

# Class of 2010: The Winners Are...

The annual Industry Achievement Awards Gala is the crowning jewel of The Limo Digest Show where we celebrate the industry's professionals who will lead us into the future. To be held in the highest regard as a leader in one's field—whether as a finalist or a winner—is not only an honor, but validation of one's professional achievements. Congratulations to all of the nominees, finalists, and winners. We present the Class of 2010.



## Association of the Year

### WINNER: COLORADO LIMOUSINE ASSOCIATION

The Colorado Limousine Association (CLA), currently led by President Doug Pooley, has been a pivotal force for operators in the state. Whether it was working with the airport advisory board on a shelter for chauffeurs, working with area schools to combat prom drinking, or simply providing members with timely educational speakers, the CLA is doing its part to help all operators in the state. Perhaps its proudest achievement in 2010 was assisting in drafting, obtaining a sponsor, and helping to get legislation passed that would require specialized “limo” plates for Colorado operators starting in 2011. The plates may help to identify and enforce legal operation of limousines.

The CLA also gives back to the community. Each year many of its 40-plus members participate in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in Denver where Make-A-Wish kids are given the opportunity to ride in the procession. It also provides monetary and in-kind contributions to a local school so that each student has the necessary tools—like pencils and notebooks—to learn. Also, the class with the highest percentage of attendance is treated to a limousine ride at the end of the school year.



## Community Service

### Finalists:

Apollo Transportation Services in Boca Raton, Florida  
Red Limo in Miami, Florida

### WINNER:

## APOLLO TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Apollo has been led by President Rebekah Urbina and her husband, Mauricio, since opening its doors in 1988. Apollo has made community outreach a core value in its business model from the very beginning. Just some of its charitable efforts include supporting the United Way, the Unicorn Foundation, and the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation; working with the Pajama Program, which delivers cozy PJs and nurturing books to children in need; and providing free wedding transportation for a returning Iraqi war veteran.

Apollo also became a certified woman-owned business in 2010. The company runs a mix of sedans and SUVs, and it recently added a Lexus hybrid as part of its aggressive green efforts.



## Image

### Finalists:

Cooper-Atlanta Transportation Services in Atlanta, Ga.  
ETS International in Quincy, Mass.  
Reston Limousine in Dulles, Va.

### WINNER: RESTON LIMOUSINE

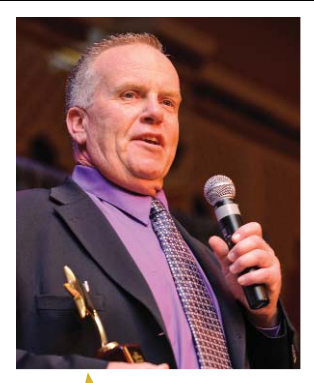
Reston Limousine was founded in 1990 by William Bouweiri and has been operated by his wife, Kristina Bouweiri, since 1991. Reston has grown to become the largest private and shuttle service in our nation's capital with over 250 employees and 145-plus vehicles. In the tough-as-nails Washington, D.C. market where image is everything, it takes a savvy businesswoman like Bouweiri to stay ahead of the curve of not only what her clients demand today, but will expect tomorrow. While this award is often given to a company that has the best collateral, Bouweiri herself, through her personal involvement in her market, represents the company's image best. She's a fierce marketer and networker, which has netted her some serious recognition from professional journals and local organizations, to name a few. Bouweiri also was awarded Limo Digest's Community Service award in 2008 for her involvement in—and the company's annual donation of over \$100,000 (cash and in-kind gifts) to—over a dozen charities and organizations. Bouweiri has spoken at many industry events and was recently the first woman panelist for The Limo Digest Show's State of the Industry.



## Employee of the Year

### WINNER: THOMAS WALKER OF NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN HENDERSON, NEVADA

Thomas Walker became part of the National family in 2000, working his way up to lead chauffeur and now chauffeur trainer. In the 10 years that he has been with the company, not a single complaint has been filed against him—an impressive record considering that he has driven for many of NTS' most demanding Fortune 500 and celebrity customers. The fact that Walker is fluent in several European languages is also a boon for the company's international clientele. But it's his effervescent attitude, unwavering commitment to customer service, and a deep generosity to his co-workers and community that makes him so valuable to National, according to company owner Ron Steinberg.



## Chauffeur of the Year

### WINNER: JOSEPH THURBIDE OF ETS INTERNATIONAL IN QUINCY, MASS. (TIE)



Joseph "Buddy" Thurbide joined the industry in 1991 as a chauffeur when he was asked to drive for his sister's wedding. Although he took a 5-year sabbatical from the industry to pursue a career in oil drilling, he reconnected with his former employer, Johnny Greene, and joined ETS shortly after. Now a 20-year veteran chauffeur, he has built his career on one simple philosophy: Treat every job the same regardless of status and always be respectable. This credo has earned him repeated praise from celebrity and corporate clients alike. He has even been featured in the local newspaper for his commitment to not only ETS, but the industry.



### WINNER: MADELYN TORRES OF TORGRO WORLDWIDE TRANSPORTATION IN ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (TIE)

Madelyn Torres commanded her first limousine only 5 years ago in late 2005, but quickly became one of the company's in-demand chauffeurs. In fact, it was one of the company's longtime customers—who personally requests her each and every time he uses the service—who nominated her for the award. The first-time chauffeur was trained with the assistance of Tom Mazza, the industry's leading consultant who was working with Torgro to recraft its chauffeur training. Torres has not only won the praises of her customers, but she has impressed several staff members of Limo Digest who have had the good fortune to land in the back of her vehicle (Torgro has been the official transportation provider of The Limo Digest Show for several years). Professional, courteous, prompt, and polite are just a few of the attributes that her customers ascribe to the experience.





## Small Operator of the Year (10 vehicles or less)

### Finalists:

- International Livery Services in Beverly Hills, Calif.
- Panama Luxury Limousine in Panama City, Panama
- Red Limo in Miami, Florida
- Two Step Limousine in Littleton, Colorado

**WINNER: TWO STEP LIMOUSINE**



**President/founder:** Barbara Curtis

**Years in business:** 15

**Fleet:** 10

**Headquarters:** Littleton, Colorado

**Community involvement:** Make-A-Wish Foundation, Girl Scouts, local high schools including the Columbine High School Library Fund

After two disappointing limousine experiences for her son, Walter, during his junior and senior proms, Barbara Curtis knew she could do it better and definitely more professionally. This idea came to fruition in 1995 when she opened Two Step Limousine, which today operates 10 vehicles throughout Colorado. Walter joined the company a few years later and is now vice president of the family-owned company. It's no surprise that the Curtises have a soft spot for prom-goers and work extra-hard to ensure a wonderful experience.

Two Step has contracts with all of the major ski resorts in the Denver area, which is a sizeable portion of its business during the winter months. The company also handled the transportation needs for the 2008 Democratic National Convention, which was based in Denver. Barbara, who runs Two Step with a spotless record with the Better Business Bureau, has a long history with the Colorado Limousine Association, of which she was president and vice president. She is an active member of the NLA, of which she is secretary, and she frequently participates in the NLA's Day on the Hill.

## Midsize Operator of the Year (11-30 vehicles)

### Finalists:

- AAA Worldwide Transportation in Clinton, N.J.
- Apollo Transportation Services in Boca Raton, Florida
- Premier Transportation Worldwide Chauffeured Services in Minneapolis, Minnesota



**WINNER: PREMIER  
TRANSPORTATION  
WORLDWIDE CHAUFFEURED  
SERVICES**



**President/founder:** Janet Cherrier

**Years in business:** 20+

**Fleet:** 30

**Headquarters:** Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Community involvement (partial list):** Ronald McDonald House, Make-A-Wish Foundation, United Way, American Diabetes Association

President Janet Cherrier purchased her first car in 1989 and incorporated Premier Transportation a year later. The company, which had provided transportation since 1965 in the Twin Cities area, already had a solid reputation, but Cherrier aggressively grew Premier over the next 20 years. In 1996, she expanded the company nationwide to serve 550 cities in over 65 countries ... and still growing. Through several acquisitions and building a strong reputation, today the company is the Minneapolis area's largest and oldest service, with over 100 employees and 30 vehicles.

Premier has been an active member of the Minnesota Chauffeured Transportation Association, NLA, and Meeting Professionals International. The company has won local and statewide awards and was a previous finalist for Limo Digest's Midsize Operator of the Year. Premier has handled large-scale events such as the 2008 Republican National Convention, Super Bowl, and PGA Tour.



## Large Operator of the Year (31+ vehicles)

### Finalists:

Black Tie Limousine in Haverhill, Mass.

Cooper-Atlanta Transportation Services in Atlanta, Ga.

RMA Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation in Rockville, Md.

## WINNER: BLACK TIE LIMOUSINE (TIE)

**Founder/president:** Mark Mollica

**Years in business:** 27

**Fleet:** 40+

**Headquarters:** Haverhill, Mass.

**Community involvement (partial list):** Make-A-Wish Foundation, Angel Flight, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute



Founded by Mark Mollica in 1983 as a side business, Black Tie almost didn't see its 5th anniversary. The first few years, Mollica had to supplement his income by working as a bartender at night while running the shuttle service during the day. He was able to hang up his bartending career in 1987, and the home-based business moved to its first office two years later. With a lot of determination and faith, the company today is in its 27th year with a fleet of over 40, 70 employees, and a 66,000-square-foot facility.

Mollica is also a founding member of the New England Livery Association, of which he is an active member and currently serves on its board of directors. His company, including the incredible 1960 Rolls-Royce once owned by actor Nicolas Cage on display in the company's lobby, has been featured in numerous local and regional publications.

## WINNER: RMA WORLDWIDE CHAUFFEURED TRANSPORTATION (TIE)



**Founder/president:** Robert Alexander

**Years in business:** 19+

**Fleet:** 100+

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C.

**Community involvement (partial list):** National Foundation for Cancer Research, The American Cancer Society, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Special Olympics

President, CEO, and entrepreneur Robert Alexander founded Errands Plus, which was a business that performed everyday tasks for customers who were too busy to do them themselves, when he was in still in college in 1988. The initial idea came from his senior thesis, which focused on how America changed from an industrial to a service economy. But it was in 1992 when RMA was officially born. The company has grown to over 100 vehicles and 150 employees in two decades, and RMA is now one of Washington's most respected services.

Alexander is also a tireless industry member who was one of the founders of the Washington Metropolitan Limousine Association and is currently an active board member of the NLA. He is a frequent attendee of the NLA's Day on the Hill. In addition, Alexander has contributed to industry publications, has been on the panel of experts for The Limo Digest Show's State of the Industry, and has been a featured seminar speaker.

To read more about RMA, refer to the May 2009 issue of Limo Digest. **LD**

