

## 2024 Flxible & Converted Bus Centennial Summit

by Brian J Santin



The Flxible company, founded in Loudonville, Ohio in 1913 is credited with having built the first motorcycle sidecar that was not rigidly connected to the motorcycle. Because of its flexibility, no matter how uneven the road, or how fast the motorcycle and Flxible sidecar were moving, there was no strain, and the sidecar always retained its even level. When the name 'Flexible' was applied for trademark with the U.S. government, it was denied but agreement was made with

the 'e' being removed. Thus, the Flxible Company was born. Fast forward 11 years and the Flxible company built its first or many thousand buses. Flxible Buses have been memorialized on the logo of the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) as many view Flxible buses to be amongst the original motor coaches.



Flxible Owners International (FOI) is a not-for-profit organization for the preservation and appreciation of the vehicles manufactured by the Flxible company from 1913 to 1995, including but not limited to motorcycle sidecars, funeral cars, ambulances, airway coaches, and buses. The organization seeks to encourage fellowship with other Flxible owners and enthusiasts. FOI hosts a bus rally for Flxible owners and bus enthusiast of all types every other year, on the even numbered years in Loudonville. Loudonville is approximately halfway between Cleveland and Columbus in the northern part of the state of Ohio located amongst the beautiful Mohican-Memorial State Forest.

Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

The Flxible Co. built its first bus in 1924 and this year the Flxible & Converted Bus Centennial Summit celebrated this 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Fortunately, a very large and accommodating campground, Mohican Adventures ([mohicanadventures.com](http://mohicanadventures.com)) is located just 1/8 mile south of downtown Loudonville and has been the host site for the FOI rally for many years. One of the nicest facilities of the campground is a large conference center and kitchen where most events of the rally are held. The conference center serves as a perfect respite of cool air for rally participants throughout the event whether it be for friendly card games or a place to catch up with fellow Bus Nuts.

The 5-day event was fueled by sponsorships from 46 companies including the presenting sponsor: Sugar-Creek™. This year's event began with a 3-mile casual canoe and kayak river ride down the Mohican River. The weather couldn't have been any better – 83 degrees with the warmth of sun rays peeking out judiciously from amongst a few fluffy clouds. A Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening provided the official kick-off of events with a welcome address from a Mohican Adventures representative and FOI President and Centennial Summit Chair/Captain, Brian Santin.



items – notably AutoShow™ sponges for keeping the big rigs clean, Tuscan Garden™ packs of bacon bits, OpenRoads.com koozies, Dometic™ multi-tools and holding tank drop in bio-packs,

and NailsByCheryl nail polish strips. Custom made Centennial Summit blankets were also provided to each participant. The Exclusively Yours Catering food truck was on hand to get everyone fed a fantastic meal for dinner followed by the first of the Neighborly Campfires held nightly at the Summit Captain's site. Arguably the largest pile of (2 pallets worth!), and nicest pile we might add, of firewood was donated by a local hardwood flooring company – Northwest Hardwoods. We burned some amazing oak, walnut, maple, and other various 'scrap' wood during those campfires!



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**





The first full day of the rally found everyone heading into Loudonville for a private visit to the Cleo Redd Fisher Museum which houses the most extensive collection of Flxible Co. artifacts. Following the tour, everyone headed across the street to the Loudonville Library to see the ½ scale Flxible bus in the Youth Section. Plenty of social media ready photos were captured during this fun event!

Following lunch at any of the several restaurants within walking distance, everyone got their competition face on as we embarked on go-kart racing and competitive putt-putt at Mohican Adventures across the street from the campground. Everyone had a blast burning some rubber and *attempting* to get a hole-in-one!



Back at the conference center, in keeping with the birthday theme of the event celebrating 100 years since the first Flxible bus was built, faux birthday cake building commenced using cardboard boxes, giftwrap paper, ribbons, and the like celebrating the 'birthday' of everyone's coach. Saturday evening saw Melissa Coe and her family's winning entry crowned king for Clark, their 1969 Flxible Cruiser's 55<sup>th</sup> birthday. A brief 1<sup>st</sup> timers session followed providing the new kids on the

block an overview of events to come especially details on the big day, Saturday.

This year's event was a collaborative effort with Midwest Coachmen, a Chapter of the FMCA. This group provided several fun and interactive sessions this year playing Mexican train dominos and 'baseball' which is like the popular cornhole game. Dinner Thursday evening was an over-the-top

Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

BBQ catered meal – so much food to go around! BBQ chicken halves, ribs, fresh Ohio corn-on-the-cob, coleslaw, baked potatoes, buns.... *there was soooo much food*. We fed everyone twice over including the band! Amazingly despite full stomachs, the Lincoln Highway Bluegrass Band brought everyone out of their food comatose to some classic tunes after dinner. The 5-piece group played several bluegrass classics until the sun was down and the moon had risen. Again, the neighborly campfire kept the evening rolling until the wee hours.



Rest was not for the weary as Friday morning came quickly filling everyone's tummies with freshly baked donuts and fresh brewed coffee. Through a long-standing collaboration with the Mohican Market and Café, daily donuts are provided that should be recorded in the Guinness Book of Records for the largest apple fritters ever produced!



The group traveled a short 1/3 mile down Route 3 to the Wolf Creek Grist Mill for a private tour of a water powered grain mill dating back to the 1800s. A naturalist provided a very thorough recount of the mill's history and the value it brought to the Loudonville region throughout the decades since being built. More faux birthday cake decorating followed by a quick trip to a newly constructed covered bridge near the campground. A Dometic technical representative was brought in from Indiana to provide an informative Q&A session on routine maintenance and troubleshooting tips for various RV/converted bus appliances. The interactive session was accompanied by complimentary pizza and salad. The Summit planning committee showcased their ability to roll with changes as an opportunity to showcase a few Flxible buses at the original Flxible Co. factory



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**





arose. Seven Flxibles strode over to the factory for 90 minutes to allow members of the public a chance to view the buses and for attendees to take a private factory tour. The warm summer



afternoon was cooled off by an ice cream social back at the campground conference center where everyone's knowledge of Flxible history was challenged in an epic Flxible bus trivia – Jeopardy style! The breadth of knowledge of Flxible Buses was truly on display as audience members didn't miss a beat on any of the more than 20 trivia questions.....er, answers, HA!



Following the Flxible trivia and throughout each day of the event, Summit goers had ample time to vote for several of the Flxible Bus Awards and place their bids on more than 25 raffle packages which were ultimately given away Saturday evening. More on those highly acclaimed awards in just a minute (*keep reading!*).

The sumptuous potluck dinner, a Flxible rally classic, kept everyone's bellies full followed by two entertainment options Friday evening. Shortly after dinner, Santin got his industrial sized popcorn popper roaring with freshly buttered popcorn. The husband-and-wife owners of Cappy's

Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

Incredible Caramel Corn, and 1960 Flxible Hi-level Bus owners, Brad and Margaret Wallace donated several cases of their Incredible Caramel Corn for everyone to enjoy during the big screen showing of the movie *RV* featuring Robin Williams and more infamously, a Flxible Clipper bus!! The kids and adults alike really enjoyed the evening's entertainment in the air-conditioned conference center – again, what an ideal venue to host a rally of this magnitude at. Other attendees sang their hearts out with karaoke around the campfire.



Saturday of the Flxible Summit is always the highlight for everyone as the incomparable Flxible bus parade into downtown Loudonville takes place in the morning. This year, in part due to a donated custom-made 30ft banner hung over Main Street for several weeks leading up to the event, there were several hundred locals and visitors from afar packed into town for the historic event. A notable addition to the parade this year was the inclusion of SOBs, otherwise known as Some Other Bus, ie non-Flxibles.

Seven SOBs participated in the parade and were a welcome addition highlighted by the Best SOB Award recipient – John Thompson's 1947 GM Silversides. This year 21 Flxible buses participated, led by the iconic 1930 Denure Family bus – also the winner of the Best Overall Flxible Award (*Congrats Denure family!*). After petitioning the Ohio Dept of Transportation and Village of Loudonville Council, Santin was granted permission to block Main Street for a few hours to allow the Flxible and converted buses to park and allow the public a unique opportunity to view the insides of each classic machine. Read aloud via massive speakers by a local MC, each bus description and history were billowed out to the audience. The parade of buses was sponsored by the Marty Stuart's Congress of Country Music. Several hundred votes were cast for the People's Choice Award. "This year's event is not only the largest we've ever assembled but marks a truly historic occasion. The FOI group is so fortunate to work with the Village of Loudonville to make this event happen for the benefit of the local community", said Santin. Several food trucks were on hand, local shops were open and a wonderful Farmers' Market was in the Village Square giving everyone plenty of opportunity to enjoy the community at its finest.

A People's Choice Award voted on by several hundred visitors was presented to one of the unique Flxible buses on display, a 1947 Clipper originally used to transport the Goodyear blimp. In 1946 and 1947 Goodyear placed an order for three Flxible Clippers to serve their airship fleet. The buses were equipped with outriggers and a tower to serve as mobile mooring masts when the



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



airships travelled to locations without mooring facilities. The buses could also be used to tow the blimp short distances.

A few of the unique coaches that were on display for the public to appreciate included the 1930 Flxible. Regarded as the oldest and most pristine example of a Flxible bus, this 1930 Model 17DL is a prized jewel. Saved from being a storage shed or chicken coop, this bus was expertly restored



in the late-1980s and has been featured in many concourse-pedigree shows, movie productions, and commercials. Featured in *Vintage Motor Coach Magazine*, this Flxible-Buick turns heads wherever it goes.

The Flxible Company produced ten special Visicoach buses in 1954 for Fred Harvey Restauranteur and the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railway company. In the early '50s the Grand Canyon was in its infancy of being recognized as a national treasure and to entice the public to travel to the dry desert to see the Grand Canyon, Fred Harvey built hotels and restaurants to make it more attractive as a vacation destination. The ten Flxible buses played a major role in this as they were transported to the Grand Canyon where they spent the next two plus decades transporting tourists and the Harvey Girls around the various landmarks in the Grand Canyon national park, including Helmet Rim, the Watchtower, and famous Grand Canyon hotel.



Only two of the Fred Harvey buses are known to remain in existence and they were both on display at the Centennial Summit. One resides in Columbus, Ohio owned by FOI President Brian Santin and his wife Crystal (blue above) and the other traveled from Virginia under the care of Greg Troxell (green above).

Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



A rare Flxible model D1012AA drove from Omaha, Nebraska to participate in the parade and Centennial Summit. This model Flxible stands out in contrast to the typical Clipper model buses many are familiar with. The model D1012AA was built at a factory in Evergreen, Alabama following the acquisition of the Southern Coach Manufacturing Co. by the Flxible Co. and was designed as a motorhome from the outset. The current owner, Greg Sloma has restored the interior and attended this year's event for the first time.

After everyone had ample opportunity to check out all the Flxible and converted buses in town, the entire line-up of Flxibles drove around the corner to the site where each had been 'born' – the original Flxible Co. factory. We managed to cleverly line up the 21 coaches in front of the building and snap plenty of photos: many already making their way into the record books for sure! Compliments of Brad Wallace, some fantastic drone footage was shot both in town and in front of the Flxible building – we hope to have the drone footage uploaded to [www.FlxibleOwners.org](http://www.FlxibleOwners.org) soon for all to see or check out the Flxible Owners International Facebook page for more photos and videos from this year's event.



After everyone got settled back in at the campground, an Ask-the-Expert session featured several interesting talks. Santin projected pictures and explained the fabrication of new aluminum 'fluted' panels for his '54 Flxible Visicoach including having them anodized and highlighted the process of installing 'bucked' style rivets (also anodized for a consistent and impenetrable finish). Steve Cramer from Tavernier, Florida discussed the process of repowering his 1947 Clipper (won the RVUpgrades.com Best Repower Award) taking less than 2 months start to finish for this overhaul. Hans Saier reviewed the interior renovation of his and Marilee's 1945 Clipper (Best Clipper Award winner). Brad Wallace brought the tools and described the process of polishing the aluminum sides of his 1960 Hi-Level. The trials and tribulations of some bus projects can be appreciated by many as highlighted by Santin's talk on removing, cleaning, and reinstalling the windows on his Visicoach. The valuable lesson learned to have glass tinted *before* reinstalling the glass in the rubber u-channel. Finally, the saving from the scrap yard story and history of the Goodyear Flxible bus capped off the session.

Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**





Concurrent to the educational session were a Maker's Mart where attendees sold items they created and a complimentary crafting session. Summit Planning Committee member, Kathy Jeffries led folks in assembling wreaths from dyed clothes pins and ribbon.

Saturday evening is the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest event at each Flxible Summit, and this year was no different.



It began with a business meeting complete with power point presentation by the Summit Captains providing a complete breakdown of the planning, sponsorship packet development, execution of, and financial analysis for the event. A new set of Bylaws and Constitution were unanimously adopted by the membership which will help keep FOI on a solid organizational foundation and allow it to grow with its growing

membership – *currently it has the largest membership in at least the past 10 years!* If you are interested in becoming a member, go to [www.FlxibleOwners.org](http://www.FlxibleOwners.org) and click on JOIN. Next up was a home cooked Amish meal of baked chicken, roast beef, Amish noodles, corn-on-the-cob, salad, and green beans. Desert was comprised of homemade pies, cookies, baked goods, and a 100-year Birthday Cake celebrating the centennial event. No one went hungry during the 5-day event for sure!! Brian and Crystal Santin tag-teamed the awards and raffle prize portion of the evening from opposite ends of the large conference center. The Flxible Bus Awards were presented to 25 lucky recipients and an equal number of



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

raffle prizes went home with their proud owners. A few of the standout raffle prize baskets included several subscriptions to Vintage Motor Coach magazine, a custom made Flxible cornhole set amongst other Flxible paraphernalia, several wine baskets, and tickets for flights on a 1928 Ford Tri-motor airplane at the Liberty Aviation Museum in Port Clinton, Ohio. The night was capped off with a standing ovation for this year's Summit Captains who responded with sincere gratitude that everyone enjoyed the various off-site events, meals, parade, entertainment, and joy of being together with fellow Flxible and Converted Bus enthusiasts. Arguably the largest bonfire this side of the Mississippi ensued shortly thereafter and burned well into the wee hours of the night.



Following a final coffee and donuts morning feast on Sunday, everyone packed away their buses and headed off to their next adventure only after marking their calendar to attend the next Flxible & Converted Bus event – same place, same great times to be had by all in the late summer of 2026. Stay abreast of 2026 Flxible & Converted Bus Rally plans on [www.flxibleowners.org](http://www.flxibleowners.org) or our Facebook page – [Flxible Owners International](#). We look forward to seeing many of you there!!

### **2026 Flxible Bus Awards**

People's Choice – Liberty Aviation Museum's 1947 Flxible 'Goodyear' Clipper



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



Best In Show – Ned & Ken Brown's 1952 Flxible Visicoach 'Stanley Tool Bus'



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

Best Overall Flxible – Denure Family 1930 Flxible



Best Flxible Clipper – Hans & Marilee Saier's 1945



Best Flxible Visicoach – Brian & Crystal Santin's 1954



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



Best Flxible Starliner – John & Paulette Lingafelter's 1958



Best Flxible Flxliner – Dan Aldridge's 1969



Best Flxible Hi-Level – Dave & Brenda Martin's 1960



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

Best Flxible Cruiser – Erik & Melissa Coe's 1969



Best Flxible D1012AA – Greg Sloma's 1966



Flxible Centennial Summit Award – Ron & Tyler Manchester's 1950 Flxible Visicoach



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



Sugar Creek Award - John Tassinari's 1947 Flxible Clipper



Best SOB (Some Other Bus) – John Thompson's 1947 GM Silversides



President's Award – Bill Hoffman's 1947 Flxible Clipper



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

RVUpgrades.com Best Repower – Steve & Shelli Cramer's 1947 Flxible Clipper



Congress of Country Music Award – George Showman's 1962 Flxible Starliner



Iconic Replicas Award – Rob Detro's 1949 Flxible Clipper



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



Work in Progress Award – Keith & David Allard's 1966 Flxible Starliner



Preservation Award – Greg Troxell's 1954 Flxible Visicoach



Greatest Potential Award – Bob Roger's 1966 Flxible Starliner



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

Outstanding Craftsmanship – John Lingafelter (restored 1958 Flxible Starliner & 1947 Flxible ‘Goodyear’ Clipper)



Flxible Owners International Award – Brad & Margaret Wallace’s 1960 Flxible Hi-Level



AutoShow Brilliance Award – Tom & Helen Scherzer’s 1960 Flxible Starliner



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



Best Tow Behind – Brian & Crystal Santin's 1962 VW Ragtop Deluxe Beetle



Midwest Coachmen Award – Cheryl Bowen



Des Feary Award – Mike Middaugh



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**

Antique Flxible Drum Set at the Cleo Redd Museum



Original Flxible sign at the Flxible Factory



Winners of Bus Conversion Magazine Subscriptions



Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**



### Winners of Vintage Motor Coach Magazine Subscriptions



### 2026 Flxible Centennial Summit Planning Committee

Brian Santin, Cheryl Bowen, Kathy Jeffries, Crystal Santin



### 2026 Flxible Bus Rally by the #s

Attendees: 136

SOBs in Attendance: 12

Meals Provided: 369

Campsites: 56

Flxible Buses in Attendance: 21

RVs/Trailers: 23

Donuts consumed: 550

Corporate Sponsors: 46

Don't miss the **2026 Flxible Rally in Loudonville, Ohio**  
**September 16 – 20, 2026**