

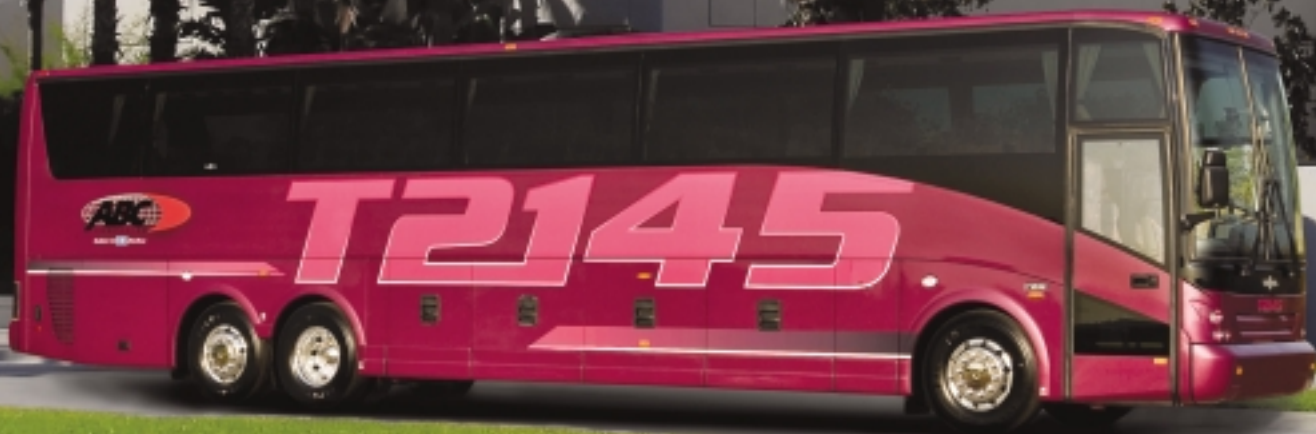
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- Van Hool T2100 Enhancements for 2009
- Prevost Adds the Volvo 9700 to its Product Line
- New MCI Improvements for 2009

2009 will be an excellent year for MCI customers. Both the J4500 and E4500 models will receive an impressive round of improvements, and even the D-Series coaches will have new options and enhancements. More than 50 quality and design improvements cover a very wide range from reliability, safety, passenger improvements, driver enhancements, and low maintenance features to substantially improved suspension and handling. Some improvements bring the coaches to higher levels of state-of-the-art technology while others will turn the heads of your existing passengers while attracting new riders. Your drivers will be delighted with some of these improvements while your service staff will be happy with others. MCI has included everyone on their list for 2009 improvements.

Where do you start with so many different improvements to cover? I have elected to start with the new wide-ride suspension for the J4500 and E4500 coaches. Koni shocks are standard equipment and MCI has included Frequency Selective Damping shocks on the drive and tag axles. In addition to some fine-tuning of the components for improved cornering and crosswind control, MCI has moved the shocks further out on the coaches.

All of this has made a tremendous difference. I recently was given the opportunity to drive one of the new wide-ride J4500 coaches and I put it through its paces by purposely driving down state highways, back roads and farm roads. The result was nothing short of impressive. The empty coach not only drove like a fully loaded coach, but had top notch handling and an obvious desire to follow your direction. This improvement obviously sets new levels of empathy between the driver and the vehicle.

At least part of this impressive handling can be attributed to two additional features from MCI. Both the J4500 and E4500 now offer Automatic Traction Control (ATC). The J4500 goes one step further with Electronic Stability Control. The ESC is used in conjunction with the existing anti-lock braking system and automatically intervenes in situations where vehicle stability enters a critical area with the added protection of Roll Stability Control.

Arguably next in importance is a series of state-of-the-art systems designed to improve coach safety. All 2009 J4500, E4500 and D model coaches will now have the SmartWave Tire Pressure Monitoring System as standard equipment. An upgrade of the older SmartTire® system, SmartWave will have an integrated dash display and information can even be relayed remotely via the Asset Tracking System. In addition to improving safety, SmartWave can also maximize fuel mileage and increase tire life.

New MCI Improvements for 2009



by Larry Plachno

The magic of Adobe Photoshop helped improve the appearance of this photo showing a new 2009 J4500 adjacent to the NATIONAL BUS TRADER office in Polo, Illinois. Your editor, with the able assistance of Office Manager Nancy Plachno, had just put the coach through its paces while driving state highways and back roads from the MCI facility in Des Plaines, Illinois. In spite of the obvious bad weather and secondary roads, the new wide-ride suspension was impressive. NBT.

Optional on the J4500, E4500 and D model coaches for 2009 is the Amarex Fire Suppression System. It is designed to monitor the engine compartment area and discharge a fire extinguisher automatically in the event of a fire.

The Reverse Sensing System will be standard equipment on both the J4500 and E4500 models in 2009. It helps alert drivers and prevent them from backing into things by sensing objects at the rear of the coach. The system alerts drivers to their presence and distance from the rear bumper. It can be a big help when backing up and maneuvering in tight spaces.

Optional on the J, E, and D models for 2009 is MCI's new Drive Cam system. It consists of two cameras, one in the front of the coach and one in the driver area. The cameras are triggered by an unusual maneuver including hard braking, impact, erratic vehicle movements, or the driver panic button. Both decreased driver-related violations and decreased insurance premiums can result from use of this system.

Also optional on all models for 2009 is MCI's Asset Tracking System. This GPS system provides fleet management data, including SmartWave tire information, to be transmitted via the Internet – either as e-mail or to be viewed on the Web. In addition, an



As its name implies, the success of the new wide-ride suspension lies in the engineers putting suspension components further outboard on the coach as shown here. The result is an impressive improvement in handling and a better ride for the passengers. MCI.



Standard equipment on the 2009 MCI J, E and D models will include the SmartWave Tire Pressure and Temperature Monitoring System that improves safety while increasing tire life. Shown here is the standard dash monitor that will be installed on MCI coaches. MCI.

optional upgrade to the Saucan GPS asset tracking system provides additional features such as vehicle-defined geo-fencing, route optimization, vehicle operational performance, and other features.

There are a few exterior improvements worthy of note. Both the J4500 and E4500 have received new conversion-style halogen front cornering lights as well as rear docking lights. In addition to increasing driver visibility and safety at important times, the new lights improve exterior appearance and aesthetics. The D-series coaches now have a new LED license plate light. If you are looking to improve the appearance of your wheels, you will find that new Designworks USA custom-styled aluminum

wheels are now optional on the J, E and D models.

MCI's engineers have certainly not forgotten the driver. The new standard steering wheel for both the J4500 and E4500 now contains built-in controls including cruise control. Equally impressive is the elimination of the traditional knife-type battery disconnect switch. It has been replaced with a driver-actuated dash switch with an automatic wake-up mode and a 30-minute time-out feature.

Perhaps appropriately, many of the 2009 improvements are designed to please your passengers. They range from state-of-the-art entertainment systems to improved light-

ing and even include an option for passenger Internet connection.

Passengers will see three lighting improvements as standard equipment or options on the 2009 models. Standard equipment on both the J4500 and E4500 will include soft-start, fade-off fluorescent aisle lighting that MCI calls "a gentle yet dramatic way to begin or end a trip." It provides a delightful high-class upgrade yet improves safety with better lighting while passengers are moving in and out of the coach.

An option on the J4500 and E4500 models will be front, middle and rear LED aisle ceiling lights. They are activated by the exterior marker lights and provide attractive lighting at night that is helpful but not obtrusive. LED blue seat aisle lights are optional on the J, E, and D models. These provide lighting at the aisle level and can help passengers moving around the coach at night.

Several new options for 2009 are designed to enhance the on-board entertainment experience of passengers. Perhaps the most important, and now standard equipment on the J4500 and E4500 and optional on the D model is the Blaupunkt Pro-Line AV System. It provides concert-hall sound for passengers and offers a variety of flat-screen TV monitors. If you are looking for even better sound, consider the enhanced audiophile system. It provides 15 audiophile-quality tweeters and dual subwoofers and is standard equipment on the E4500 while offered as an option on the J4500.

Looking for more entertainment options for your passengers? MCI offers satellite radio and TV as an option on J, E, and D models in 2009. If your coaches are used for tours, you may also be interested in the new cordless microphone that allows tour guides to move up and down the aisle and communicate with passengers from anywhere

Both the J4500 and E4500 for 2009 will feature a new steering wheel. Controls built into the steering wheel will include cruise control. Another improvement is the elimination of the traditional knife-type battery disconnect switch and its replacement with a driver-actuated dash switch. NBT.





New features for passengers include optional wireless Internet, iPod connectivity and these 120-volt outlets at the seats that permit passengers to plug in their laptops. MCI.



For 2009, standard equipment on the J4500, 4500 and D models will include this new light and compact MCI-branded compressor to improve air conditioning on your coach. MCI.

in the coach. It is offered as an option on the J, E, and D models. You can even upgrade your coach with the latest Internet technology. Wireless Internet is now optionally available on the J, E, and D models. You can also opt for 110-volt outlets and iPod connectivity.

Possibly less obvious but equally interesting are a few "under the hood" enhancements designed to make your coach more reliable. A skid plate has been added to protect the DPF filter and exhaust systems at the rear of the coach. On the J4500, service door hinges have been upgraded and body pan-

els exposed to salt spray have been treated for corrosion resistance.

One of the more important new features is a new MCI-branded air conditioner compressor that is now standard equipment on the J, E and D models. This new compressor is one of the lightest and most compact of its kind and is designed to maintain a comfortable cabin temperature in even the hottest summer months. Less obvious but equally interesting are updated fuel tank fittings and relief valves. The rear air suspension now includes a single check valve to isolate it from front accessories. This will help minimize air leaks.

Finally, MCI's D4505 model will offer a Braun wheelchair lift. It uses easy-to-operate hydraulics and will make it simpler for operators to be ADA-compliant.

With higher gasoline prices, reduced flight schedules, airport security and increased airline charges, more and more people are looking to motorcoach transportation as a viable alternative. MCI's improvements for 2009 not only help bus operators attract this new business but also impress both new and old customers once they get on board. □

MCI offers numerous passenger entertainment options for 2009. Shown here is the popular Blaupunkt Pro-Line AV system that provides concert hall sound for passengers. MCI.



MCI options for 2009 include a variety of flat screen TV monitors. Other possibilities include satellite radio and TV, a cordless microphone and the audiophile enhanced sound system. MCI.





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