

February 7, 2014

# The Risky Business of School Bus Purchasing

***Why what you don't know about your next bus purchase might surprise you!***

**A wise friend once told me: "You don't know what you don't know." He also said, "Talk is cheap". At no time have those words proven truer than in the weeks since the most recent NC DPI School Bus Purchase Contract was awarded.**

Any school bus provider can make promises about customer service after the sale. But just saying you're planning to provide superior parts and service support does not make it happen. It's easy enough to say, but it's difficult to do.

We know from experience. It's hard work. And it takes years of dedicated effort – day in and day out – to make it happen.

At Carolina Thomas, we are in business for one purpose - to be the best-in-class full-service bus dealership in North Carolina. No trucks or heavy equipment. We've dedicated 100% of our resources to one single purpose: To provide you with the best-in-class products, parts and service you deserve, reduce your total cost of ownership, and keep your buses on the road.

We know we're far from perfect – but our commitment to this single purpose drives us to constantly improve in order to be the best at what we do. And we do that every single day.

Here's how we're doing it.

### **BEST-IN CLASS PRODUCT**

**Lowest Total Cost of Ownership:** We've worked with Thomas Bus and all component suppliers on continual improvement measures to reduce warranty claims in the last four years by 80%. In the process, we have achieved the statistically proven lowest cost of ownership. We have worked tirelessly to improve the bus - and it has paid off. But don't take our word for it. Compare the records of your earliest Saf-T-Liner C2s with the C2s delivered in 2012. The durability and reliability proof is in the results.

**Dash Air Conditioning Standard:** Carolina Thomas offers free dash air conditioning on every Saf-T-Liner C2 bus. You can have your choice of a 12-volt fan overhead or the comfort of dash A/C. Air conditioning wins every time. Flush-mounted rear A/C also means your passenger compartment headroom is not cramped by ceiling-mounted evaporators.



**Your Choice of GPS:** Carolina Thomas offers all GPS brands. We have installed thousands of GPS systems on buses operating all over North America. Do you want to be locked into one brand of GPS? (Friendly reminder: GPS equipment is of no use unless you're willing to subscribe to the service.)

## **BEST-IN-CLASS PARTS**

**Superior Parts Support:** We've spent years perfecting our parts processes and distribution network. This is no easy feat with 20 year old buses. Our parts professionals have over 150 years of combined parts experience. So for a competitor to say they can come out of the gate and meet or exceed our level of service is wishful speculation at best. Do you really believe this? Brand new bus personnel in all these newly-partnered parts and service locations simply cannot provide the level of service offered by Carolina Thomas.

**Smart Parts Inventory:** We have millions of dollars of parts in stock that are controlled by intelligent stocking software based on your parts requests. Our competitors say they have parts distribution centers located throughout the state. But simply having parts locations spread around the state does not solve your parts issues.

**Think seriously for a moment:** Do you think our competitors are going to stock millions of dollars of bus parts at every location across the state just so it is convenient for you to pick them up? There's a reason this is not going to happen: It is simply not financially sustainable.

**Free Ground Shipping:** Carolina Thomas offers free ground freight to every county in North Carolina. If we ship you a warranty part, we pay the return freight as well. Do other suppliers do this for you? This is an exclusive service of Carolina Thomas and a huge cost savings for you.

**Streamlined Parts Management:** Having fewer parts suppliers means less headache and cost for you. As a school bus operator, are you going to carve out a third of your parts department to add all new parts for yet another brand of bus?

**Think of the additional associated costs of:** More inventories, extra storage space, required additional training and stocking on yet another bus brand. Our competition thinks that's a risk you should take. We think differently. Avoid the risk – choose Carolina Thomas.

## **BEST-IN-CLASS SERVICE**

**Focus on Customer Service:** We're focused on and committed to solving your service issues. Our competitors talk about having a "footprint" of service locations scattered across the state. But simply having numerous service locations does not solve your issues, especially if the service provider doesn't specialize in solving your particular issue.

**Case in point:** Remember when Thomas provided Caterpillar engines in buses? Many counties were very vocal to us about the lack of support at some locations. We listened – and learned from that experience. And today we're better for it. Because we understand that location alone does not necessarily solve the issue. A focused commitment to fix the problem solves your issues.

**Unsurpassed School Bus Knowledge:** Our knowledge of school bus technology works to solve your service issues and keep your buses on the road. Carolina Thomas is a full-service bus company. That's all we do. Our service expertise makes us the best-in-class choice when choosing your next school and activity buses.

**Thomas Built in North Carolina:** Because Thomas Built Buses is located in North Carolina, we have access to every resource required to resolve any issues quickly. If the need requires it, you can call us and we'll go together with you to meet one-on-one with any personnel at Thomas - from the President on down to service, parts, manufacturing or warranty personnel – to get your issue resolved quickly.

**When you choose Thomas Built Buses and Carolina Thomas:**

- Your buses are produced in North Carolina by your fellow North Carolinians
- The manufacturing taxes stay here in North Carolina and employees' payroll taxes stay home as well
- These state and county taxes greatly support our local economies
- You are within driving distance of Thomas management, workforce and manufacturing plant. This provides you with a great opportunity to get involved in what is produced and brought into your fleet. You have access to the top people at Thomas Built Buses who want to hear from you.

**ONE FINAL REASON TO CHOOSE THOMAS BUILT BUSES AND CAROLINA THOMAS**

**Accountability:** Easy enough to say, but difficult to do. Along with nearly 1,400 Thomas Built Buses employees here in North Carolina, we sincerely hope you choose a Thomas Built bus rather than a bus manufactured in Georgia or Oklahoma. When you do, we expect you to hold us accountable to provide the best-in-class products, parts and service you deserve. This collective accountability provides the fuel for our continual improvement in every area. We get better because you expect us to get better – every single day. That's our best-in-class commitment to you.

**MAKE THE NO-RISK CHOICE - CHOOSE THOMAS BUILT BUSES AND CAROLINA THOMAS**



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