

# inside



# TRALA

January 2003

## New Programs and Services Continue for TRALA Members in 2003

TRALA continues to expand and improve its publications, programs and services - and we're moving into the New Year by introducing a monthly electronic format for *Inside TRALA*, which before was a quarterly newsletter sent through the mail.

I hope you enjoy the opportunity to quickly catch up on TRALA activities and membership news, including regular profiles of TRALA members. And keep in mind that we're saving money while expanding our publications, since our mailing costs are dramatically reduced by utilizing electronic delivery.



**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Earlier in 2002, TRALA gave birth to *EnRoute*, a bi-weekly electronic summary of business news in the vehicle renting and leasing industry. *EnRoute* has proved enormously successful, with tens of thousands of readers, and it's still growing. TRALA's *Weekly Wire* continues as a summary of our legislative and regulatory activity at the state and federal level, with most TRALA members now receiving the *Weekly Wire* electronically.

The *TRALA Vehicle*, our membership directory, was reformatted for easier use and published earlier this year as a mid-year/bridge-year publication (2002/03) in order to allow newly-elected TRALA board and officers to be included and to better accommodate new product introduction advertising by suppliers.

Two major TRALA publications are now at the printer and will be available shortly, the *TRALA Industry Report* and the *2003 State*



*Tax Guide*. The *Industry Report* provides the most comprehensive information ever published for truck renting and leasing operations throughout the U.S. and Canada, and includes both 2001 and 2002 statistics. TRALA's *State Tax Guide* is a brand new product for the renting and leasing industry, with detailed information on taxes, registration fees, and vehicle operation at your fingertips in one easy-to-use guide.



As part of TRALA's ongoing nationwide campaign to promote the industry, a new 2003 membership/promotional brochure will be distributed to TRALA members and media, as well as through TRALA government relations activities, including legislative visits. The brochure will be available soon for viewing or download at our TRALA website, <http://www.trala.org>.

I hope you like what you're seeing. TRALA is moving forward with the encouragement of our officers and membership to place our trade association among the best in the nation in service, performance and professionalism.

It is a privilege to work with an association staff and leadership that is devoted to excellence. I look forward to sharing more information with you on the many programs and activities underway at TRALA in future issues of *Inside TRALA*.

-- Peter J. Vroom

## TRALA Board Lays Foundation for 2003 At Fall Leadership Meeting

TRALA Chairman Bill Ford presided over a well-attended 2002 Fall Board Meeting in Amelia Island, Fla. Some highlights:

- The Board of Directors approved the 2003 budget with no dues increase for next year.
- The association headquarters' lease ends December 31, 2002, and TRALA has located new office space in Alexandria, Va., to be occupied in early 2003.
- The importance of security issues was emphasized during the board's strategic planning session. TRALA's Truck Security Task Force will remain active as an information conduit between government and the industry.
- TRALA will explore retaining outside environmental counsel to assist the association and members in responding to increased activity on the environmental front, particularly vehicle emissions.
- Annual Meeting Committee Chairman Frank Walter previewed TRALA's exciting 25th anniversary celebration at the Westin Mission Hills Resort in Palm Springs on March 12-16, 2003, featuring Super Bowl champion quarterback Steve Young.

### Joining Us...

TranSystems is a 700-person, full-service architectural and engineering design firm specializing in the site evaluation, design, regulatory permitting and financing of facilities for trucking companies. For more information on TranSystems, please contact Michael Priest at (816) 329-8600 or see [www.transystems.com](http://www.transystems.com).



### 2002 TRALA LEGAL ACTION FUND

\$50,000	
\$40,000	
\$30,000	
\$20,000	
\$10,000	
\$0	

**RAISED TO DATE: \$33,200**

**HELP US REACH OUR GOAL!**

VISIT OUR  
LEGAL ACTION FUND  
INFORMATION CENTER AT  
[HTTP://WWW.TRALA.ORG](http://www.trala.org)

A special thank you to our sponsors, see page 2

# Larkin Works to Maintain AMI's Connection to Consumer

Longtime Ford Motor Co. veteran Stephen Larkin stepped to the helm of AMI Leasing after Arthur Wolpert's retirement in 2002. AMI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ford Commercial Credit.

**For those that might not know you, tell us a little about your background and your family.** I have been with Ford Motor Co. for 17 years. During that time, I have had 15 different positions, including ones in consumer retail and marketing, commercial lending, international operations, product development, e-commerce and marketing.

My wife and I have relocated six times in those 17 years, and have enjoyed the opportunity to experience different parts of the United States and Canada. We both like golf and antiques/history, so living in New England is perfect for both.

**How has your time as the head of AMI Leasing been thus far?** AMI is a great company with great people resources. The way the company has grown and developed over the years has resulted in most of the employees feeling like they own AMI, unlike many public company employees that don't feel a sense of ownership. That small change in attitude shows up in big ways.

The other difference that I noticed is that within AMI, everyone is close to the customer. Large organizations can't maintain that connection directly and have to develop ways to hear what their cus-

tomers need and are experiencing.

**What's the best thing about your job?** Working at Ford was a little like a 17 year training position. The company made an investment in me by giving me the opportunity to learn a lot of different business models and develop skills. I am now in a position which challenges and uses all of that experience.

**What does 2003 hold for your company?** Our managers and employees are committed to a few broad areas of improvement that we will focus on in


2003. We want to focus on efficiency, especially decreasing costs for us and our customers. We are deploying 6-Sigma tools and will expand their use in improving our processes and driving out duplication and defects.

We're also focusing on employee programs. One of the luxuries of being part of a large corporation is that large corporations have entire departments devoted to narrow areas of expertise. One of Ford's benefits to AMI is access to those experts. We will roll out several new programs intended to improve our career planning, organizational efficiency, employee involvement and recognition.

And finally, we're focusing on growth. Every company with sharp competitors has to grow or will eventually become unable to serve their customers. Given the current economic situation, this will be our toughest challenge for 2003. Fortunately, we also have a lot of opportunity, both in geography and product lineup. With our current product mix, we can grow even if our customers are not expanding.

**What does 2003 hold for the renting and leasing industry?** I expect 2003 to be a continuation of the changing environment we have seen over the last couple of years - including customer and competitor consolidation, choosing to be a niche or volume provider, excess capacity among our customer base and continued cost pressure on everyone. The margin for error, in pricing, administering and managing assets and controlling cost will get narrower.

### A FEW MINUTES WITH...



**NAME:** Stephen Larkin  
**AGE:** 51  
**COMPANY:** AMI Leasing in Worcester, Mass. Joined Ford Motor Co. in 1985  
**PERSONAL:** Married to Jackie; three adult children, Gina, Andy, and Chris  
**EDUCATION:** Graduated in business and agriculture from U. of Arkansas

## VoteForBusiness.com Wins Big With TRALA Website Users

Dozens of TRALA members participated in the recent partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that provided members with access to the Vote for Business website.



More than 1 million people nationwide used voteforbusiness.com to answer questions about office holders and voting procedures.

Chad Mitchell, the executive director of grassroots and advocacy programs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, says the website will be occasionally updated with voting records in key areas across the country.

To see voteforbusiness.com, visit <http://www.trala.org>.

### TRALA CALENDAR

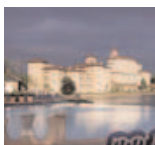
February 3, 2003  
**APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR 2003 FOUNDERS SCHOLARSHIP**  
 See <http://www.trala.org> for more details, or call (703) 299-9120.

March 12-16, 2003  
**TRALA'S 25TH ANNUAL MEETING**  
 Westin Mission Hills Resort in Palm Springs, Calif.  
 Information: (703) 299-9120



Have an event for the calendar?  
 Contact Angie Bonaccorsy at [abonaccorsy@trala.org](mailto:abonaccorsy@trala.org).

October 8-12, 2003  
**2003 FALL LEADERSHIP MEETING**  
 The Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, Colo.  
 Information: (703) 299-9120



## SALUTE TO SPONSORS

**TRALA is extremely grateful for the support provided by the Elite Sponsors for our 2002 Fall Board Meeting.**

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