

# Meet Robert Jones

## “The Prevost Guy”

by Sharleen Nelson

As important as building quality luxury coaches for customers is to Marathon, building quality relationships with both Marathon and its customers is essential to Prevost Motorhome Sales Manager Robert Jones. As the liaison between Prevost Car—the company that provides Marathon with the bus shells it converts into luxury coaches—and Marathon Coach, Robert’s mission is to maintain excellent working relationships. Simply put, if Marathon customers are happy, they’ll keep buying coaches, which means Prevost will continue to provide shells to Marathon. “My primary job is to coordinate the buying process between Marathon and Prevost for the shell business,” Robert said. “But it’s also to be the point person for all of the relationships between Marathon and Prevost.”

Robert has been involved in the bus industry for 18 years, and has worked as a sales manager of Prevost’s shell division for 3 years. For the past two years, he has been working closely with Marathon. Although Robert technically works out of his home in High Point, North Carolina, he spends more time on the road than at home, traveling approximately three out of four weeks every month. “I go to a number of rallies and open houses in support of our motorhome converters,” he said. “In addition to that, I take a lot of trips to Québec (Canada) to coordinate with people in our factory, as well as making regular sales calls to visit our converters.”

When he is home, Robert enjoys playing golf, and he and his wife Susie recently returned from a much needed vacation in Bermuda. They have two grown children, a daughter who lives in the Los Angeles area, and a son who lives at home. “Because I trav-

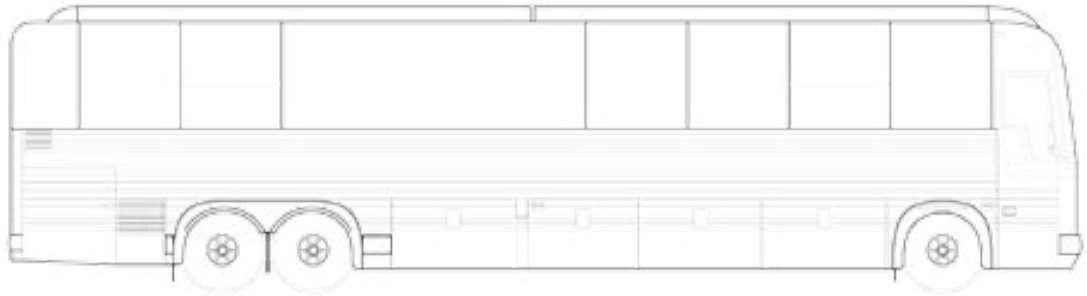


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el so much, when I am home I’m not interested in doing much of anything. I just want to stay home,” he conceded. “There are a lot of things I thoroughly enjoy doing, but there’s only so much time in a week.”

Despite his rigorous travel schedule, when he’s away on trips, Robert manages to mix a little pleasure in with business. “Although I travel a lot, my work is fun, so it’s not a real drudge,” he said. Indeed, one of the more enjoyable job duties in his position is attending Marathon Coach Club rallies. “The Marathon club has many really nice people in it,” he said. “I thoroughly enjoy the relationships I have with many of the members, and I hope they feel the same toward me. It’s as much social as it is business.”

# PREVOST



According to Robert, attending a Marathon rally is akin to embarking on a vacation travel package. "The rallies are very consistent in terms of good food and a really great group of people," he said. "The nice part about them is that because of the members' extraordinary connections, the rally organizers can often put together activities that you could not do on your own. Even if the activity is something that's available to the general public, the club will do something with the activity to twist it in some way and transform it into something extra special and exclusive."

Robert's wife Susie often accompanies him to the rallies. Most recently, the Jones' attended the club's "Sunsational San Diego" rally, during which they toured the USS Midway Museum. This proved to be a thought-provoking experience for many. This year Robert and Susie will attend "Spectacular San Francisco!," which takes place September 28-October 4. Perhaps the best part about the rallies is that there are usually opportunities for Robert to get in a round or two of golf. "When I'm at a rally, I try to get involved with Marathon customers as much as possible, so I make it a point to attend all of the breakfasts and dinners. I also attend the events during the day as it makes sense, and somehow I am always around and available to participate in the golf scramble," grinned Robert. "I enjoy playing in this with the attendees."

The business side of rally attendance is not only to help Marathon grow its business, but also to be a visible PrevoSt representative—someone who can answer questions or listen to concerns customers may have about their coaches. "The main way I look at it is that Marathon customers like knowing 'The Pre-

vost Guy,' so if they have any questions, issues, or whatever, they have an actual person they have met that they can call," he said. "The better we can make that relationship, the easier it is for everyone going forward."

According to Robert, the most common question Marathon customers ask him is, "What's new?" "It's a regular little dance we do," he said. "'What's new' is what's going to be coming off the line shortly from Marathon." Robert is also happy to help customers who have an issue or a complaint. "Sometimes a customer doesn't know who to talk with to get a problem resolved; they just really need some guidance, so I'll run interference for them. Club members also let me know little things that we are doing wrong or how we can improve our product. I use this information to help PrevoSt continue to provide the ultimate product and services."

Although Robert also attends other non-Marathon rallies, he has cultivated close friendships with many of the Marathon club members. "I really enjoy the Marathon club and the Marathon customers. They are just a nice group of people," he said. "Everyone has been extremely welcoming to Susie and me, which has made my relationship with Marathon a real pleasure."

So the next time you're at a rally or some other Marathon function and you have a question about your coach, ask someone if they know where to find Robert Jones, "The PrevoSt Guy." If he's not on-site, head to the nearest golf course and look for him out on the links. There's a good chance you'll find him there, discussing business while "working," of course. •