

the

Fall 2013

# ROAD Explorer

## Ottawa – A Capital Outing



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# Hammond Transportation Limited

by Jeffrey Reed



Hammond Transportation coach at NASCAR hall of Fame.

In 1944, the principal of Bracebridge High School advised 14-year-old Orvil Hammond to quit school and enter the working world. Heeding the schoolmaster's advice, Hammond entered the world

of entrepreneurship, purchasing a 1938 Ford Sedan as the single vehicle within his new taxi business. Soon afterward, his father, Harold, joined the family business – Hammond's Taxi.

Today, with a complete fleet of vehicles and close to 200 employees working within its travel and tour divisions – Hammond Transportation Ltd., and Muskoka Travel Service – the company owns a well-deserved



reputation as a leader in the Ontario transportation industry.

Seventy-two years after he took his principal's advice, Orvil Hammond remains involved with the company as its president, but his son, Greg, has overseen much of the family business since 2006. In fact, a fourth generation is now at the wheel of Hammond Transportation as it continues to expand, relying on unique diversity as its growth engine.

Hammond Transportation operations include school bus, charter bus and tour services. With a fleet of more than 175 vehicles serving the Muskoka, Parry Sound, North Simcoe, Haliburton and Algonquin Park areas, the bus company operates from coast to coast in Canada and throughout much of the United States, while Muskoka Travel Service operates tours throughout North America and as far afield as Europe and Australia.

"Our vehicles service those key areas, but we're also licensed to operate

**Like the entire Hammond Transportation company, Muskoka Travel has thrived under controlled growth, thanks largely to its people, who include many long-time, dedicated employees.**

within a wide stretch of central Ontario," said Greg Hammond, a director with the Ontario Motor Coach Association. "Our school bus and charter operations make up a significant portion of our business – they're nice-size operations which could stand on their own – and our Muskoka Travel Service is the smallest component. But they all complement each other."

### **From Small Enterprise to Local Institution**

As Hammond's Taxi grew, first adding a panel van equipped with side seats to transport students to and from school, followed by trucks and ambulances, it became clear that a more encompassing name was necessary to reflect changing business:

Hammond Transportation Ltd. By the mid-1970s, Hammond Transportation had sold off its taxi, ambulance and trucking divisions in order to focus on bus and travel.

"(Muskoka Travel Service) was operated by two sisters in town," explained Greg. "My father helped them get started. When legislation was relaxed in the 1970s, allowing a bus company to own a travel agency, we took over operations, first operating tours throughout Ontario, across Canada and throughout the U.S."

Muskoka Travel started with annual day trips to the Canadian National Exhibition and the Royal Winter Fair, growing to include monthly shopping trips to Toronto and day trips to



*Hammond Transportation purchased the motor coach limousine operations of Sinton Transportation in March 2013. From left, Greg Hammond, Barb Sinton and Floyd Sinton.*



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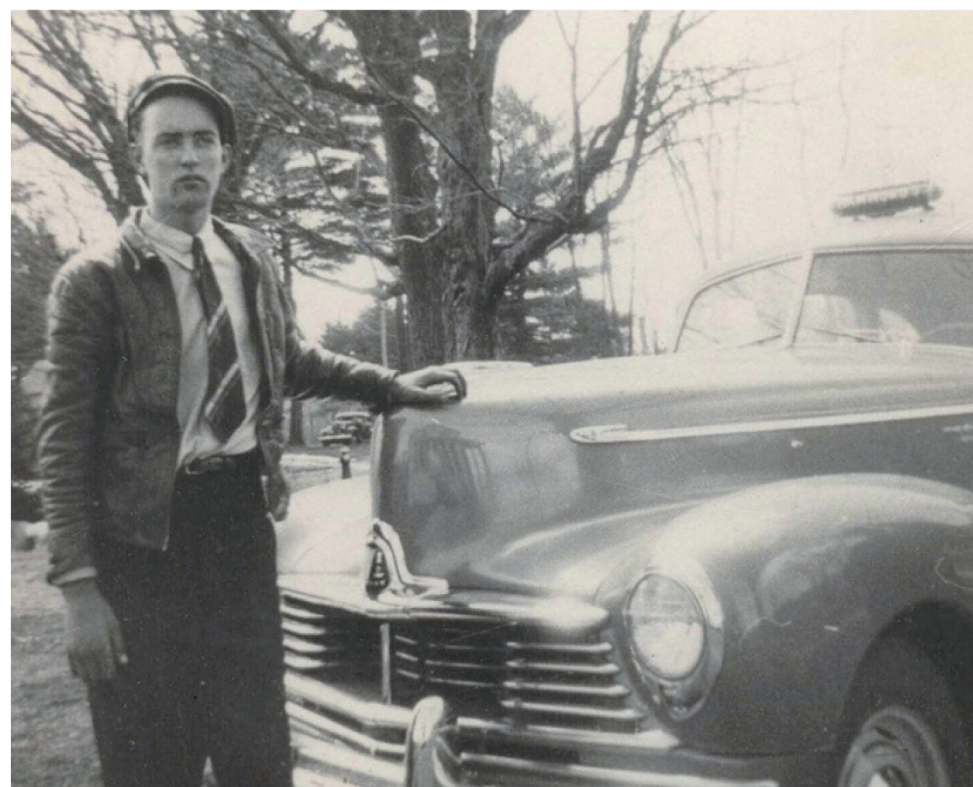
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*Orvil Hammond and a taxi car, 1947.*

**"We are very proud of our past and our history in this region. It's a tremendous honour for us to be recognized for doing what we do, and for being involved with and contributing to our community."**

### **Greg Hammond**

Toronto, Niagara Falls and Hamilton. Recently, the service has also enjoyed tremendous success internationally to such places as Hawaii, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal and Africa.

Like the entire Hammond Transportation company, Muskoka Travel has thrived under controlled growth, thanks largely to its people, who include many long-time, dedicated employees. Orvil's three sons, Jim, Brad and Greg, became more active in the company during the late-1970s. During the 1990s, the management of the business gradually was turned over to the boys, and the fourth generation was brought on board as first Jim's, then Greg's sons began helping out with the family business.

"We are very proud of our past and our history in this region," said Greg. Hammond Transportation was recognized in late 2012 as the Business of the Year at the 19th Annual Bracebridge Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business Achievement

Awards. Said Greg, "It's a tremendous honour for us to be recognized for doing what we do, and for being involved with and contributing to our community."

### **Complete Transportation Needs**

From highway coaches to classic vehicles, Hammond Transportation offers a complete array of transportation services. Hammond highway coaches – European style touring coaches and standard coaches – comfortably seat 48, 55 or 56 passengers. In fact, Hammond's fleet is only one of two in Canada that are Green Coach Certified.

The Green Coach Certification Research initiative (GCC) is part of a multi-year project from the University of Vermont, in close collaboration with the American Bus Association (ABA) and the United Motorcoach Association (UMA). During the 18-month pilot program, participating operators are eligible for a pilot GCC label/recognition for any motorcoach

complying with at least one of the following: meeting or exceeding the industry average of 148 passenger miles per gallon; running an EPA 2007 compliant engine; running an EPA 2010 compliant engine; offsetting carbon emissions by 80 percent through an endorsed carbon-trading; running on an alternative fuel such as a blend of biodiesel; having a strict, documented and verifiable energy conservation and recycling program; and incorporating other emerging environmental technologies as prescribed by the GCC.

"We're also proud supporters of the Muskoka Envirocredits Program," added Greg, referring to the program that promotes watershed health and the reduction of carbon emissions. "It strengthens the environment in the areas where we serve, so it's important that we be involved in the community in that way."

Activity buses, school buses, adult and executive vans, plus luxury sedan and chauffeur services, as well as limousines and classic vehicles are all available at Hammond Transportation. In March, Hammond expanded when it took over the coach and limo business of Sinton Transportation of Barrie. The transaction expanded Hammond's motorcoach fleet to 19 coaches and

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Orvil Hammond and his 1951 Chrysler Limousine departing for Chilliwack, BC.

added two limousines, a limo bus and other vehicles to the Hammond fleet.

Ninety years ago, Greg Hammond's grandfather, Harold, received his professional driver's licence to drive a bus for T.R. Huxtable Bus Lines in Barrie. "This has been a significant year for us," said Greg. "With the purchase of charter and limousine businesses from Sinton, we've gone back to our roots."

Another portion of that significant growth arrived in late 2012, when Hammond Transportation announced that its Corridor 11 bus service was back on the road. The Corridor 11 Bus resumed its twice-a-day run, Monday to Friday, from Huntsville to Barrie and back, making stops along the way in Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Washago and Orillia.

"It was difficult for people in Muskoka to get to hospitals in Barrie and Orillia for treatment. Corridor 11 takes them to hospitals, and it takes students to Georgian College. We're not going to a bus terminal; we're going to a hospital and a college. It's targeting a need in our community and improving people's lives," said Greg.

While Hammond Transportation gives annually to numerous groups, including local minor hockey, Special Olympics and food banks, it also takes pride in how it treats its own people. For example, solid safety and training programs are in place. And it all stems from membership within many professional associations, including OMCA.

"We joined OMCA in the late 1970s, and it has been exciting to be part of an association that has grown and changed. It's invaluable. We've gotten to know and work with so many different operators. And there is so much information made available by OMCA, including regulatory changes. OMCA does a great job," said Greg.

Heavily imbedded within its community, Hammond Transportation and its Muskoka Travel Service division continue to do great things for the Muskoka region and beyond. Whether it's a trip to African deserts or the local hospital, Hammond's mission is to provide safe, friendly service as it connects its communities with the world. ■