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PARATRANSIT ASSOCIATION

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tom Burns, Northwest Transportation Awarded Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year 2008 by the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association (TLPA)

WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 21, 2008. Tom Burns, driver of an accessible minibus for Northwest Transportation, a subsidiary of Valley Transportation Corporation, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, has been selected as TLPA 2008 Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year.

In her letter nominating Tom Burns, Debra Tancrell, Manager of Northwest Transportation wrote: "Considerate, dedicated, and a real gentleman are just a few words I would use to describe my nomination of Tom Burns for the TLPA Paratransit Driver of the Year award. I was so impressed with his skills that I made him the one and only trainer of all Northwest Transportation employees. The number of compliments we receive from trainees, passengers and his fellow employees are numerous. During his first week of employment, he stepped into a difficult run and handled it with the professionalism of a veteran driver. He has made himself irreplaceable. In his spare time, he goes out and learns different runs so he will be able to help out. He never refuses a job and feels bad when he needs time off. He never complains about anything and is always up for the challenge. If I have late jobs, he will take them and if I have early morning jobs, he will take them. If I am stuck with holiday or weekend work, I know I can always go to him. His passengers beg him to go to their Special Olympics contests and when he and his wife show up, the passengers run up to him and hug him. Tom is the type of guy who walks into the office and makes sure he says hello to everyone. He is always prompt and there is always a smile on his face. He has received our Employee of the Quarter award numerous times and was our Employee of the Year in 2006. In his spare time, he is a volunteer fireman for the Anthony Fire Department in Coventry, Rhode Island. I am proud to have him as a driver for our company."

Tom Burns was born in Providence, Rhode Island and was raised in nearby Pawtucket. Tom was originally hired by Almacs Supermarket, a Providence-based grocery business to round up shopping carts.

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He worked his way up to become a department manager and worked twenty-five years for Almacs until the company declared bankruptcy in the late 1990s. After a few years as a local delivery truck driver, Tom says, "It came to me that I love driving and I love working with people so I thought I would enjoy working for a passenger transportation company." So in 2005, he began his career with Northwest Transportation driving an accessible vehicle. Tom states that his passengers "do not let their disabilities define them; rather they offer their own determination in obtaining their goals. They enjoy everyday life and are always happy." Tom said, "I was invited to attend the Special Olympics for the first time by some of the young people who ride my bus. I was enlightened by the determination and will clients participate with, and I was proud to see them receive their medals. Also, my elderly riders have provided me with a wealth of information about the history of the town of Smithfield where I live."

"Compassion, attitude, trustworthiness, helpfulness and safe driving are what make a successful paratransit driver. The family atmosphere and the respect for each employee, which begins with the owner and trickles down throughout the company is why I enjoy working for Northwest Transportation! It is rare to find a job that you look forward to going to every day, but the company and the clients make it a great experience," he said.

Tom's reacted to being awarded the TLPA 2008 Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the year by saying, "It is an honor for me and my company." In honor of his dedication to his profession, his family and his sensitivity to his clients, the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is proud to recognize Tom Burns, as the TLPA 2008 Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year.

The Taxicab, Limousine, & Paratransit Association established in 1917, is an international organization representing owners and managers of taxicab, limousine, sedan, airport shuttle, paratransit, and non-emergency medical fleets. TLPA consists of more than 1,000 member companies operating more than 100,000 passenger vehicles, which transport over 2 million passengers each day, more than 900 million passengers annually. This for-hire vehicle industry is vital to a community's commerce and mobility, aiding in the relief of traffic congestion while promoting environmental improvements. The specialized paratransit services furnish more than half of the transportation needs of the physically challenged, while other facets of the industry provide feeder services to major transit stations and airports. The elderly and economically disadvantaged rely on the industry for fast, affordable transportation.

Please note: An electronic copy of this press release and a photograph of Tom Burns are available from a link at TLPA's web site at www.tlpa.org.