaches have been replaced with newer models that offer more passenger seating than our previous models. We've lowered our fuel and maintenance costs by this move as well." INL strives for maximum employee use of the bus system; if every INL bus were filled to capacity, an estimated 100,000,000 lbs. of CO₂ emissions would be prevented each year.

To further its commitment to reduce fuel usage and emissions, INL Bus Operations is working in tandem with the University of Idaho and 5D Robotics to test and develop a new method to reduce idling and change driver behavior with real-time feedback. Its new MCI J4500s are measuring up.



In 2010, the White House recognized INL with a Lean, Clean, Green Award (a GreenGov Presidential Award) for its work to modernize its fleet, improve fuel efficiency and for its use of bio-based alternative fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. INL Bus Operations also holds an industry reputation for having one of the best maintenance programs anywhere.

The fleet logs more than two million miles annually, transporting nearly 2,750 passengers a day.

"An INL MCI coach is somewhere on an eastern Idaho road some 20 hours a day, seven days a week," said Scott Wold, Integrated Transportation Services director. "Our drivers are a well-trained, tough breed. Most have combated blizzards, black ice, and blowing dust and sand. These things don't happen every day, but our drivers take them in stride and handle them with precision."

INL Bus Operations staff totals 116 employees, of which 92 are drivers, 20 of them women. "Over the years, 70 of our drivers have reached a million-mile safe professional driving mark. This year bus driver Max Sessions became the latest INL driver to reach that milestone" said Wold. It is estimated the INL fleet has logged more than 100 million passenger trips and 176 million miles driven over the years.

INL, a national laboratory dedicated to supporting the U.S. Department of Energy's missions in nuclear and energy research, science, and national defense, was formed in 1949; its bus system started May 21, 1951, with 24 used school buses, known as Green Hornets, which transported workers across the Blackfoot route in the eastern Idaho desert. Today, the route is considerably shorter because of modern highways, and it is much more comfortable, thanks to the many amenities found on the MCI J4500.

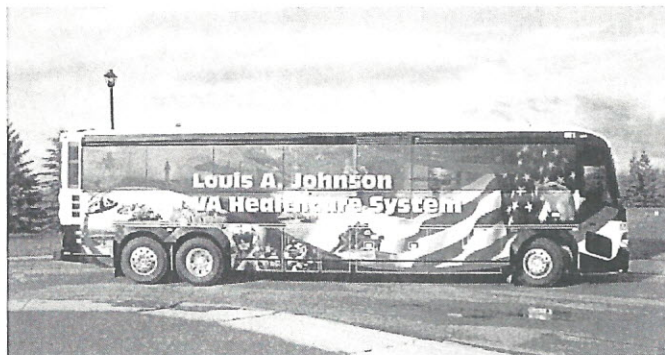
The MCI J4500 has been the best-selling coach in the industry for the past eight consecutive years.

Passengers appreciate its curb appeal, ergonomic entryway with grab rails, and spiral stairwell. A new seating configuration increases legroom by about an inch. A wide-ride suspension improves handling and offers a smooth ride. Safety features include Electronic Stability Control, a SmartWave® tire-pressure monitoring system and a fire suppression system.

"MCI offers the J4500 and other models to federal agencies through our GSA program, which continues to provide INL the opportunity to update its fleet," said Tom Wagner, MCI Public Sector executive director of sales. "INL Bus Operations demands a coach that's as reliable as it is comfortable. We're pleased to be an integral part of INL bus operations."

Clarksburg, WV Louis A. Johnson VA Healthcare System takes two new MCI® D4005 coaches; graphics package makes them praise- and parade-worthy

SCHAUMBURG, IL — May 25, 2012 — In a salute to the veterans it serves, the Clarksburg, West Virginia Louis A. Johnson VA Healthcare System's two new MCI D4005 coaches come clad with patriotic graphics. The new coaches are used in daily scheduled service to transport veterans to the Pittsburgh VA Medical Center. The new coaches come equipped with wheelchair lifts and the latest clean diesel engine technology for near zero emissions. The coaches, delivered this month, were purchased through the Government Services Administration procurement process.



For the new D4005s, Clarksburg VA facilities management services staff worked closely with the graphic design team at Motor Coach Industries (MCI), the leading manufacturer of intercity coaches, and builder of the Buy America compliant D4005 model.

"We're especially proud of these coaches," said Bryan Couch, MCI vice president and general manager of operations. "MCI's design and graphics departments created, printed and installed the graphics on the coaches as part of MCI's value-added capabilities. We were happy to help, and the final results look great."

"Our vehicles are often featured in Memorial Day and Veterans Day parades," said Wesley Walls, Clarksburg VA public affairs officer. "Our patriotic graphics not only

identify us, they are a tribute to the men and women who signed up for service to our country." To learn more, visit <http://www.clarksburg.va.gov>.

AFC Transportation Adds Luxury C2045 to Lineup

John Ferrari didn't start out to be in the motorcoach business. "I grew up working in my family's five star restaurant, 'La Tour D'Argent'. I bought a limousine to complement the dining experience with first rate transportation to the theater district and around town. Our signature touch was a rose for the ladies in the limousine."



Ferrari's Houston-based AFC Transportation intended to buy one limo in 1992, but business took off, and he ended up with 10 after the first year, with 18 more added in 1993. In 1994 he ventured into mini-coaches, and by 1998 was also operating school buses. "In 1999 our customers were asking for motorcoaches," says Ferrari. "My first meeting with ABC's Greg Gates convinced me that he and ABC Companies came from the same tradition of customer service and friendliness that I'd grown up in. They treat AFC the same way we treat our customers - first rate, friendly service, always attentive not just to their needs, but to their desires."

AFC's recently delivered 2012 Van Hool C2045 is the 13th they've purchased. Like every vehicle that AFC purchases, it is outfitted with Omatics GPS and DriveCams providing clientele with quality assurance. The new coach comes equipped with high-end leather trimmed seats with 3 point seatbelts, wood grain floor, oversized 22" video monitors mounted in Van Hool's unique contoured overhead rack, along with PC and iTouch connections. The coach is powered by a Cummins ISX engine coupled to an Allison GenIV B500 transmission.

While offering charters to 48 states, they specialize in offering chauffeured luxury service in the Houston area. In addition AFC serves a number of local corporations with both transportation and shuttles. Every motorcoach operator is a trained, uniformed chauffeur. AFC currently operates three divisions - Limousine, Charter and Transit. Among them they run 9 motorcoaches, plus 18 low floor transit and shuttle buses, as well as a variety of limousines, limobuses, and executive vans.

ABC Companies' Senior Account Executive, Greg Gates, points out, "At a time when so many folks are standing still or cutting back, John continues to thrive. It's a tribute to AFC's commitment to offer first rate service by going the extra mile for their customers." Ferrari added, "The only coaches we've ever owned are Van Hool's purchased from ABC Companies. Our clients and staff love the buses, and we love the fact that ABC is there when we need them."

Louisiana Motor Coach Triples Fleet Size in Two Years

"Our whole business is about relationships - with our customers, employees, suppliers, even our competitors," says Louis Sanders of Marrero, LA-based Louisiana Motor Coach. "We started with 2 coaches in 2010, and this new Van Hool C2045L represents a tripling of our fleet since then, all built on solid, honest relationships."



"We try to treat everyone as if they are partners and that seems to have worked out well for everyone. We spend a lot of time helping our employees translate that philosophy into action at every level of our business."

Louisiana Motor Coach serves the New Orleans and southern Louisiana market with charters to 48 states, as well as tours, convention shuttles, airport and cruise ship transfers and casino trips.

ABC's Senior Account Executive, Greg Gates, pointed out, "Louis and Mary Sanders, along with their son, Jeffrey Celeste, have more than 30 years of combined experience in the motorcoach business. Louisiana Motor Coach may be relatively new, but Louis, Mary & Jeffrey really know what they're doing and how to offer superior service. And they're really creative, as evidenced by the fantastic graphics they put on their coaches."

Louisiana Motor Coach has just taken delivery of their sixth coach in two years, a 2012 Van Hool C2045L. It is their second coach equipped with a wheelchair lift. The coach is also equipped with 3 point seat belts, rear passenger window, Alcoa DuraBrite aluminum wheels, Saucan GPS, REI entertainment systems with 15.4" monitors and satellite radio / TV and is powered by Cummins ISX engine coupled to an Allison B500 Gen IV transmission.

Sanders emphasized, "We buy the best possible coach in an effort to take good care of our customers. Great

equipment is a fine tool, but there is no substitute for customer service, and our folks do a great job of that every day. We've felt that ABC treats us the way we treat our customers and the partnership has really helped us grow. We're a family business and no one cares more than us about getting it right."

West Valley Lines Adds Five 2012 Van Hool C2045's to Fleet

Scott Habr travelled a circuitous route to his current position as General Manager of Campbell, CA, based West Valley Trailways. One of the coach industry's few executives sporting a Culinary Arts degree, Habr says, "Motorcoaches and restaurants aren't that different. The key is service and making sure customers have a really good time."



After a varied career in disciplines ranging from food service through construction, Habr who grew up helping in the family business was agreeable to returning full time when his father, West Valley CEO, Stan Habr, decided he needed help in managing the growing company.

"I'd stayed involved part time, while doing other things, and when my Father asked me to become General Manager, it felt like things fell into the right place," said Habr. "My first priority was fine tuning our staff and right now I think our team is one of the best in the industry. Our great people and my cooking background make for some terrific company picnics."

"ABC was opening a facility in Redwood City and quality support is key to any coach's success," pointed out Habr. "We decided to try two pre-owned Van Hool C2045's and see how they did. After a trouble free year, we ordered five new C2045's and a late model 46 passenger pre-owned 'Premium Coach' with lots of amenities and leg room."

The new 2012 57 passenger Van Hool C2045's are powered by Cummins ISX engines coupled to Allison B500 Gen IV transmissions and have Saucon GPS tracking, and REI luxury entertainment systems.

West Valley Lines was started by Scott's grandfather, John Habr, in 1966. An aircraft mechanic himself, Habr saw a need for commuter transportation for airline employees. He quickly figured out that the buses that were busy all week would be in demand for charters and

tours on weekends, and the business "took off." His son, Stan Habr, continued to expand the company until his retirement in 2009.

Located in the heart of California's Silicon Valley, West Valley Trailways has grown to 21 full-sized coaches and 4 mini's, and operates charters and tours throughout the US and Canada.

ABC's Senior Account Executive, Don Jensen, says, "We're proud to be working with the Habr family and West Valley Trailways. ABC is a family-owned business, and we love serving family owned operators. It's a real partnership, and we're grateful for the opportunity to serve the Habr's."

Roadrunner Acquires New 2012 Van Hool T2145

"I can't remember when I fell in love with buses, but I was only 12 when I first drove one. I grew up traveling and singing, riding all over the place in buses with my family," says Ron Wills, CEO of Euless, Texas, based Roadrunner Companies. "Running a coach company is something I've always wanted to do. When a member of the church where I was working suggested we start a bus company, I jumped at the chance."



The jump has turned into a giant leap, as Roadrunner (www.roadrunnercompanies.com) now serves the Dallas/Ft Worth market with 34 buses, offering charters to destinations throughout the US and Canada. Beginning with a single small bus in 2001, the fleet now includes 18 full-sized coaches, 10 of which are less than 3 years old.

The most recent acquisition is a 2012 Van Hool T2145, equipped with leather seats, Alcoa DuraBright Aluminum wheels and Van Hool's contoured parcel rack, including an REI Elite Video System with 22" video monitors. The coach is powered by a Detroit Diesel DD13 coupled to an Allison (Gen4) B500 Six-Speed Automatic transmission.

"We're proud of our equipment, but Roadrunner's greatest strength is its staff," Wills pointed out. "The most important part of our business is our people. We've been careful to grow the company only as fast as we can find excellent people. Great customer service is more than just shiny coaches, and our folks work hard at

making sure our customers have a great time, every time."

Bob Holloway, Senior Account Executive for ABC Companies, Van Hool's exclusive US distributor, said "Ron and his staff are a genuine pleasure to work with. They're real 'bus people', who just want to make sure their customers get the best possible ride. They bring out the best in Van Hool and ABC and we're proud to work with them."

"Other manufacturers have facilities near us and they all do a fine job," indicated Wills. "We like the Van Hool coach a lot, but the thing that has us sold is ABC's support. Bob Holloway and everyone at their Grand Prairie location takes care of us, making it easy for all of us at Roadrunner to concentrate on our main task - serving our customers."

New Prevost H3-45s provide Cardiff Limo and Transportation with cool solutions

May 03, 2012

Sainte-Claire, QC, April 30, 2012 – Cardiff Limousine and Transportation recently added two 2012 H3-45 motorcoaches to its all-Prevost operation, which boasts the largest and newest fleet in the Palm Springs, California area.



Gary Cardiff, president, explained how the company, which he founded in 1990 to serve the desert resort and Southern California market, came to select Prevost as its vehicle of choice. "Our operations manager is a former 'bus man' with a lot of experience," he recalled, "and we researched all the manufacturers before deciding that Prevost was the one we wanted."

The company's newest Prevosts are equipped with three-point seat belts, fire suppression and tire monitoring systems, and upscale amenities, Gary Cardiff explained, as well as a feature not found on every bus: special fans in the ceilings. "It's very important for us to be able to deal with the high heat of the desert," Gary Cardiff explained, "and these fans help keep our passengers and drivers comfortable when those temperatures soar."

Cardiff Limousine's Prevosts have put on a great many miles since 1990, transporting high-profile travelers throughout the desert resort area, to and from Southern California airports, and on tours that criss-cross the U.S. and Canada. Along the way, the company name has become synonymous with artfully decorated luxury vehicles, attentive service, and a state-of-the-art Palm Desert facility.

So it's no wonder that Cardiff has garnered its share of accolades and awards. It was named Access Destination Service's 2010 "Supplier of the Year" in recognition of its service to convention groups; recognized as Southern California's "Best Transportation Service Provider" in 2010 by California Meeting and Events magazine; and received top honors from the Palm Springs Desert Resort Communities Convention and Visitors Authority in 2011.

Cardiff Limousine has clearly mastered the fine art of traveling in style—and keeping cool—in the high desert.

Trinity Transportation adds three new Prevost H3-45s to its fleet

May 03, 2012

Sainte-Claire, QC, April 26, 2012 – The saying "good things come in threes" can be applied to Trinity Transportation Group, where the focus is threefold: providing modern vehicles, an outstanding safety record, and the best transportation value in Michigan and beyond.



Trinity, a premier transportation company providing coach charter service to the eastern half of the U.S. from its southeastern Michigan headquarters, got its start over 30 years ago as a sedan and van service provider. Its line of vehicles expanded through the years as motorcoaches and school buses were added. Today over 300 Trinity vehicles are plying the roadways of southeastern Michigan, including three 2012 Prevost H3-45 coaches that bring the coach fleet to 29, the majority

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of them Prevost

General manager Tracy Akers explained that when current Trinity president Jerry Sheppard launched the company's coach division in 2000, he sought a "superior product" to build the fleet. That made the choice of Prevost an easy decision. The Prevost coaches have lived up to expectations, carrying tour and group passengers that include numerous school, sports, and seniors organizations to destinations throughout the eastern half of the United States. Trinity's location near Detroit also brings in corporate business and high profile entourages—including press corps—that accompany political visitors to the area.

The family-owned and operated organization has experienced steady growth since Jerry Sheppard acquired it in 1995. Today it boasts over 500 employees, a new dispatch office with a 24/7 digital dispatch system, and luxury motorcoaches equipped with state-of-the-art GPS tracking systems. Trinity has also developed and implemented an extensive, two week long certified driver training program that all of its drivers, new or experienced, must complete.

With its top-quality fleet and attention to detail, it's easy to see Trinity successfully sailing through the next three decades.