

Operators plan to challenge bus brokers with co-op

SUN VALLEY, Calif. — A group of southern California motorcoach operators who say they are fed up with bus brokers trying to dominate the industry's charter business is setting its sights on derailing the effort by beating them at their own game.

The operators have formed The Bus Co-Op, and have crafted a

business plan that will zero in on the Internet where bus brokers are doing almost all of their business.

"I believe we can knock them right out of the game," said Neil Eisenberg, owner of VanGo Inc., which is based in Sun Valley in the San Fernando Valley, and a lead participant in the fledgling cooperative.

The group, which plans to roll out its campaign next month, has seven founding members and hopes to grow rapidly throughout the country to a maximum of 500 carriers that operate anywhere from about 10 to 40 coaches each.

"That will give us the strength we need to take them on," said Eisenberg, who has been in the

motorcoach business for 15 years and is fearful many of the smaller operators could be run out of business if the brokers are not challenged.

The key to being successful, he said, is to take over the Internet where bus brokers get most of their business and do the most damage to small- and medium-size carriers.

Eisenberg said brokers get the bulk of the Internet charter business because their Web pages pop up first when someone searches to hire a motorcoach company. The brokers have been able to obtain and keep the highly sought-after lead positions on the search engines of Google, Yahoo and others.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

BACK TO NEW ORLEANS



SIXTEEN MONTHS AGO, more than 1,000 privately-owned motorcoaches — from as far away as Washington state — descended on New Orleans to evacuate tens of thousands of residents stranded by Hurricane Katrina. This month, the owners of many of those coaches are going

to New Orleans to attend Motorcoach Expo 2007 and to support the city's efforts to regain its position as one of the leading motorcoach and tourism destinations in the United States. Expo begins Jan. 16. For more information, call (800) 424-8262 or go to www.motorcoachexpo.com.

UMA adopts hardline against public transit charter rules violators

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The United Motorcoach Association has adopted a tough, aggressive new policy towards public transit agencies that appear to have violated federal charter service rules.

In complaints filed with Federal Transit Administration regional administrators in Texas, Pennsylvania and Georgia, the association alleges transit agencies in those states may have committed criminal fraud by violating FTA rules that prohibit them from competing with private operators and providing service when willing-and-able private operators are available.

UMA points out that the contract public transit systems sign with the FTA — to obtain the federal tax dollars they use to pay for

buses and subsidize operations — contains a provision that expressly prohibits transit agencies from violating the charter service rules.

It's UMA's contention that a transit agency is committing fraud and breaching public trust when it induces the federal government to give it money and then violates the charter rules.

"We are inclined to conclude these inducements (by public transit agencies) may be fraudulent and warrant investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Treasury," which have broader investigative authority than the FTA, says UMA Vice President of Industry Relations Ken Presley.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►

Rash of rear-end collisions points to risky driving

In North Carolina, 18 people — 14 of them children — were injured when a charter bus driver in a six-bus convoy failed to stop for the bus ahead of him, causing a three-bus pileup.

Two weeks earlier, more than 70 people were hurt when the two charter buses they were riding in were involved in a rear-end collision

in Indiana.

A couple months before that, the driver of a charter bus in California was unable to stop for a bus that stalled in front of him, causing an accident that left 44 young people hurt.

And just days earlier, a charter driver ran into the rear of another bus that had stopped for a red

light, setting off a chain reaction collision that involved three buses and several other vehicles, injuring 34 people.

Although bus safety experts aren't sure if the rash of rear-end accidents late this past fall is pointing toward a dangerous and costly trend, they do know it might do well for motorcoach carriers to

review their safety practices to avoid such devastating and dangerous collisions.

While rear-end collisions are not the most-frequent types of accidents involving buses, they are among the most costly, according to Jack Burkert, a Maryland-based private safety consultant and former executive with Lancer Insur-

ance Co.

"The combination of frequency and severity make them the most costly," he notes.

He says drivers appear to be the blame for most rear-end collisions. Often, the drivers were either distracted or fatigued, were following too closely, or they missed visual

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

Join MCI at UMA EXPO 2007 in New Orleans
Learn about new greener models. Try out our new coach driving simulator.

Visit Booths 1213 1115

MOTOR COACH INDUSTRIES
Going further!

1-866-MCICOACH www.mcicoach.com

ACCESSORIZE YOUR FLEET IN MARDI GRAS STYLE 2007

AT UMA



OUR DIVERSE COACH AND BUS EQUIPMENT LOOK GREAT ON ANY FLEET!

Looking to make a major statement to your customers? Adding any of our exclusive Van Hool and ABC equipment to your fleet will impress passengers and compliment your bottom line. With an expanded lineup of coach and bus equipment and fresh new features, now ABC drives even more flexibility, simplified maintenance and revenue opportunities to your operation. And, we keep you going the extra mile with a comprehensive range of support services – including parts, collision and maintenance services, and private and municipal financing options – all dedicated to delivering fleet forward performance.

Stop by ABC Booths #101 & #518 to inspect our fresh new equipment collection – offering over 36 cutting edge new features and special event savings on parts and service!



FLEET FORWARD TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

www.abc-companies.com

MIDWEST
800-222-2875

NORTHEAST
800-222-2873

SOUTHEAST
800-222-2871

SOUTHWEST
800-222-2877

WESTERN
800-322-2877

JOIN THE
**MARDI GRAS
MADNESS**
AT BOOTHS #101 & #518



AND ENTER FOR A CHANCE
TO WIN THE PATENTED
**BITIMEC 626 SPEEDY
BUS WASH SYSTEM –
A \$25,000 VALUE**
FOR ONE LUCKY CUSTOMER!
DRAWING WILL BE HELD AT BOOTH #101
FRIDAY, JAN. 19TH AT 4PM



Exclusive U.S.  Distributor

Gray Line joins 20 Group program expands (again)

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The popular 20 Group program the United Motorcoach Coach Association introduced to its members just over a year ago has been expanded for a third time.

The latest to join the business-improvement program is the Gray Line family of sightseeing companies, which has operators throughout the United States and in several foreign countries.

Since being introduced to Gray Line Worldwide in October, at least a half-dozen Gray Line operators have hooked up with existing UMA 20 Groups in various parts of the country.

UMA has five separate 20 Groups in existence now and is prepared to start others as they grow in popularity, says Victor Parra, UMA president and chief executive.

The 20 Group program for the motorcoach industry, which was developed several years ago for the International Motor Coach Group, involves non-competing coach operators getting together several times a year to develop

benchmarks for performance, discuss all aspects of their businesses, and compare each other's financial reports. Individual groups are limited to 20 members, hence the name 20 Group.

Parra said the expansion of the program initially calls for new members to join existing groups, which allows them to become involved immediately rather than having to wait for enough new members to form a new group. However, he said new groups will be formed as demand continues to develop.

Gray Line becomes the third organization of motorcoach operators to join the UMA-led effort. Trailways Transportation System and the Ontario Motor Coach Association signed on earlier this year and have members in existing 20 Groups.

"Gray Line is tremendous at marketing its tours," said Parra. "They understand the sightseeing business and how they market it will be good for others to hear."

He said motorcoach operators who joined UMA's 20 Groups at

the outset already have benefited from having Trailways and Ontario Motor Coach Association members participating in the program.

"I'm excited about the way they all have developed," he added.

Parra has suggested that the 20 Group program is likely to raise the financial bar for the industry by boosting prices and revenues. He said operators attending the meetings recognize the amount of revenue they will need to generate to cover their cost structure, and that will benefit everyone.

"Even though you may not be in a 20 Group, you may benefit because you will get operators establishing a pricing structure that is really going to be a profitable structure," he said.

The 20 Group program was packaged by business consultant Duane Spader of Spader Business Management in Sioux Falls, S.D. Spader, who has worked with the program for more than 30 years, and has partnered with UMA to bring the program to motorcoach operators.

Mark-up is hefty for Super Bowl service; operator cries foul

MIAMI — The mark-up by the contractors arranging charter bus transportation for the Super Bowl here next month is 200 to 300 percent, figures supplied by one coach operator show.

The operator, who has been asked to supply several coaches for the Super Bowl, is outraged by the rates that have been adopted by Gameday Management Group of Orlando, which was hired by the National Football League to coordinate bus transportation for the Super Bowl, and Transportation Management Services of Vienna, Va., a subcontractor.

Gameday Management is charging its Super Bowl-bound customers an 8-hour minimum of \$1,825 per day, plus \$130 per hour for service that extends beyond 8 hours during the five days leading up to Super Bowl Weekend (Sunday-Thursday).

For Super Bowl Weekend (Friday-Sunday), there is a 3-day minimum (12-hour minimum/

maximum per day) of \$2,450 per day, or a total of \$7,350 for the three days, plus \$140 per hour for service running over 12 hours.

Plus, if the charter exceeds 12 hours (not driving time, just 12 hours) in any day, there's an additional charge of \$500, plus a hotel room.

Oh, yes, and the daily rate being offered to operators who supply coaches to Gameday Management or TMS: \$850. That's right, \$1,000 a day less for Sunday through Thursday, and \$1,600 a day less than on Super Bowl Weekend.

"I think it is ridiculous for them to be making that much profit on our motorcoaches, with no investment in equipment, insurance, fuel, operating authority, liability and the like," said one Florida operator.

"I doubt most carriers are even aware of what Gameday and TMS are getting. If they did, they would likely reconsider the \$850 per day."



HURRY THEY ARE MOVING FAST!

Call your nearby ABC Account Executive today.

MIDWEST | **NORTHEAST** | **SOUTHEAST**
800-222-2875 | 800-222-2873 | 800-222-2871

SOUTHWEST | **WESTERN**
800-222-2877 | 800-322-2877



www.abc-companies.com

Used vehicle sold "as is." No warranties expressed or implied.

Wide Selection of 1992-1996 MC-12s Available Now –
Priced from \$12,500 to \$26,500

Operators are sold on the **superior value and condition** of these well-equipped, professionally-maintained highway coaches. Plus comprehensive service at 5 convenient locations nationwide keeps you covered for all your equipment needs.

Coach features include:

- Streamlined systems designed for simplified maintenance
- Goodyear tires
- Restroom equipped
- Clean interiors
- Integral steering
- Thermo-Pane side glass
- Late-model air-conditioning system
- 47 passenger seating
- 6V92 DDEC III Detroit Diesel Engine
- HT-740 Allison Transmission

THE DOCKET

Fuel taxes dip as fuel drops; hike in Iowa?

The nationwide average tax on diesel fuel was 52.5 cents per gallon as of Oct. 1, a slight decrease (.7 cents) from the end of the second quarter of last year, figures compiled by the American Petroleum Institute show. The figure includes both state and federal taxes.

The dip generally reflects the decline in the price of diesel fuel during last year's third quarter. State taxes that are indexed to the price of the fuel decrease when the price of diesel drops.

One state, Wisconsin repealed tax indexing for motor fuels last year.

Meanwhile, in Iowa, there is new talk of higher fuel taxes because of a decline in road tax revenues and rising highway construction costs.

Income from Iowa motor fuel taxes is expected to decline this year for only the second time in the past 26 years. For that reason, state lawmakers have begun looking at raising fuel taxes, which have remained unchanged since 1989.

A report by the Legislative Service Agency, the research arm of the legislature, says road-use revenue during the current fiscal year will be roughly \$700,000 below last year, during a time highway construction costs are climbing.

The accompanying fuel tax chart was compiled from information developed by the American Petroleum Institute. In some cases,

State & Provincial Fuel Tax Rates

A number of states reduced fuel-tax rates during the third quarter of 2006. Here are the updated rates for all states and provinces, plus the federal tax rate in the U.S.

State	Gasoline	Diesel	State	Gasoline	Diesel
Alabama	20.3	21.3	North Carolina	30.2	30.2
Alaska	8	8	North Dakota	23	23
Arizona	18	28	Ohio	28	28
Arkansas	21.8	22.8	Oklahoma	17	14
California	40.1	41.9	Oregon	24	24.3
Colorado	22	20.5	Pennsylvania	32.3	39.2
Connecticut	40.5	39.8	Rhode Island	31	31
Delaware	23	22	South Carolina	16.8	16.8
Dist. of Columbia	20	20	South Dakota	24	24
Florida	31.9	27.9	Tennessee	21.4	18.4
Georgia	21.3	24.2	Texas	20	20
Hawaii	31.8	44.1	Utah	24.5	24.5
Idaho	25	25	Vermont	20	26
Illinois	32.5	43.5	Virginia	19.2	19.7
Indiana	26.6	39.5	Washington	34	34
Iowa	22	23.5	West Virginia	27	27
Kansas	25	27	Wisconsin	32.9	32.9
Kentucky	18.5	15.5	Wyoming	14	14
Louisiana	20	20	U. S.	18.4	24.4
Maine	28.3	28.6	<i>Tax Rate in U.S. is cents per gallon</i>		
Maryland	23.5	24.3	Province	Gasoline	Diesel
Massachusetts	23.5	23.5	Alberta	9	9
Michigan	30.8	30.6	British Columbia	14.5	15
Minnesota	22	22	Manitoba	11.5	11.5
Mississippi	18.8	18.8	New Brunswick	10.7	16.9
Missouri	17.6	17.6	Newfoundland	16.5	16.5
Montana	27.8	28.6	Nova Scotia	15.5	15.4
Nebraska	28	27.4	Ontario	14.7	14.3
Nevada	32.5	28.6	Prince Edward Is.	21.5	20.8
New Hampshire	19.6	19.6	Quebec	15.2	16.2
New Jersey	14.5	17.5	Saskatchewan	15	15
New Mexico	18	19	<i>Tax Rate in Canada = cents per liter</i>		
New York	41.7	41.2			

the figures are markedly different than those in fuel tax charts *Bus & Motorcoach News* has published each quarter in the past (most recently in the Oct. 1 issue).

The differences result largely from the inclusion of secondary taxes on diesel fuel and gasoline in

the API-supplied information. Those additional fuel taxes oftentimes were missing from the fuel tax tables published previously.

The API information is more comprehensive and, therefore, more accurately reflects total at-the-pump diesel fuel and gasoline taxes.

Pa. wants money for roads, transit

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A state commission in Pennsylvania has issued a report recommending roughly \$1.7 billion in tax increases, including a hike in fuel taxes, to help pay for road and bridge repairs and public transit upgrades.

The Pennsylvania Transportation and Funding Reform Commission issued its report after spending 16 months looking at the state's transportation funding needs.

The report recommended \$900 million a year in additional funding for roads and bridges, plus \$760 million more annually for transit.

The state currently provides nearly \$3 billion annually for con-

struction and maintenance of roads and bridges and about \$1 billion for public transit, according to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

The commission, appointed by Gov. Ed Rendell, recommended that the road improvements be funded through a 12.5-cent-per-gallon increase in fuel taxes and an increase in motor vehicle registration or driver license fees.

For public transit, the commission recommended a combination of state and local taxes.

The commission noted that spending on roads and transit could be reduced by \$180 million through steps such as using public-

private partnerships, streamlining the road construction process, and restructuring mass-transit routes.

Decisions about implementing the commission recommendations will rest with the governor and state lawmakers, who convene this month.

Meanwhile, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell is studying the idea of leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike to private investors.

Last month, Rendell began soliciting what he calls "expressions of interest" from private-sector investment groups to place a monetary value on the turnpike, a first step toward privatizing the roadway.

FMCSA unveils revised process for new entrants, seeks to tighten program

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has proposed a revamp of the rules for entry into the over-the-road bus and truck business.

Under the proposed New Entrant Safety Assurance Process, would-be operators would have to comply with 11 rules the agency believes are essential elements of basic safety management necessary to operate in interstate commerce.

Failure to comply with any one of the 11 regulations would result in automatic failure of the new-entrant safety audit.

It should be noted, however, that failing a new-entrant audit does not mean a neophyte operator is put out of service or fines are levied. Rather, after education regarding its shortcomings, the carrier would be brought into compliance before operating authority is made permanent. Previously, start-up operators have had what amounts to kindergarten operating authority.

The proposed new process essentially tightens up current new-entrant restrictions while preserving the educational component of the system now in place.

The essential elements that can keep a new operator from passing its initial safety audit are:

1. Failing to implement an alcohol and/or controlled-substance testing program.
2. Using a driver who has refused to submit to an alcohol or controlled substances test required under part 382.
3. Using a driver known to have tested positive for a controlled substance.
4. Knowingly allowing, requiring, permitting or authorizing an employee with a commercial driver license that is suspended or revoked to operate a commercial vehicle.
5. Knowingly allowing, requiring, permitting or authorizing a driver who is disqualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle.
6. Operating a commercial motor vehicle without the required minimum financial responsibility coverage.
7. Using a disqualified driver.
8. Using a physically unqualified driver.
9. Failing to require a driver to make a record of duty status.
10. Requiring or permitting the operation of a commercial vehicle declared "out-of-service" before repairs are made.
11. Using a commercial motor vehicle not periodically inspected.

The FMCSA noted that "these 11 infractions...are so basic to ensuring safety (that) no carrier should be allowed to operate if any of these violations are found and not corrected."

Under the new proposal, carriers would also be subject to the current safety audit evaluation criteria in Appendix A of part 385 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

Additionally, if a roadside inspection discloses certain violations, the new entrant would be subject to expedited actions to correct the deficiencies.

Essentially, new entrants operate somewhat free of enforcement action in certain areas of their operation until the FMCSA, or a state regulatory agency, or a FMCSA contractor comes to their business and educates them and performs a review within 18 months of the company start-up.

There are approximately 48,000 new truck and bus operators annually. The United Motorcoach Association estimates that roughly 400 of the new entrants are passenger carriers. Under current FMCSA procedures, new bus operators are supposed to get expedited attention and be reviewed long before the 18-month deadline.

Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at UMA, said the proposed changes are "a very important step in the right direction for FMCSA. But I personally would like to see some changes for passenger carriers."

Generally, Presley would like to see more rigorous procedures before new operators are allowed to hit the road.

Some in the coach industry think it a bit incongruous that an official from the FMCSA or other enforcement agency is required to visit a one-unit motorcoach operator to educate and ensure compliance when many industry safety professionals and advocates have insisted that a basic level of knowledge be obtained through legiti-

Opponent of Nevada regulators gives up buses, but not fight

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Nevada motorcoach and limousine operator Bob Fairman's long-running feud with state regulators has taken the ultimate toll on Fairman.

The owner of No Stress Express in Carson City has sold his fleet of 15 vehicles and officially turned in his state operating certificate.

"I just got tired of them hammering me," he said. "I couldn't take their 'Gestapo' tactics anymore."

Despite giving up his business, he said he's not about to give up the fight.

He intends to remain in the forefront in the battle against the state Transportation Services Authority, which he has long contended is acting unconstitutionally by regulating the motorcoach industry beyond federal laws that preempt state authority.

The TSA has continually denied the claim, maintaining it has the legal authority to establish rules and policies that govern motorcoaches and buses that operate in the state.

Fairman said that now that he is "semi-retired" he expects to have more time to push his cause, even though he continues to operate a freight company that also comes under the authority of the TSA. "But they don't bother the trucking industry that much," he notes.

To stay in the thick of things, he has registered as a lobbyist for the Nevada Transportation Coalition and is gearing up for a head-to-head confrontation with the TSA when the Nevada State Legislature opens its 2007 session this month.

On the agenda are about a dozen pieces of proposed legislation aimed directly at reigning in the TSA.

Among the most drastic bills are two that would abolish the TSA and turn over its duties to other state agencies. Others range from limiting the agency's regulatory authority over the motorcoach industry, to requiring that TSA inspectors wear uniforms and drive marked vehicles.

He has been working closely with several state legislators who appear sympathetic to the motorcoach industry and he's hopeful he will be able to lobby enough others to get legislation through during the upcoming session.

In addition to his work at the legislature, he plans to be seen often at hearings the TSA conducts on proposed new regulations that would expand the agency's regulatory hold on the motorcoach industry even further.

Among the proposals advanced by the TSA is one that would require motorcoach operators to begin paying the state an annual \$100 certification fee for each vehicle in their fleet. Currently only limousines, tow trucks and cabs pay a fee for certification, and

their payments would be increased under the proposal.

"They're just looking for ways to bring in more money," says Fairman, who stressed that the TSA likely would use the money to hire more inspectors to harass more motorcoach operators.

The TSA, however, has insisted the added funds are needed to keep pace with rising expenses associated with processing applications and regulatory oversight.

The agency has requested an overall budget increase, but a couple of legislators are calling for an

audit of the agency before any action is taken on the budget request.

Fairman said he also plans to follow a second proposed regulatory change that would give the TSA new authority over buses that motorcoach operators lease from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ▶

TIME TESTED

YOU NEED TO KNOW YOUR BUS INSURER...

Will always be there when you call.

Has been the industry leader for over 20 years.

Has a team of 200 claims specialists who have professionally managed nearly 100,000 bus claims since 1985.

Is simply the best.

Insure with the best. Insure with Lancer.

1-800-782-8902, x3304

bus@lancer-ins.com or mbayard@lancer-ins.com

LANCER
INSURANCE
The Difference is Our Attitude.
370 West Park Ave., Long Beach, NY 11561
www.lancerinsurance.com

Proud Member of:

Single State Registration System is history; what now?

WASHINGTON — As expected, the Single State Registration System passed quietly into oblivion on the last day of last year.

The immediate impact of the system's death is that companies that participate in the program will

not be issued SSRS receipts for 2007.

In fact, states that participated in the SSRS should not be sending out 2007 renewals, and operators should not pay SSRS fees this year.

If an operator gets such a

notice, it should contact the issuing state agency for clarification, and let the United Motorcoach Association know about the mailing.

Meanwhile, the federal registration system that's going to replace the SSRS is not ready and

seemingly won't be for months. (See Dec. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

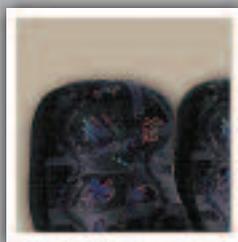
At some point this year, however, the Unified Carrier Registration Agreement is expected to begin functioning.

In the interim, some states may

attempt to make up the loss of revenue by implementing stop-gap fee and registration programs. These are worrisome because of the possibility they will not be rescinded once the UCR program kicks into gear.

seats

Progress consists of making change.



If you are looking to refurbish a coach interior, consider the option of **buying new seats**. New technology, materials, and ergonomics have evolved over the years, so you can offer increased comfort and amenities to your passengers. We can offer you new-model seats that are aesthetic to the eye and your pocketbook. Also, we have the **warranty** and **service** you want and deserve. Take a look at an alternative to refurbishing your older seats. Contact us to find out if new seats are a viable option for your company.

U.S. and Canada contacts:
George Farrell
Tel: 214•495•9975
Fax: 214•495•9978
Email: gfarr007@aol.com
Darrell Niswander
Tel: 419•892•2377
Fax: 419•892•2655
Email: darnis1@aol.com

AMAYA ASTRON
ISO 9000 CERTIFIED

helping you change your seats.

Fulton 6, Fraccionamiento Industrial San Nicolás
Tlalnepantla Edo. de México, MÉXICO, 54030
Tel: (52.55) 53.10.10.46 • 53.11.50.00 Fax: 53.17.40.51
Email: pepe@asientosamaya.com.mx
Email: donovan@asientosamaya.com.mx

Nevada

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

other carriers for special events, the number of coaches that could be leased, and under what circumstances they could be leased. "I think it would just give them more probable cause to impound our vehicles," he said.

This year's efforts against the TSA come after two years of not too successful tries by Fairman and his coalition.

In 2005, he managed to get about a half-dozen bills introduced in the legislature that would have resolved most of the problems the carriers are having with the agency. Just one — a measure that would have done away with the TSA and assigned most of its duties to other state agencies — came close to becoming law.

Although it passed both houses, it was vetoed by Gov. Kenny C. Guinn because it contained a last-minute amendment that would have hurt the taxi industry. The governor said at the time that he

would have signed the legislation had it not been for the added language that would have prevented taxi drivers from accepting tips from nightclub owners for taking passengers to their businesses.

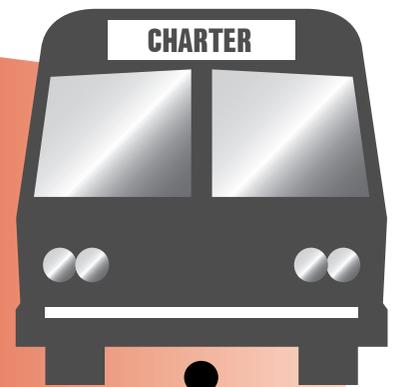
Concerned they could not afford to wait another two years before getting another crack at the legislature — lawmakers in Nevada meet only every other year — Fairman and the coalition took their fight to the federal courts where they sued the TSA.

The suit charged the TSA was overstepping its authority with its regulatory efforts against the motorcoach industry. A federal judge, however, ruled year that the TSA was protected from such legal action under the U.S. Constitution and tossed out the suit.

Although it was a severe blow to motorcoach carriers in Nevada, it apparently gave Fairman the incentive he needed to carry on the fight.

To contact Fairman, motorcoach and bus operators should call (800) 334-4176.

**Dump
CLEAN...
Dump
LEGAL!**



WASHROOM WASTE DISPOSAL UNIT
Installs directly into your existing sewer system!

Lavatory dump hopper is assembled and ready to install in your existing sewer system. Its cover plate is easily rolled back with the remover tool. Each of your service lanes can easily be equipped with this time-saving unit, which has been the industry standard for over thirty years. All major credit cards accepted.

Call 1-866-LAV-DUMP or email lavdump@yahoo.com for additional information.

▲ Washroom waste is removed quickly, easily and safely

HUDSON RIVER CORPORATION

Call toll free: 1-866-LAV-DUMP | Fax: 1-201-420-3322

The J4500. It's #1 for a reason.



Make that 2,000 reasons.

It's not every day that a motor coach model celebrates a milestone like 2,000 units on the road. Then again, it's not every day that a coach as appealing as the MCI® J4500 comes along. As luxurious as it is dependable, as attractive as it is easy to operate, and backed by an unparalleled parts and service network, the MCI J4500 is the best-selling coach in the industry.

Discover what many operators already know. Call today to test-drive a J4500. Or learn more about one of our other great models: the opulent E4500; the newly redesigned classic D4505; or our 40-foot D4005.



Capitol Bus Lines adds the 2,000th MCI® J4500 to its fleet, setting a new milestone for the nation's No. 1 luxury coach

Why MCI

- ▶ 24-hour in-house Emergency Roadside Assistance
- ▶ Fast-or-Free Parts Guarantee
- ▶ Nine service centers in the U.S. and Canada
- ▶ MCI Technical Training Institute
- ▶ Some of the longest warranties in the industry



MOTOR COACH
INDUSTRIES

Going further!

Call 1-866-MCICOACH or
visit www.mcicoach.com.

A distorted picture of the charter bus industry

Warning: Do not read this article unless you've taken your blood pressure medication for the day.

Now that eight months of negotiations to rewrite the federal charter bus regulations have ended in a stalemate on critical issues, the job of revamping the rules devolves to attorneys employed by the Federal Transit Administration.

Obviously, that development should strike fear in the heart of every motorcoach operator who has ever put a bus on the road and faced overt or covert competition from a public transit agency that gets a large chunk of its funding from the very same Federal Transit Administration.

There may be some who read this newspaper who are able to muster up the courage to believe the FTA attorneys will do the right thing and keep public transit agencies out of the charter business. But, we doubt, there are many.

Or, who believe the FTA attorneys will carefully consider the potential for horrific financial damage to scores, if not hundreds, of private bus operators if they screw up and give public transit agencies the right to offer charter service beyond very, very narrow limits.

But the biggest mistake would be to believe that the FTA attorneys will retreat — ivory-tower like — to their steel and glass offices and write the rules in splendid isolation, free from outside pressure and influence.

There's not a chance in the world of that happening. After all, the FTA offices are on Seventh Street in Washington, D.C.

Here is a small, simple sample of the kind of lobbying and pres-

sure they will face. The pressure is in the form of a one-page letter from an organization you've doubtless never heard of, the County Executives of America.

Membership in County Executives of America is composed entirely of the chief elected officials of more than 700 county or consolidated city/county governments across the U.S. In other

'Private (bus) operators have a role but, by their very nature, they are transitory and do not have long-term ties to communities.'

words, its members are the highest elected executives of the largest metro governments in the country, representing more than half of the U.S. population.

So, when the executive director of the County Executives of America writes a letter to the administrator of the Federal Transit Administration about the charter bus regulations, you can bet the letter gets read and copies put under pillows at night.

The letter to the FTA penned by Michael G. Griffin, who has been executive director of the County Executives of America for the past 17 or 18 years, is outrageously inflammatory, inaccurate and misleading. Here's what he wrote:

First, he noted that the County Executives of America organization "has a direct interest in the

outcome of the final rule (the FTA) will issue on the topic of charter bus regulations.

"We fully respect the right of the nation's private bus operators to serve the private market, but at the same time we strongly support the right of local governments to make appropriate and efficient use of locally-owned public transit buses for special events open to the public, for special transportation assistance to local governments in their efforts to create jobs and development. In other words, a good public transit operation is more than just a fixed-route service, it is a provider of community-based transit services.

"Private operators have a role but, by their very nature, they are transitory and do not have long-term ties to communities. They move with the markets, they change ownerships and personnel, and in general are not interested in supplying services in which little or no profit can be reasonably expected.

"Your agency set a goal of increasing ridership on public transit throughout the United States. One way to do that is to have the public transit system serve community events so a wider segment of the population can be exposed to the convenience or, in some cases, the very existence of the local public transit operator.

"Public transit systems should also be available to provide limited transportation services for local government functions within their service areas. Non-profit groups which serve disadvantaged segments of the population should also be benefactors of the local,

state and federal investment in public transit operations.

"This organization urges and encourages you to propose a rule which lets the taxpayers get a reasonable return on their investment in the local public transit system."

Nice, huh?

Take a moment and reread those last five paragraphs.

That's the kind of trash that's

'Most (private) bus companies make community involvement and responsibility a core value of their daily operations.'

very likely inundating the FTA and its rules-writing attorneys right now from transit agencies and their "stakeholders," like Mr. Griffin.

If you are as offended as we were by Mr. Griffin's characterization of the private bus industry, or assertion that buses largely paid for by federal tax dollars are "locally owned," perhaps you can take a few minutes and write to the top county executive where you live and let that person know that Mr. Griffin is all wet.

You could point out, for example, the extent of your involvement in your community, the length of your involvement in your community, and your resentment at being characterized as a fly-by-night operator that's simply out looking for charitable organizations to financially rape.

You might also note that there are few industries where executives come and go faster than those who manage public transit agencies. These rootless transit managers have no ties to or history in the communities where they land. The revolving door likely was invented by a public transit administrator.

Also, while you're at it, write to The Honorable James S. Simpson, administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, and let him know in five concise paragraphs or less how wrong it is for public transit agencies to use taxpayer dollars to provide charter bus service — however well-intentioned.

Here's Mr. Simpson's address: 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Also, be sure to point out to Mr. Simpson a bedrock fact Mr. Griffin totally ignores: On a daily basis, private bus operators provide safe, affordable and efficient transportation for tens of thousands of people. Most of these bus companies make community involvement and responsibility a core value of their operations. Mr. Griffin could not be more wrong.

And speaking of Mr. Griffin, his organization's Web site (www.countyexecutives.org) contains a list of his board of directors. You might want to take a look to see if the chief executive of your county or metro area is on that board.

And, if he or she is, you might want to write a second letter, letting your county executive know you aren't very thrilled with Mr. Griffin's characterization of your industry and your company.

How to contact us:

To submit or report news, Letters to the Editor, articles, news releases:

E-mail: bsankey@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Fax: (866) 930-8426

Mail: 4930 W. Glendale Ave., Suite 6
Glendale, AZ 85301

Call: (623) 930-8423

To subscribe or inquire about your subscription:

Call: (623) 930-8421

E-mail: ebalm@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Fax: (866) 930-8426

Mail: 4930 W. Glendale Ave., Suite 6
Glendale, AZ 85301

To report corrections:

Call: (623) 930-8421

E-mail: bsankey@busandmotorcoachnews.com

To advertise or to mail advertising-related materials:

Call: Johnny Steger

(623) 930-8422 or (602) 980-0840

E-mail: jsteger@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Mail: 4930 W. Glendale Ave., Suite 6

Glendale, AZ 85301

To contact the
United Motorcoach Association:

Call: (800) 424-8262

Online: www.uma.org

To send advertisements or photographs
via the Internet:

E-mail: BMNews@jezac.com

©2006 by the United Motorcoach Association.
Reproduction in whole or in part without
written permission is prohibited.

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

ISSUE NO. 92

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

Staff

Editor & Publisher
Victor Parra

Sales Director
Johnny Steger

Senior Editor
Bruce Sankey

Industry Editor
Ken Presley

Associate Editor
Ellen Balm

Editorial Assistant
Tara Sheehan

Editorial Assistant
Amy Stalknecht

Editorial Assistant
Eric Morales

Art Director
Mary E. McCarty

Accountant
John Giddens

Advisory Board

William Allen
Sierra Trailways
Sacramento, Calif.

Steve Haddad
Carl R. Bieber Tourways
Kutstown, Pa.

Larry Benjamin
Northfield Lines
Northfield, Minn.

Rick Hillard
Tri-State Tours
Galena, Ill.

Dave Bolen
New World Tours
Bristow, Va.

Todd Holland
Ramblin' Express
Colorado Springs

David Brown
Holiday Tours
Randlemann, N.C.

Robert Hume
Travel Mates Trailways
Harrisonburg, Va.

Steve Brown
Brown Coach
Amsterdam, N.Y.

Daryl G. Johnson
J & J Charters
Crosby, Texas

Bob Foley
ABC Companies
Faribault, Minn.

Dale Krapf
Krapf Coaches
West Chester, Pa.

Godfrey LeBron
Paradise Trailways
Hicksville, N.Y.

Joan Libby
Cavalier Coach
Boston, Mass.

Michael Neustadt
Coach Tours
Brookfield, Conn.

Jeff Polzien
Red Carpet Tours
Oklahoma City

Tom Ready
Ready Bus Lines
LaCrescent, Minn.

Brian Scott
Escot Bus Lines
Largo, Fla.

Michelle Silvestro
National Interstate Insurance Co.
Richfield, Ohio

T. Ralph Young
Young Transportation
Ashville, N.C.

Setra – a Brand of DaimlerChrysler

The benchmark
in luxury coaches



- Exciting, distinctive European design
- Unrivalled passenger comfort
- Outstanding driveability and maneuverability
- Finely tuned functionality
- Easy-to-service components of the highest quality
- A state-of-the-art safety package
- Backed by DaimlerChrysler

Setra of North America, Inc.
6012-B High Point Road
Greensboro, NC 27407
Toll free: 1.800.882.8054
email: sales@DCBUSNA.com
www.setra-coaches.com

SETRA
LUXURY COACHES

DOT audit says FMCSA should be tougher on rogue outfits

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General has criticized the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for not being tough enough on chronic violators of highway safety regulations.

In the past year, the FMCSA imposed its maximum fine on only 33 of 533 repeat violators, says an audit by the Inspector General, who recommends harsher treatment of truck and bus operators that are persistent offenders.

At the same time, the audit said the implementation of the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999, which created the FMCSA, has improved truck and bus safety.

In its response to the audit, the FMCSA said it would strengthen

its policy by May to make sure the most serious violations are counted correctly when assessing fines.

The audit also found the agency and states have improved the quality of safety performance data. For example, the percentage of carriers

that did not report census data on drivers, buses and trucks was cut from 42 to 27 percent in a two-year period ending in 2005.

Still, the FMCSA needs to keep up pressure on states to track drivers suspected of fraud.

New entrants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

mate means and certified prior to obtaining permission to convey 50+ passengers on dangerous and crowded highways.

The FMCSA has discovered during the past two years, however, that new entrants, despite the requirement that they certify they know and will comply with federal safety regulations, were not complying.

The agency is now proposing to eliminate the requirement that a new operator use the Form MCS-150A — Safety Certification for Application for USDOT Number — to certify that it knows and will comply with federal safety regulations.

The FMCSA is essentially shifting the disclosures to the Form OP-1(P) — Application for Motor Passenger Carrier Authority, which contains a safety certification section.

The agency also intends to check compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act during the new entrant safety audit. However, failure to comply with

these requirements would not impact the outcome of the safety audit.

According to the FMCSA, the proposed changes would not impose additional operational requirements on any new-entrant operator. All new entrants would continue to receive educational information on how to comply with the safety regulations and be given an opportunity to correct any deficiencies found.

The FMCSA says many new entrants are small businesses that are unaware of all of the safety requirements and need the agency's assistance.

Finally, FMCSA also is proposing establishing a separate new-entrant application procedure and safety oversight program for non-North America-domiciled motor carriers.

Overall, the FMCSA believes its proposal would improve its ability to identify at-risk new entrant operators and assure deficiencies in basic safety management controls are corrected before the new entrant is granted permanent registration.

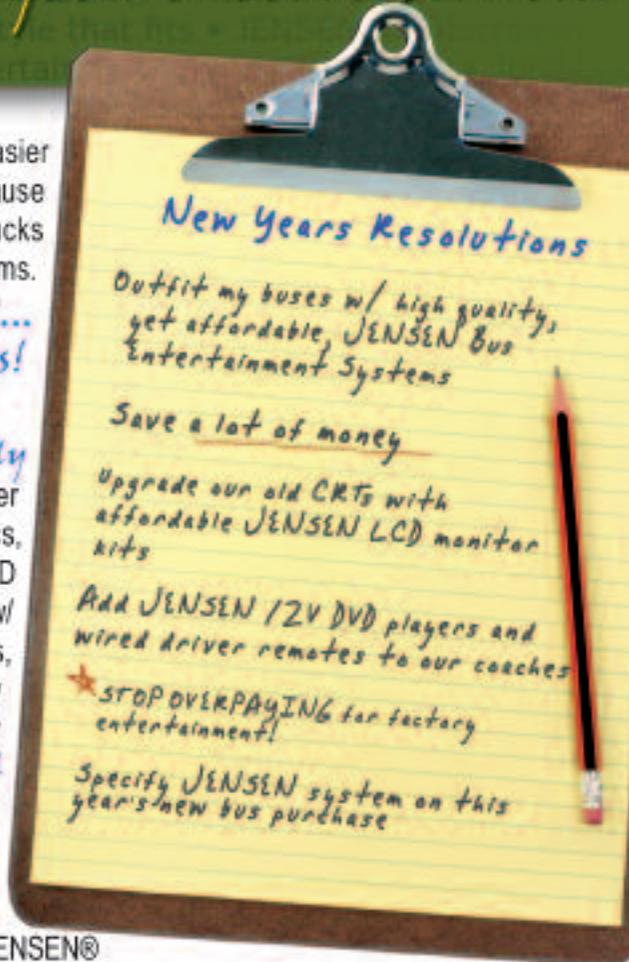
The proposal was published in the Dec. 21 Federal Register. Go to: www.gpoaccess.gov.

Stick to this year's resolutions...

Most New Year's Resolutions are easier said than done. But not this year! Because 2007 is **THE** year to start saving **BIG** bucks on high quality bus entertainment systems.

Begin your year with **JENSEN®**...
a style that fits!

ASA/JENSEN® brings you a *full family* of Bus Entertainment products. We offer JENSEN® stereos w/ integrated PAs, mics, and accessories; as well as 10" & 15" LCD wide-screen monitors, 12V DVD players w/ mountable wired driver/hostess remotes, and LCD upgrade kits that make it easy and cost effective to replace old factory CRT monitors. We've got our hands *full* of new & unique products *specifically designed* for the coach bus industry.



Don't forget to check out the all new JENSEN® PADIN3 PADVD Controller. Yes, there's *finally* a PA controller that can fully operate a DVD player! It features partitioned audio with separate controls for Driver and Passenger speakers, allowing each party to listen to their *own* audio source. With user-friendly buttons and a larger LCD display, your drivers will be glad the PADIN3 made it on your *list!*



With JENSEN®, you can outfit or upgrade your buses with high quality entertainment systems *without overpaying* for factory installed electronics. This means you *save* a lot of money *and* you get to accomplish your new year's resolutions! So, come see us at **ASA/JENSEN® UMA Booth #907** or contact our distributors today for more information on our complete bus product lineup or to request a 2007 catalog.

JENSEN®... a style that fits.



JENSEN® Bus Entertainment Systems available through our Authorized Bus Distributors.

Eastern
Kingston Mobile
866.733.2820

Western
LTM Electronics
800.447.6825

National Installer
Ward Electronics
800.695.1670



Shuttle Bus Leasing

"Your Solution For Shuttling & Fixed Route Contracting"

Leases Terms Available From 3 Months to 2 Years

High Quality, Transit Shuttle Buses

Over 1000 Buses In Inventory

22' To 60' Models Available



Parking Lot Shuttles ~ Seasonal Coverage
Employee Shuttling ~ Peak Demand Coverage



Top Quality Transit Buses Also
Available for Sale

800-287-7253

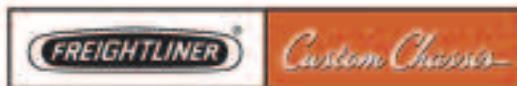
1863 Service Court, Riverside, CA 92507
www.ShuttleBusLeasing.com



FREIGHTLINER A chassis you can trust

SUNLINER COACH An alluring, state of the art,
innovative Coach setting new standards
for the coach industry.

*We believe we achieved the perfect marriage between a chassis and coach.
Designed for ultimate passenger comfort, reliability, and maximum cost effectiveness.
The Sunliner Coach based on the Freightliner chassis is the ideal choice
to maximize your investments return.*



With service available throughout the Freightliner service network the Sunliner Coach is the obvious choice.

**Choose from a large selection of sizes
starting at 27 passengers to 42 passengers**



Call to arrange a test ride and drive today!

For Information Contact:
CLIFFORD C. CLARE, JR. • cclare@stallionbus.com
1-888-949-4673 • 1-860-350-4846 fax

UMA gets tough

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In its request that the regional administrators investigate possible charter rules violations by the agencies they regulate, UMA also asked the FTA officials to refer the results of their investigations to the Justice Department when they find charter violations.

"Frankly, the only way the FTA can avoid the Department of Justice from ultimately becoming engaged in these violations is to crack down on them," said Presley. "The violations are too widespread and the private operators are noticing the violations more and more."

Additionally, UMA wants the Internal Revenue Service to get involved to determine whether the money received by transit agencies for charter services is being properly accounted for and taxed.

At the same time, UMA has asked the regional administrators to go harder on transit agencies it determines have violated charter rules.

"We are requesting that upon findings of violations, funds be withheld from the recipients proportionate to the violations, along with an amount determined to be punitive," said Presley.

Punitive fines, says Presley, will send a message to transit managers, local government officials and community residents that private charter service by a public transit agency violates federal regulations and will not be tolerated.

The three transit agencies that triggered the aggressive new approach by UMA are:

First Capital Trolley of Guthrie, Okla. According to UMA, this transit agency is a frequent and unrepentant violator of the charter service rules, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, which it is supposed to provide oversight for the agency, is failing to fulfill its responsibilities. The Web site for Guthrie, Okla., even promotes the availability of charter service by First Capital Trolley. The Web site notes that First Capital trolleys "are available for private rental for \$50 per hour within the Guthrie area, and \$65 hourly outside of town."

Virginia Regional Transportation Association, which operates under the name Virginia Regional Transit, of Purcellville. UMA says this transit agency provided private charters in June and July for \$300 daily, a rate that would be unobtainable without a federal subsidy.

Transits seek charter providers

The following public transit providers have informed the United Motorcoach Association of their intent to provide charter bus service unless willing-and-able private operators step forward to offer service. UMA urges appropriate operators to take the time to respond to these notices:

Greater Des Moines, Iowa. Deadline: Jan. 5, 2007. Write to: Brian M. Litchfield, Director of Program Development, Des Moines Regional Transit Authority, 1100 Dart Way, Des Moines, IA 50309. Phone: (515) 283-5007.

Mecosta County, Mich. Deadline: Jan. 12, 2007. Write to: City of Big Springs, Attn: Charter Service Public Notice, 226 N. Michigan Ave., Big Rapids, MI 49307. Phone: (231) 796-8675.

Bluefield (Mercer County), W.Va. Bluefield Area Transit.

Clarksburg (Harrison County), W.Va. Central West Virginia Transit Authority.

Elkins (Randolph County), W.Va. Country Roads Transit.

Fairmont (Marion County), W.Va. Fairmont-Marion County Transit Authority.

Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas and Webster counties, W.Va. Mountain Transit Authority.

Grantsville (Calhoun County), W.Va. Little Kanawha Bus.

Kingwood (Preston County), W.Va. Buckwheat Express.

Petersburg (Grant County), W.Va. Potomac Valley Transit Authority.

Philippi (Barbour County), W.Va. Here and There Transit.

Wayne (Wayne County), W.Va. Wayne X-Press.

West Hamlin (Lincoln County) W.Va. TriRiver Transit.

The notices for the above 11 transit agencies have a deadline of Jan. 12, 2007. Write to: West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transit, Bldg. 5, Room 830, 1900 Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, WV 25305-0432. Phone: (304) 558-0428.

Berkeley County, W. Va. Deadline: Jan. 14, 2007. Write to:

Lee Ann Sansone, Operations Assistant, Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority, 446 Novak Dr., Martinsburg, WV 25401. Phone: (304) 263-0876.

Corpus Christi, Texas. Deadline: Jan. 18, 2007. Write to: Lamont Taylor, Director of Compliance, Regional Transportation Authority, 5659 Bear Lane, Corpus Christi, TX 78405. Phone: (361) 289-2712.

Greene County, Ohio. Deadline: 4 p.m. Jan. 29, 2007. Write to: Rich Schultze, Executive Director, Greene County Transit Board, 245 Valley Rd., Xenia, OH 45385. Phone: (937) 562-6511.

Louisville, Ky. Deadline: Jan. 29, 2007. Write to: Alyce French-Johnson, Assistant Executive Director, Transit Authority of River City, 1000 W. Broadway, Louisville, KY 40203. Phone: (502) 561-5104. Informational meeting for private operators will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, in the board room of Union Station, 1000 W. Broadway.

Pee-Dee Regional Transportation Authority of Florence, S.C.

Last month, this transit agency provided charter service, using two

buses, for a student group to travel to a theater nearly 70 miles away.

**HIGH EFFICIENCY
ALTERNATORS
AND MOBILE
ELECTRONIC
DEVICES**

Get The **PennTex**
INDUSTRIES, INC.



PennTex products are proudly manufactured in FORT WORTH, TEXAS, USA.

PX-833

Advantage!

The PennTex PX-833 is efficiently air-cooled and produces 60 additional amps with an output rating of 330 amps. The efficient PX-833 causes less drag on the engine to produce the same output as the 50DN, which saves fuel.

- ✓ 330A/24V, with more than 200 amps at idle
- ✓ Air-cooled for maximum performance
- ✓ Efficient design reduces fuel consumption
- ✓ High temperature bearings and grease
- ✓ Uses existing regulator, pulley and wiring

PennTex
INDUSTRIES, INC.

PennTex Industries, Inc. 202 Plaza Dr.
Manchester, PA 17345

Complete Equipment and Parts Catalog Available. Can be downloaded from our expanded Web Site: penntexusa.com

Sales and Technical Toll Free: 877-590-7366

Sales Fax: 817-590-0505

E-MAIL: sales@penntexusa.com

Expo shuttle in Charleston is back in private hands

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Shuttle bus service for a large exposition here — that was the focus of a charter service complaint filed last year against the local transit agency — is returning to the private sector.

When the popular Southeastern Wildlife Exposition opens in Charleston next month, the show's shuttle will be provided by 5 Star Transportation of Moncks Corner, S.C. Charlie Hill and Ingrid Long are principals of 5 Star.

For last year's show, the event organizers paid Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority, known locally as CARTA, \$23,000 to provide shuttle service for attendees.

During the previous 15 years, private operators had provided the shuttles.

FTA grants easy payout to violator

WASHINGTON — The Federal Transit Administration has decided to go easy on Akron Metro Regional Transit Authority for its egregious charter rules violations during a 3½-year period.

Last March, the FTA regional administrator in Chicago ruled that Akron Metro violated federal charter rules at least 475 times between 2002 and 2005, and said the agency should lose more than \$620,000 in federal funding. (See April 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Six months later, new FTA Administrator James S. Simpson upheld the regional administrator's decision, but reduced the amount of FTA money to be withheld to just over \$415,000. (See Oct. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Now, Simpson has decided the money will be withheld over a two-year period — fiscal 2007 and 2008. That means Akron Metro is getting \$207,500 less during fiscal 2007 and next year than it normally would have received.

Akron Metro receives upwards of \$6.3 million annually from the FTA, so the \$207,500 represents just over 3 percent of its yearly allocation.

While the \$415,000 — and larger \$620,000 amount — are relatively small potatoes to Akron Metro, those dollars represent very significant business losses for private operators in Akron and northern Ohio. The operators not only lost business but got no compensation for their losses.

In April, the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina lodged a formal complaint with the Federal Transit Administration, contending CARTA was providing prohibited charter service for the expo. (See May 1 and July 1 issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

FTA Regional Administrator Yvette Taylor ruled last fall that the service CARTA provided in conjunction with the expo was not open to the public. (See Nov. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Meanwhile, Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at

UMA and the author of the complaint filed against CARTA, says the CARTA decision has had a salutary affect on other transit agencies in South Carolina.

He noted that a transit agency that has been providing charter service for a large marathon-like event

wants to work with the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina to involve the private sector.

“Actually, this will be a bigger win economically than the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, but likely not possible without our win against CARTA,” said Presley.

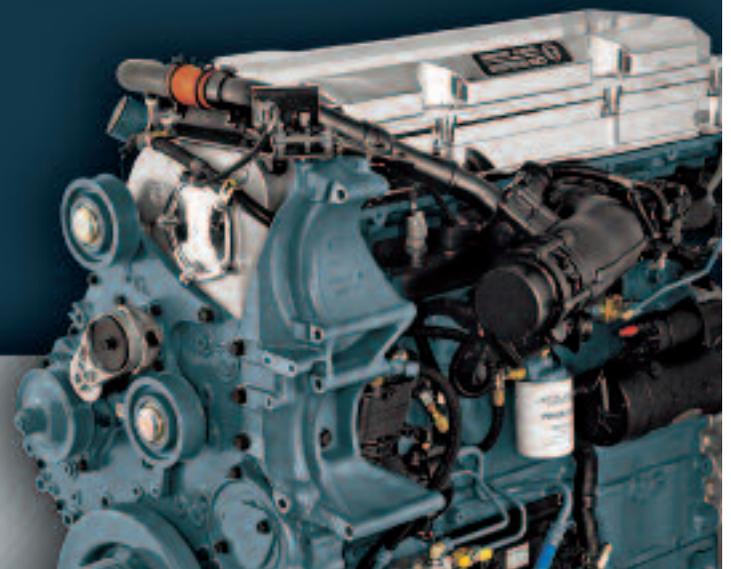


YOU GET THEM ON THE BUS. WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE.

For decades Detroit Diesel engines have provided the reliable, efficient performance you depend on. After millions of miles of successful testing, our EPA '07 engines are ready to support you. We are committed to the things you need to deliver passengers on time, like reliability, service and parts availability. Because when we do our part, you can focus on other things — like keeping your coaches filled with people. Learn more at www.detroitdiesel.com.



www.detroitdiesel.com Specifications are subject to change without notice. Detroit Diesel and the spinning arrows design are registered trademarks of Detroit Diesel. © 2006, Freightliner LLC. All rights reserved. Detroit Diesel is a member of the Freightliner Group. Freightliner LLC is a DaimlerChrysler company.



Bus co-op

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ers by regularly out bidding competitors and paying the most for the spots. High spots can go for anywhere from \$1 to \$4 for each hit a company gets on its site.

"No one calls 411 or looks in the Yellow Pages anymore," he said. "They all go on the Internet now and that's where the brokers have the advantage and where they can put the squeeze on the carriers."

The Bus Co-Op hopes to take over many of the top search positions by pooling its money and out bidding brokers for the lead positions. The positions can change frequently as companies offer more money to move up on the list of results.

The game plan of the cooperative is to recruit 500 small- and medium-size carriers from across the country that will buy into the cooperative with a one-time charge of \$10,000 to \$20,000. The fee, which would depend on the location and size of the company, could be paid with 25 percent down and quarterly payments over three or four years.

This would give each of them an ownership share in the cooperative, exclusive rights to customers in one or more three-digit Zip Codes they select, and discounts on equipment and services.

And, it would give the cooperative enough money to immediately begin making a run at moving past the bus brokers on the search engines. Organizations and individuals hunting for a charter company on the

Internet would find Bus Co-Op's Web site high on the list of returns, giving the cooperative a better shot at landing charter work.

Eisenberg said the co-op's Web site will provide potential customers with a quote for their charter and then turn them over to the individual company in their area that they could deal with directly.

"When someone uses a broker they have no idea what company they will be getting until the coach pulls up to pick them up," he noted. "With us, the customers will get direct access to the carriers so they know who they are dealing with."

Customers will benefit with price reductions, too, because the broker or middle person would no longer be in the picture, according to Eisenberg.

He said the cooperative has been requesting quotes from a number of brokers for typical charters and is finding that brokers are getting huge returns. For instance, the brokers came back with prices of between \$3,200 and \$4,500 for a charter that normally would cost \$2,400.

"They're making more money than we are and they don't have any equipment to buy, insurance payments or anything other than the Internet to worry about," he noted.

Eisenberg predicted that once customers have an easy alternative when searching for a charter company, the high markups the brokers are cashing in on will disappear.

In addition to getting new business for their companies, motorcoach operators who join the cooperative would be eligible for dis-

counts on equipment, fuel, medical insurance and a variety of other products and services. Industry suppliers already have indicated to the group they would like to take part once the cooperative gets under way, according to Eisenberg.

"With 500 companies and 7,500 coaches, we would have very strong buying power for equipment and services," he adds.

Under the group's business plan, the cooperative would obtain contracts from vendors that would allow them to purchase the products and services at sharply reduced prices. The group then would resell them to its members with a slight markup, which would produce a steady flow of revenue that would keep the cooperative in business and allow it to continue to maintain its high position on the search engines.

Eisenberg said he views the effort as life saving for many small- to medium-size carri-

ers that could be run out of business if the brokers continue to grow their businesses and more of them enter the market.

"The brokers are putting the squeeze on the carriers now and it has become a real serious problem," he emphasized. "Without some kind of program like ours, I believe many carriers will fall by the wayside."

He likened the situation to the clothing business where he spent more than 20 years before joining the motorcoach industry. Eisenberg was a clothing wholesaler who saw clothing brokers take over the industry, forcing hundreds of small clothing stores out of business.

"I know in my heart of hearts that that is going to happen in the motorcoach industry if we don't do something," he said.

The cooperative's Web site — www.bus-coop.com — is expected to be up and running in early February.

Risky driving

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

clues and didn't realize the vehicle ahead of them had stopped.

Studies by federal transportation regulators show that most rear-end crashes involving buses following each other occur when the lead bus had been stopped for just two to five seconds, meaning the bus behind was traveling too close to stop in time.

This often happens in convoys; drivers some times forget or ignore rules about following too closely when they get in a convoy.

Burkert also stresses that drivers can become confused — especially if their attention is diverted to something else or they are tired — by what they see ahead of them because stopped and slowing traffic can look the same.

That's why following too closely can have such devastating results.

By not maintaining a proper distance behind the bus ahead, a driver is unable to detect traffic changes and then does not have enough time to react to them to stop in time.

Burkert says equipment failures often play a role in rear-end accidents as well, especially poorly maintained brake systems. In many of those cases, he says, the condition of the equipment on a bus in an accident has shown that the braking power or air

system response was inadequate or beneath regulatory minimums.

He says new electronic equipment such as front-end radar systems that alert the driver when the vehicle is too close to the one ahead of it shows great promise in helping operators reduce the number of rear-end accidents involving their coaches.

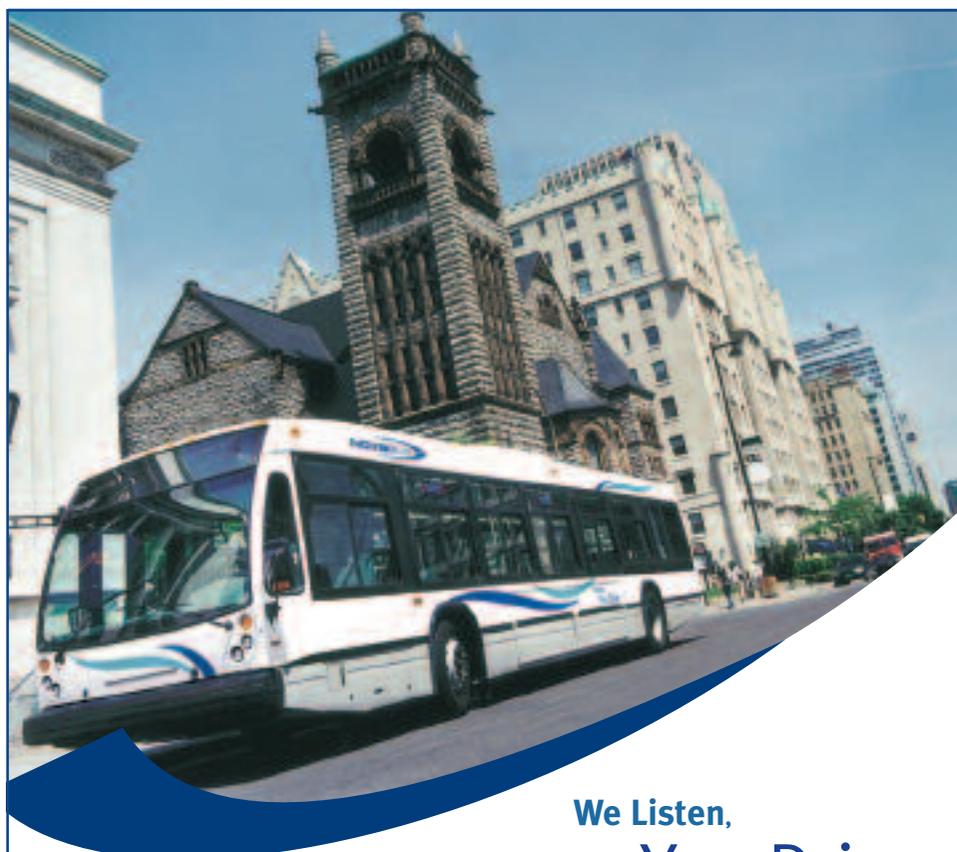
In addition, electronic monitoring systems that can detect driver braking practices can alert an operator to a driver who may not be driving safely all the time and who possibly could be headed for a rear-end accident in the future.

"Hard braking can be an indicator of aggressive driving, possibly following too closely, failing to observe potential problems, or missing visual clues," notes Burkert.

Meantime, he suggests that operators make certain they have strict safety standards in place for their drivers and their equipment, and that they continually train their drivers, especially on the rules for convoy driving.

The training, he says, should focus on speed, following distances, aggressive driving, fatigue, staying attentive and being alert to what is taking place down the road.

"The worst case in a rear-end collision in a convoy is that you could destroy at least two buses and injure more than 100 people, which could cost upwards of \$1 million," he adds.



We Listen,
You Drive

Discover the new face of performance with the line of Nova Bus transit, suburban, and shuttle vehicles. Building on our reputation for quality, our bold new front styling reflects the sound engineering and unique design features you have come to expect from every vehicle we produce. At Nova Bus, the quality is built right in. **We listen, You Drive.**

www.novabus.com



SEFAC
Mobile Column Lifts

800.826.3486
www.sefac.com

Motorcoaches find slow going at U.S.-Canadian border

TORONTO — The Ontario Motor Coach Association reports its members have been encountering long delays clearing customs when returning to Canada at the Peace, Rainbow and Queenston-Lewiston bridges.

Operators say some coaches have been forced to wait for hours in customs' queues.

"We have spoken with the folks at Canada Border Services Agency in Niagara Falls (Ont.) to see what can be done to expedite clearance. It appears to be a staffing issue, coupled with the fact that motorcoach shopping trips to Buffalo, N.Y., and Erie Pa., have increased substantially over last year, probably due to the strong Canadian dollar," said OMCA president and CEO Brian Crow.

Canadian customs officials told the association that for the Peace Bridge alone, the number of buses cleared in October was up by 211 over October 2005.

On the weekend following the U.S. Thanksgiving Day, duty payments collected at the Peace Bridge from bus passengers amounted to \$80,000, compared to \$11,000 for the same weekend in 2005.

The OMCA has requested a meeting with Canada Border Services Agency staff to discuss speeding up clearance.

However, the association noted that Canadian border officers have reported a high incidence of "duty violations," or smuggling, by motorcoach passengers.

"Not surprisingly, this elevates the level of scrutiny for all coaches," said Crow. "Even some drivers have been caught trying to conceal purchases which exceed personal limits."

It also appears some tour directors and drivers have been giving bad advice to passengers about allowable limits or what to say to customs officers to avoid paying duties, Crow noted.

"Our industry is not helping itself when these games are played. Coach operators should caution drivers on the severity of smuggling."

"While drivers can't control the passengers' actions, they can ensure they themselves comply. Drivers should know that customs has the right to seize the coach in cases where a driver is smuggling."

"Drivers and tour directors or group leaders on shopping trips should not be giving advice to a passenger that contravenes information in the brochure *I Declare: A guide for residents of Canada returning to Canada*," Crow added.

The brochure can be found at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca. Click on English or French; click on Publications and Forms; click on All Publications by Number; click on "R,"

and scroll down to form No. RC4044 *I Declare*.

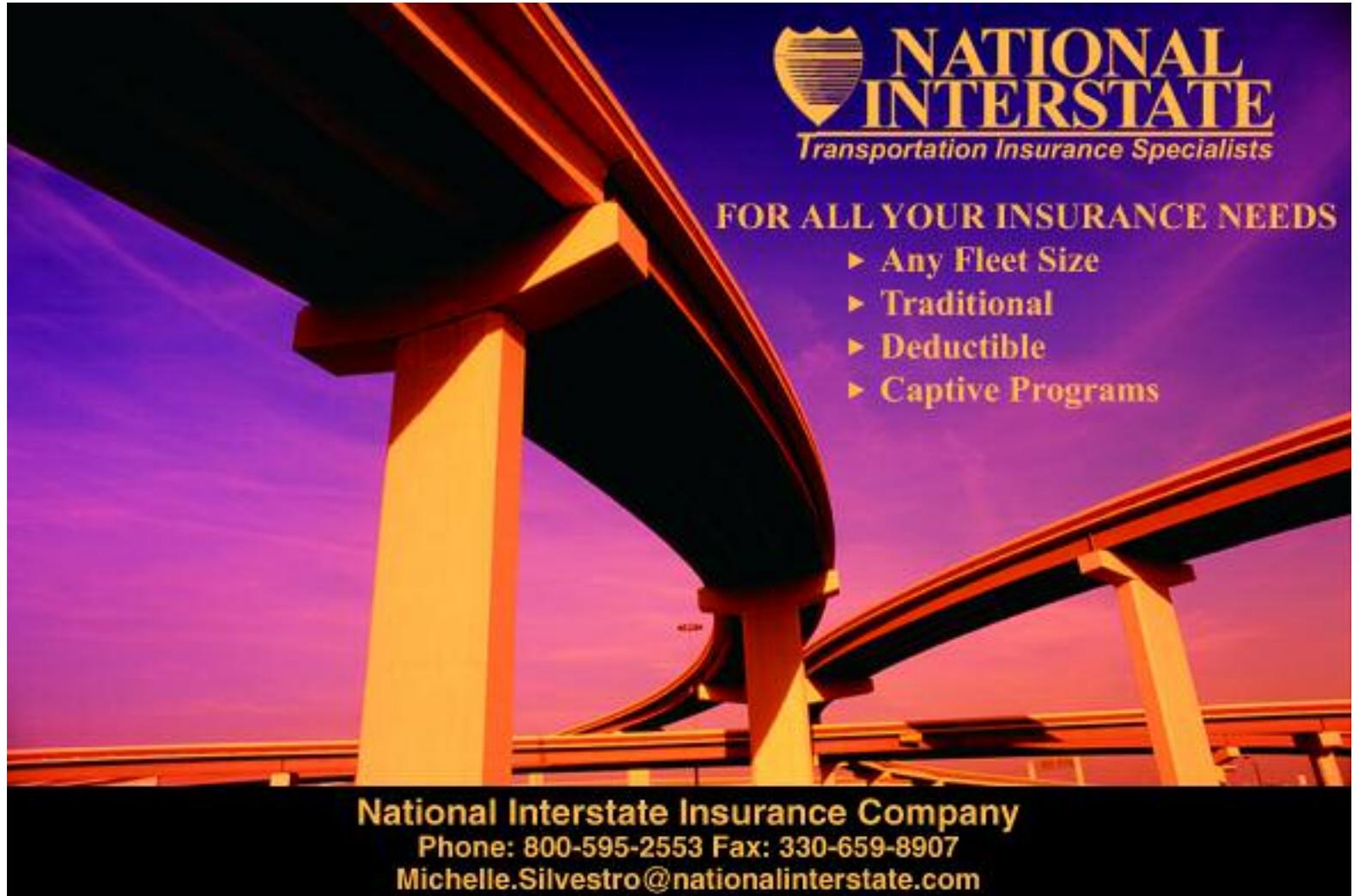
Meanwhile, the Canadian Press reports that Canadian truckers must now declare lunch items when they cross the U.S. border.

If truckers who regularly travel across the border do not precisely declare the contents within their lunch bag, they may be looking at hefty fines, the news service said.

Some drivers say they have

been fined, detained and threatened with confiscation of their U.S.-issued identity cards for trying to enter the United States with undeclared food, according to the news service.

A member of the Ontario Trucking Association says the lunch-bag crackdown is yet another U.S. security measure aimed at stopping terrorists, smuggling and threats to the food supply.



NATIONAL INTERSTATE
Transportation Insurance Specialists

FOR ALL YOUR INSURANCE NEEDS

- ▶ Any Fleet Size
- ▶ Traditional
- ▶ Deductible
- ▶ Captive Programs

National Interstate Insurance Company
Phone: 800-595-2553 Fax: 330-659-8907
Michelle.Silvestro@nationalinterstate.com

Expo Booth 521



SINGLE USE

POT SHOT®

- Easy to Use
- Measured Dosage
- Powerful Odor Control
- Low Cost
- Super Concentrated
- Pleasant Fragrance
- Non-Staining Blue Dye
- Non-Formaldehyde
- Biodegradable
- Safe for Dump Valves

The power of POT SHOT in a convenient, portion controlled, single use bottle. Portion Control POT SHOT is more effective than any other portion controlled product on the market. Each bottle is individually labeled with use instructions. No more packets that melt, stick together, and/or damage dump valves.

UNIT CHEMICAL CORPORATION
(800) 879-8648 www.unitchemical.com

60 Years Manufacturing Environmentally Safe Products

Here. There. Everywhere.

Presence. That's what we're all about. Backed by the biggest network in the industry along with a dedicated and experienced team, we're behind you all the way. Wherever you are, Prevost Parts is always there. With 7 Prevost-owned Parts & Service facilities and over 150 independent Prevost-qualified repair facilities, we're never far away.

PREVOST
PARTS
COACH & TRANSIT



CANADA

QUEBEC • 1-800-463-8876

UNITED STATES

ILLINOIS • 1-800-799-9938

NEW JERSEY • 1-800-223-0830

FLORIDA • 1-800-874-7740

TENNESSEE • 1-877-299-8881

TEXAS • 1-866-773-8678

CALIFORNIA • 1-800-421-9958

All numbers toll free

▶ Easy to find. Easy to order. www.prevostparts.com

Stallion Bus takes wraps off its U.S.-built Chinese coach

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Stallion Bus Industries has announced a series of key developments related to the Chinese-designed midsize coaches it will begin marketing to the over-the-road bus industry later this month at Motorcoach Expo.

Stallion Bus president, Clifford Clare, says the company has not only lined up financing for the coaches but also arranged lots of product liability insurance to give purchasers plenty of peace of mind.

“Every purchaser of buses, regardless of who makes them, should be concerned that the bus has a solid product liability insurance policy. We were able to secure a combined policy value of \$55 million through “A”-rated insurance carriers for Stallion products,” said Clare.

Stallion is one of three U.S. companies that are developing Chinese-built or -designed coaches for the U.S. bus market. (See Dec. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Other developments announced by Clare:

- Stallion Bus’ initial model, the Sunliner, will be available in three seating configurations — 40,

38 and 36 passengers.

- All three versions will be built on the Freightliner XBR custom rear-engine chassis. The power train will be a Cummins engine and Allison transmission.

- Maintenance will be available through the 450 Freightliner service centers in the U.S.

- Sales will be through five direct locations in Florida, Connecticut, Detroit, Los Angeles and North Carolina.

- Florida-based Lease Acceptance Corp., a two-decade-old leasing lender, has committed financing of \$20 million for Stallion buses for 2007.

David Russell of Lease Acceptance said that when his company looked at Stallion, its product partners, including Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp., and its financial backers, “we must say it is a very impressive package which cannot be ignored. We, therefore, made the (financing) commitment to them.”

Clare also revealed that Stallion Bus is being financed by a Wall Street-based private equity firm, Stanford Capital Partners, which

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ▶

FMCSA told to rethink ADA stand

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court has told the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration it must re-examine its decision to ignore a bus operator’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act when handing out operating authority.

The decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia came last month in a case brought by Peter Pan Bus Lines.

Peter Pan contends Fung Wah Transportation, a Chinatown operator that competes with Peter Pan between Boston and New York City, is ignoring ADA requirements and operating coaches without wheelchair lifts.

Peter Pan says the FMCSA shouldn’t have granted Fung Wah operating authority because of the ADA violations.

In May 2005, barely more than a month after the FMCSA gave Fung Wah its operating authority, Peter Pan filed a motion with the agency, asking for a rehearing and the immediate withdrawal of Fung Wah’s operating certificate.

In rejecting Peter Pan’s mo-

tion, the FMCSA said that according to Section 13902(a)(1) of the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995, it did not have the authority to “withhold registration for failure to comply with ADA requirements.”

The FMCSA maintains that Section 13902 does not plainly state that ADA compliance is an “applicable regulation” over which FMCSA has jurisdiction. Because FMCSA believes the language of the law is unambiguous it refused to act.

After the FMCSA denied the request for a rehearing, Peter Pan went to court to challenge the agency’s interpretation of the law and regulations.

In its decision, the appeals court disagreed with the interpretation by the FMCSA. The judges found the language in section 13902(a)(1) to be ambiguous. The judges determined that the term “this part and the applicable regulations” was not clear and could mean all DOT regulations that the Secretary of Transportation can enforce. So they sent the

issue back to the FMCSA to “fill in the gap” in the meaning of the statute.

In other words, the court said the FMCSA must reconcile and reconsider what Congress meant by “applicable regulations.”

Since it was formed seven years ago, the FMCSA has never been eager to deal with ADA issues or to have a primary role in enforcing ADA requirements for the motorcoach industry. The agency has deferred to the Justice Department, which has the primary responsibility for upholding ADA law.

It is not at all clear what the FMCSA will do next. As the American Bus Association noted in a press release, the FMCSA could begin to enforce the ADA rules on applicants, or it could bring the matter back to court.

“If the FMCSA takes the latter path, Peter Pan can raise the issue again with the court of appeals, which will rule on whether the agency’s interpretation is permissible under the law,” said ABA.

In other words, we likely haven’t heard the last of this issue.

REPAIR, RENEW AND MORE WITH COLLISION SERVICES FROM ABC.

Whether you’ve had a serious accident, a fender bender or want to add a wheelchair lift feature to your equipment — **ABC Collision Repair & Retrofit** is the clear choice!

Our crew of collision-repair technicians, service technicians and **wheelchair lift install specialists** offer the widest range of professional repair and refurbishment services that can add years of life to your equipment including:

- Major Collision Repair
- Paint, Custom Graphics and Body Services
- Wheelchair Lift Installation
- Coach and Transit Refurbishment

Drive into any world-class ABC facility, and experience the expertise of ABC collision professionals.



Exclusive U.S.  Distributor

www.abc-companies.com

MIDWEST 800-222-2875	NORTHEAST 800-222-2873	SOUTHEAST 800-222-2871	SOUTHWEST 800-222-2877	WESTERN 800-322-2877
--------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

Eight, new-for-2007 features announced for Setra

GREENSBORO, N.C. — DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses North America has announced that its flagship Setra S 417 motorcoach will have a range of new standard and optional features on the 2007 models to be unveiled at Motorcoach Expo in New Orleans this month.

Some of the innovations are market firsts, while others are designed to improve safety, passenger comfort or keep Setra ahead of the competition, said Patrick Scully, chief commercial officer for DCCB.

“Our product development

team has followed our market from day one and is unveiling features that are important to the North American operator, driver, and passenger,” said Scully. “Our ongoing improvements underscore our continual commitment to our customers and market.”

Here’s a rundown on the Setra upgrades for 2007 that will be featured on two vehicles displayed at Motorcoach Expo. One of the coaches will be the 500th S 417 built for the North American market.

- ZF-AS Tronic Transmission. The ZF automated, 12-speed AS

Tronic will be available as an option for the first time on the S 417.

- Fire detection system. An engine-compartment fire detection system will be standard on all '07 Setra S 417s.

- Tire monitoring. The SmarTire pressure and temperature monitoring system will be an option.

- A/V system. An upgraded system integrates the DVD player so movies can be played directly from the driver console.

- Destination sign. An optional LCD destination sign is available for mounting to the right side front

window.

- Passive-steer tag axle with independent suspension. Standard in '07 and a market first is the newly developed passive-steer tag axle with independent suspension.

- Integral rear window. This option helps provide a more open environment in the rear of the coach cabin.

- Automatic retracting seat-

backs and footrests. This standard feature on Setra seats speeds up coach servicing after a trip.

“Our Setra brand is the benchmark in luxury motorcoach travel, said Tom Chezem, vice president of new motorcoach sales for DCCB. “Customers expect the latest innovations from DaimlerChrysler and this year’s Setra motorcoach models... won’t be any different.”

Upgrades, additions made to RBS software

CHERRY VALLEY, N.Y. — Relational Bus Systems/RBS Inc. has announced a series of enhancements and additions to its tour-and-charter management software applications. The upgrades and additions include:

- GoTourOnline. This is RBS’ next-generation, Internet-based tour management system and it’s now available.

- GoChart2000. The latest release of the GoChart2000 program will be demonstrated at Motorcoach Expo 2007 in New Orleans this month.

- RBS-Prophesy Tracker Dispatch. This application allows users to track drivers and vehicles online and via a Motorola GPS-enabled Nextel cell phone.

- RBS-Secure. This new product from RBS is a subscription, off-site backup service. The service includes installation, setup and all software necessary to perform backup and recovery.

Among the advanced features of GoTourOnline are:

1. Back-office support for vendors and vendor payables
2. Smart-tour price calculator
3. Group tour template cloning
4. Cash requirements reporting
5. Multi-coach itineraries on the same tour
6. Mixing small groups and retail customers on the same tour

New features of GoChart2000 include:

1. Expanded security and RBS user login profiles

2. Quote follow up and analysis of closing ratio and reasons for not traveling

3. Expanded smart costing based on date and utilization patterns

4. Extended revenue and utilization reporting

Key features of the RBS-Prophesy Tracker Dispatch system include:

1. Added smart-point flags on the RBS dispatch board to indicate that a job has been sent, received and read by the driver.

2. Update to the RBS driver time management modules to reflect actual on duty/off duty, pickup and drop-off times as enter in the mobile communications device.

3. Format what information gets sent to the driver’s phone and expanded reporting suite.

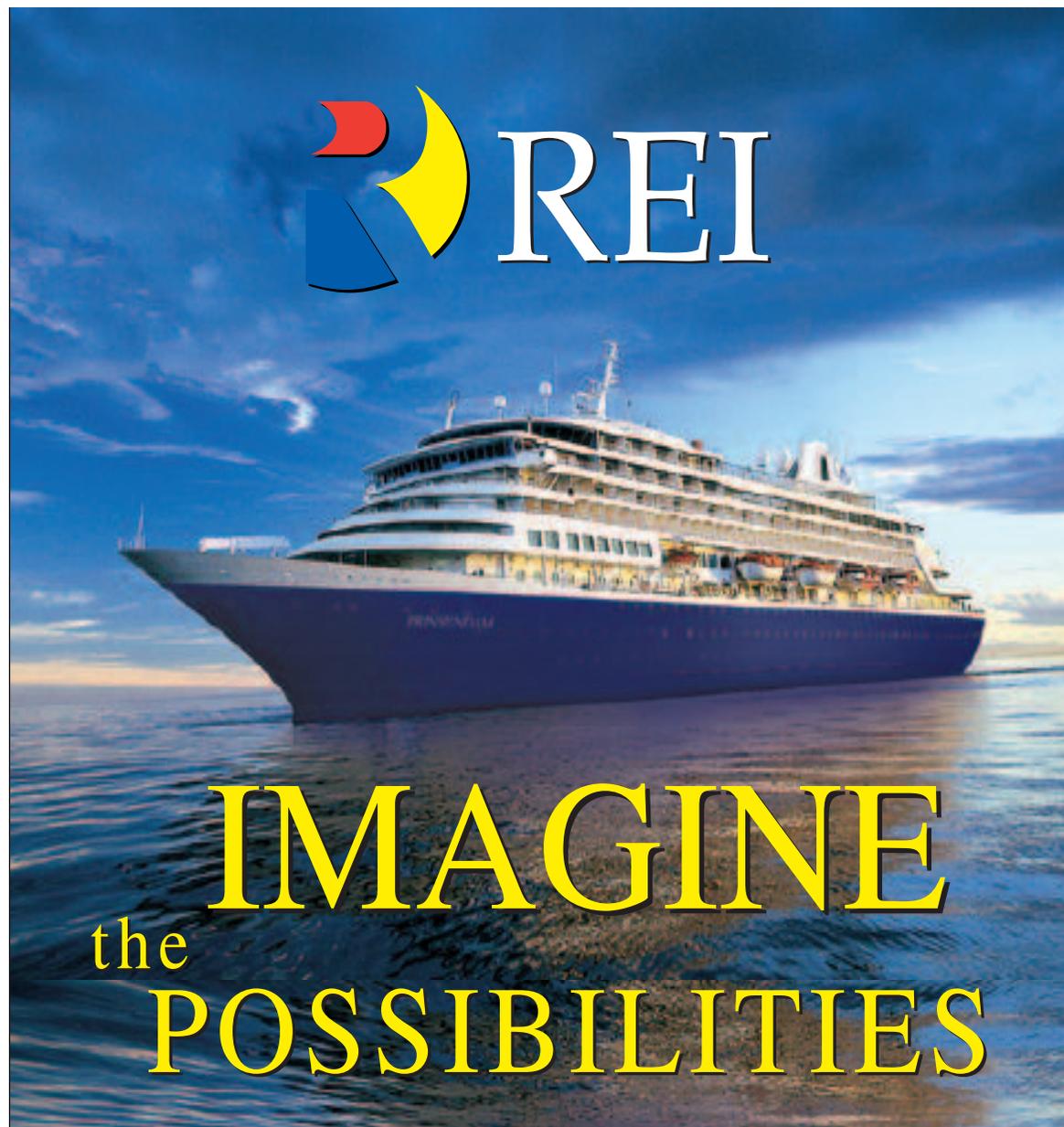
With the new RBS-Secure service product,

1. Critical data is backed-up nightly to secure servers maintained by RBS at a managed data facility in Albany NY. Data is encrypted during transmission and storage

2. Each company’s data is maintained in a discreet area on the RBS remote backup servers

3. A disaster recovery option is available that stores your data in such a way that it can be accessed remotely by up to 5 remote desktop users within 1 hour of a local server failure.

For more information, go to www.rbs200.com, or booth No. 825 at Motorcoach Expo.



REI

IMAGINE
the
POSSIBILITIES

**WIN A CRUISE FOR TWO
MOTORCOACH EXPO 2007**

**Come Experience REI’s New ELITE
Entertainment System and Register To
WIN a FREE CRUISE For Two!**

www.radioeng.com **Booth # 1039** 1.800.228.9275

Wanted To Purchase

**1999 and Newer MCI DL3’s.
Call 714-740-8888 and ask for Roman.**

REPOS FOR SALE

**Variety of makes and models of
“Bank Repos” across the United
States and Priced to Sell!**

**Call 1-877-737-2221 Ext. 716
for more information!**

'07 diesel engine switch begins, but '06s hang around

When production workers at Detroit Diesel, Caterpillar and Cummins return to their jobs this month they'll begin producing a new generation of clean-burning diesel engines.

But it will be months before the reduced-emission engines begin showing up in new motorcoaches.

That's because the coach manufacturers supplying the North American market still have scores of '06 engines to put into buses they will assemble during the first few months of 2007.

Just how many leftover 2006 engines are available for '07 coaches is unknown because the coach builders are being vague about their

inventories.

Most, however, have indicated it will be late in this quarter or into next quarter before they'll begin installing '07 engines in '07 coaches.

That could mean upwards of 12 weeks of production, or more, before the 2007-model engines, which meet stringent new EPA emissions guidelines, begin rolling off assembly lines. EPA rules allow 2006 engines to be placed in coaches built in 2007 as long as the engines are available.

Meanwhile, the nationwide transition to the ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel that must be used in the new engines has gone smoother

than many experts predicted.

In the months leading up to the switch, there had been worries the new fuel would cause supply shortages in some parts of the U.S., as well as problems with clogged fuel

filters because of the new fuel's tendency to scour fuel systems.

However, shortages have been few and far between, and there have been no widespread reports of fuel system problems.

According to the EPA, ULSD is now the primary diesel fuel produced in the United States, representing about 90 percent of the nation's total highway diesel fuel production.

Trucker tests biodiesel fuel

FORT DODGE, Iowa — Decker Truck Line and the Iowa Soybean Association are conducting what they call a "Million Mile Haul," a test to compare the performance of soy-based biodiesel fuel and conventional petroleum diesel.

The "one-of-a-kind, comprehensive fuel-impact study" is comparing a 20-percent soy biodiesel fuel blend with regular diesel fuel in a fleet of eight over-the-road trucks.

The Iowa Soybean Association said the study will be the first in

the nation to be made public and marks an industry milestone.

"The objective of this study is for the trucking industry to use the data and as a result to promote the use of soy biodiesel as an alternative fuel," the association said.

Caterpillar is participating in gathering the technical information, as well as the analysis of the findings. The trucks are equipped with Cat engines.

For more information go to www.iasoybeans.com or www.soy-biodiesel.com.



INTRODUCING THE ALL NEW...
2007 BCI FALCON 45



DRIVING YOUR BUSINESS FORWARD

- Reduce Costs
- Maximize Revenues
- Make Solid Management Decisions

Reservations • Scheduling • Dispatch • AVL • GPS • Mapping • MDC • IFTA Reports • Route Planning • Availability at a Glance and more!

www.eforwardsolutions.com
CALL (416) 273-7458 TODAY
TOLL FREE (800) 216-0978



"BUILT BY OPERATORS FOR OPERATORS"

It's here... Our all-new 2007 BCI Falcon 45' Highway Coach!

Designed to handle the unique challenges of the North American market, the new 2007 BCI Falcon 45 uses proven components manufactured by Caterpillar, Eaton, ZF, Michelin, AIT Coach Air, Webasto, and others.



The BCI Falcon 45' standard features include seamless side glass, full leather interior, steerable tag axle, 15" LCD monitors, CD and DVD, front kneeling, Alcoa wheels, back up camera, unitized hubs and much more!

See the exciting new 2007 BCI Falcon 45 at Booth 119 at the UMA Convention.



Bus & Coach International
Kansas Distribution Center
307 S. Pennsylvania Ave.
Jennings, Kansas 67643

Nevada Facility
3637 Polaris Ave.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89103



Toll-Free: (866) 714-4235 Fax: (316) 462-0876

Matthew Daecher is named COO of Daecher Consulting

CAMP HILL, Pa. — Matthew A. Daecher has been named president and chief operating officer of the Daecher Consulting Group.

Daecher succeeds his father, Carmen W. Daecher, who founded the safety consulting firm and remains chairman and chief executive.

Matthew Daecher, who has been a member of the Daecher Consulting Group since it was formed 10 years ago, has been involved in all areas of the company and has been vice president for the past seven years.

His experience includes commercial vehicle operations, as well

as accident reconstruction services. He has developed and provided safety and security training to drivers, safety managers and other groups, and provided safety consulting to bus and truck operations across the U.S.

He is active on the Bus Industry Safety Council, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, and other national organizations. He is a graduate of Kent State University.



Matthew Daecher

Bernacchi joins NABI as GM

ANNISTON, Ala. — Jim Bernacchi, who spent 14 years in senior positions at Motor Coach Industries, including chief executive, has joined North American Bus Industries Inc. as general manager.

NABI is a leading transit bus manufacturer, with operations in Anniston and Budapest, Hungary.

In his new position, Bernacchi is responsible for the day-to-day operation of NABI and its Optima Bus unit, including manufacturing operations, supply chain, engineering

and related support departments.

Seven years ago, Bernacchi left MCI after a change in ownership. A year later, he joined ABC Companies to head its new coach product support and parts division. Two years later he was named executive vice president/products and services at ABC, a new position.

Bernacchi was the first person elected coachbuilder associate member on the board of directors of the United Motorcoach Association.

Management transition at DATTCO

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — Donald DeVivo is being promoted to president of DATTCO, one of New England's premiere bus and motorcoach companies.

DeVivo will take one of the titles held by his father, Louis DeVivo, who has been DATTCO president for 44 years.

The senior DeVivo will retain his position as chairman and CEO.

The company also announced that Cliff Gibson, director of business development, will assume Donald DeVivo's role as chief operating officer.

Said Louis DeVivo: "I feel it is time to turn the reigns over to the

next generation. The company has grown significantly over the past few years and we feel this new management structure will continue that growth."

Louis DeVivo will devote more time to charting the strategic direction of the company.

Donald DeVivo, who went to work at DATTCO as a youth, holds bachelor and master's degrees from the University of Hartford, and a law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Gibson joined DATTCO last May with more than 27 years of experience in the transportation

industry. Prior to DATTCO, he was a vice president of operations for the New England division of Laidlaw International. He also has worked for VanCom Transportation, Peter Pan Bus Lines and Eastern Airlines.

DATTCO operates more than 900 school buses and upwards of 70 motorcoaches, plus 50 other vehicles in its motorcoach division.



Donald DeVivo

Blue Bird hires three senior managers

FORT VALLEY, Ga. — Blue Bird Corporation, the diversified school bus, motorcoach, transit bus and recreational vehicle manufacturer, has announced the hiring of three executives for top management positions.

William Cooper has been named senior vice president and general manager, responsible for the daily operations at all Blue Bird facilities, including manufacturing, supply chain and engineering.

Previously, Cooper was the manufacturing operations director

for Visteon Corp., an automotive industry supplier; plant manager for the Ford Motor Co., and director of quality for the Ford Motor Powertrain Systems Division.

Dale Puhmann is joining the Blue Bird Parts and Service Division as vice president of parts and service. Puhmann will be responsible for the daily operations of the business, including the development of parts sales strategies, dealer and customer interface, and general product support.

Previously, Puhmann was di-

rector of sales/marketing for Link Manufacturing, manager of customer support at John Deere, and similar positions at Caterpillar.

Roger Howsmon has been named senior vice president of school bus sales and marketing, responsible for directing the sales and marketing activities for all school bus products. Previously, Howsmon was the executive vice president of Fleetwood Enterprises, CEO of Sierra Detroit Diesel Allison and vice president of Cummins Engine Co.

Now Available —

PRE-OWNED PARTS

FROM THE NATION'S #1 LEADER IN PRE-OWNED EQUIPMENT SALES!

ABC Companies proudly introduces **our newest line of pre-owned parts and components** for **full- and mid-size coach equipment**. We're expanding our parts and service network to support your fleet with unique values that make sense for your bottom line.



- Hundreds of good used/serviceable and core parts for Van Hool, MCI, Prevost and more
- Savings up to 50% and deep discounts available

Now you can expect **speedy turnaround, great discounts** and **our signature ABC customer service** for all your pre-owned parts needs.

BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT DOORS



PREVOST



VAN HOOL



MCI



Exclusive U.S.  Distributor

www.abc-companies.com

Call Dean Gregor, toll free at 1-800-222-2875, ext. 129 for information and parts orders today.

Ray Cobb of Arrow Stage dies at 71

OMAHA, Neb. — Ray Cobb, a “true southern gentleman” who spent more than 30 years in the bus industry with Continental Trailways, Carolina Trailways and Arrow Stage Lines of Omaha, died at the age of 71 last month.

His death came barely six weeks after he retired from Arrow as vice president and chief financial officer.

Mr. Cobb was born and reared in east Texas, a region he remained loyal to throughout his life. Former classmates at Groveton (Texas) High School voted him into the school district hall of fame as a distinguished alumnus.

He was recognized for his lifetime achievements, including dedi-

cated service in the military and the transportation industry, and for his philanthropic projects in east Texas.

Mr. Cobb was a key executive at Arrow Stage Lines, having joined the company in 1988. Previously, he was employed by Carolina Trailways and got his start in the bus industry with Continental Trailways at the age of 17, fresh out of high school. He also worked in the aviation industry.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Nancy; two sons, two daughters and a sister.

A memorial has been established with CCC Women in Missions in care of John A. Gentleman Mortuaries, 72nd Street Chapel, 1010 North 72nd St., Omaha, NE 68114.



Ray Cobb

Nat'l Interstate names Michelson president

RICHFIELD, Ohio — On Jan. 1, David W. Michelson became president of National Interstate Corp., taking one of the titles held by company founder Alan R. Spachman.

However, Spachman holds on to the titles of chairman and CEO.

The change is a continuation of the company executive management development and transitioning program begun 15 months ago.

The goal is to continually refine management assignments to better focus on opportunities and to challenge and prepare key managers for future assignments.

Spachman had been company president since 1989 and chairman since 2004.

Prior to the change, Michelson had been executive vice president and chief operating officer, a job he

moved into in September 2005. He has been a senior manager at National Interstate since joining the company in 1992.

“This promotion reflects the increasing importance of Dave’s contributions and leadership since his elevation to chief operating officer,” said Spachman, who will focus more on strategic goals, including starting new businesses.

People

DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses North America announced the hiring of *Thomas Chezem* as vice president of new motorcoach sales for its coach brand *Setra*.

“Tom brings a fresh approach to our motorcoach market and we are excited to welcome him aboard,” said *Patrick Scully*, chief commercial officer for DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses North America.

Chezem has more than 16 years experience in the automotive and commercial vehicle industries. He holds a degree in engineering from Purdue University and an MBA from Cornell University.

ABC Companies has an-

nounced the appointment of *Hugh McElvaney* as director of transit sales in the U.S., a newly created position.

Dane Cornell, president and CEO of ABC Companies, said that with McElvaney’s appointment, ABC plans to expand its market share in the transit industry, and will increase its product offering to include the 30-foot, 40-foot, 60-foot articulated and 80-foot double-articulated transit buses.

McElvaney joined ABC in 2004 as national sales manager for its Parts Source division.

“This expansion (by ABC/Van Hool) into the transit industry will offer new customers the same integrity, craftsmanship, dependability and support that our coach customers have been accustomed



Thomas Chezem



Jerry Mishler

to for years,” said McElvaney.

Jerry Mishler is the new national sales and marketing manager at *Glaval Bus* of Elkhart, Ind. He succeeds *Doug Wright*, Glaval’s director of sales, who died in September.

Prior to joining Glaval, Mishler was vice president-general manager of *Pro Air*, an Elkhart-based manufacturer and supplier of A/C and heating systems to the bus and commercial vehicle markets.

Mineta awarded Medal of Freedom

WASHINGTON — Former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta has been honored with the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom.

Mineta began his public career as a city councilman and became a

congressman and U.S. secretary of commerce and transportation.

He was the lone Democrat in President George W. Bush’s cabinet. He left the cabinet last year after serving longer than any other transportation secretary.

We Purchase Salvage Buses



- All Makes & Models
- Collision & Fire Buses

For More Information Call

1-800-222-2875

Burt Edmunds ext. 157

Greg Dotseth ext. 147 or 152



www.abc-companies.com

Introducing The Only **Totally Portable Wash System** - Available Only From ABC!

Now you can save time and money with consistent, quality washes every time using the patented **Bitimec Speedy Wash System**. In just 7 to 10 minutes the remarkable, totally portable Bitimec wash system eliminates hand washing with these exclusive features:

- **Totally self-contained unit carries its own water, detergent, power and traction system**
- **Durable stainless steel base and frame**
- **Bi-directional feather touch controls**
- **Quiet, 24 volt rechargeable battery**
- **Patented brush-only leaning device**
- **Lease financing available**

For more information, complete product specifications and pricing, contact ABC Parts or visit us online.



MIDWEST
800-222-2875

NORTHEAST
800-222-2873

SOUTHEAST
800-222-2871

SOUTHWEST
800-222-2877

WESTERN
800-322-2877



Exclusive U.S. Distributor

www.abc-companies.com

King Ward joins Trailways

FAIRFAX, Va. — Trailways has signed up another northeastern motorcoach operator, King Ward Coach Lines of Chicopee, Mass., near Springfield.

Renamed King Ward Trailways, the family-owned company meets Trailways' safety and security requirements for member affiliation, including certification from the U.S. Department of Defense to transport military and other defense-related personnel.

King Ward was founded 20 years ago by Robert King, who was a police officer prior to purchasing a small transport company and building the business. King's son, Dennis, is now company president.

The company operates 30 vehicles,

including 21 motorcoaches, and employs 75 people. Its core business includes daily runs between western Massachusetts and major casinos in Connecticut. Other charters include schools, colleges and senior groups.

"We have wanted to join the Trailways team for some time. And when the territory we cover became available, we jumped at the opportunity," said Dennis King. "The Trailways name recognition, plus operational support from other team members while on the road are two ways we believe Trailways will benefit our company," he added.

For more information, go to www.kingward.com.

Stallion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

focuses its investing in five areas, including commercial transportation manufacturing and financing, and joint ventures with Asian companies.

Initially, Stallion's coaches are being assembled in North Carolina, although a West Coast sub-assembly facility is under consideration.

Stallion contracted with one of China's largest bus manufacturers to engineer a partial knock-down model of its 930 series coach that could be manufactured in the U.S. Clare said U.S. assembly was a critical point for Stallion.

He hired George Salazar, an experienced

former engineer with the nation's largest small and midsize business manufacturer, El-Dorado National, to integrate Faw's European-styled Sunliner with the Freightliner XBR chassis.

It took nearly 15 months of engineering and FMVSS compliance testing to get the Sunliner into production and off the assembly line.

"Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. offered us engineering support, a service network second to none and a product that is tried and true. From our original concept and design, working with Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. was exciting," said Clare, who has 25 years experience in the bus industry.

For more information, go to www.stallionbus.com, or talk to Clare at Motorcoach Expo.

Ziska feted on 30 years with MCI

SCHAUMBURG, IL — In the seemingly burly world of buses, the best-known executive at North America's largest motorcoach manufacturer is a woman.

And now, that woman, MCI vice president Patricia Ziska, has been honored by fellow employees on her 30th anniversary with the company. She was surprised last month with a luncheon celebration.

"Pat merits special recognition," said Tom Sorrells, MCI president and CEO. "She knows more customers personally than anyone else in the company and constantly puts their needs first. We appreciate her dedication and commitment to MCI."

With the start of the new year, Ziska has been given a new title and new role by MCI's new vice president of sales and marketing, Larry Killingsworth. Ziska's business cards now read, vice president, chief customer officer.

Killingsworth says it's a new title at MCI and for the industry.

"Pat has focused on the customer for the past 30 years. Now we have a position that is solely responsible for finding new ways to win for the customer," said Killingsworth. "This position gives her a chance to get even closer to the customer as we begin to roll out a number of new initiatives."

Ziska joined the Chicago office of what was then Hausman Bus Sales in December 1976 in sales administration. By 1985, she

was managing the customer service coordinators who support orders through the MCI factory.

She was named a vice president in 1996, managing the central regional sales team. She became vice president of marketing and major accounts in 2000.

Among her responsibilities have been managing MCI's relationship with its celebrity spokesperson John Madden; playing a key role in the launch of the Renaissance coach (now the E4500), and coordinating advertising, public relations, trade shows and events.

Even after three decades and vast changes in the industry and at MCI, Ziska remains passionate about her work and the company. "I love MCI," she said. "When I see an MCI coach going down the road, I feel a great sense of satisfaction that all of us at MCI contribute to the confidence our customers have in our brand."

Ziska earned a bachelor degree from Mundelein College while working at MCI. She also has completed several executive MBA courses through Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management.



Patricia Ziska

Reliability down the road.

C13: 380-430 hp @ 2100 rpm
1450-1650 lb-ft torque @ 1200 rpm

© Caterpillar 2006. All rights reserved. CAT, CATERPILLAR, ACERT, their respective logos and "Caterpillar Yellow," as well as corporate and product identity used herein, are trademarks of Caterpillar and may not be used without permission.

Federal parks, public lands program has opportunities for transportation providers

WASHINGTON — Motorcoach operators and manufacturers should be lining up to vie for a piece of the action in the federal government's Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands program.

That's the advice of Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at the United Motorcoach Association, as well as federal officials who point out that \$23 million will be awarded in fiscal 2007.

The program is designed to enhance the protection of national parks and federal lands, plus increase the enjoyment of those who visit them. A total of \$97 million is to be awarded through 2009.

Grants will go to federal, state, local and tribal agencies whose proposals are recommended by the Federal Transit Administration and approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

But the motorcoach industry can benefit by letting these governmental agencies know what type of

services they can provide to help meet the program goals.

The deadline for governmental agencies to submit complete proposals is the close of business Feb. 16. Selected projects will be announced next spring.

Take a look

Presley strongly encourages motorcoach operators to take a look at the program and help agencies win grants.

"It affords some opportunity, through the National Park Service and other agencies, for the private sector," says Presley. "They should be contacting the Park Service now.

"I sense there are opportunities for operators, especially those close to national parks, to get themselves into the equation. Now is the time for the private sector to inject itself into equation, rather than have the government go out and buy its own buses, which it does," Presley adds.

Eligible federal applicants for fiscal 2007 funds include the

Security and workforce compliance



By Thomas D. DeMatteo
Vice President & General Counsel
ABC Companies

All employers have a duty to assure their employees are authorized to work in the United States.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security intends to substantially increase its workplace investigations. The stepped-up enforcement is aimed at promoting national security, protecting critical infrastructure and ensuring fair labor standards.

Therefore, employers should make sure their U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' *Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification* compliance program is in order.

Basically, the I-9 form requires employers to verify that new

employees are authorized to work in this country. The form also requires that employers present new employees with a list of documents that are acceptable for establishing employment authorization and identity.

The types of acceptable documents are categorized into three lists — A, B and C. If an employee produces an item from the A list (i.e. a U.S. passport or alien registration card) then there is no need to use list B or C.

Employees must present original documents and employers should make copies of the proffered documents.

An employee must provide these documents within three days of hire, but you should get it on the first day of employment. In fact, you should remind the new employee to bring the required documentation on the first day of employment.

If a document contains an expiration date, the employer

should calendar the date and get new verification on or before the document expires.

Both the employer and employee must sign the I-9 form. The employer's signature is an attestation that it believes the documents to be genuine and the identity is correct, and believes the person is eligible to work in this country.

These files should be readily available for an inspector but must be available within three days of the request by an inspector.

Failure to be in compliance can subject a company to significant fines and penalties. Therefore, I-9 compliance reviews should be a regular part of your new hire process.

Footnote: Belton, Adrienne, *I-9 Compliance Duties of the Employer*, Employment Law Update. Buist, Moore, Smythe, McGee, P.A. (2006).

Thomas D. DeMatteo also is an adjunct professor of law at Hamline University School of Law.

National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Recla-

mation.

Others include state agencies, tribal units, and local governments with jurisdiction over land in the

vicinity of an eligible area, acting with the consent of a federal land management agency.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ►



Your bottom line – and your reputation – depend upon the reliable performance of your motorcoaches day after day, mile after mile. That's why it pays to spec a Cat® C13 engine with ACERT™ Technology. Proven over millions of miles, it's enhanced for 2007 to provide the same performance, reliability and overall value while meeting tougher EPA emissions standards. And the C13 is still built tough enough to rack up a million miles to overhaul. For the full story, contact your Cat dealer. MOTORCOACH.CAT.COM

CATERPILLAR®

Parks program

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

Contract opportunities

Scott Faulk, spokesman for the FTA, says the grant money goes directly to eligible federal, state, local and tribal agencies. "They, in turn, can contract with private carriers," he says. "The purpose is to reduce pollution and congestion and make it easier for the public to enjoy these parks."

Faulk makes it clear that any purchase of buses would make them the property of the specific government agency, but there are numerous opportunities for private operators to make a profit on services offered.

"They'll be providing a service that is needed," he says.

Asked if the private sector should be contacting federal agencies now, Faulk says "absolutely. We're just trying to find good viable alternatives, new programs. We are eager to fund new, innovative programs. If there is a need and a problem, it should be directed to the appropriate land management agency. We can work with what is seen as a solution."

Faulk says some transportation problems are clear cut. "If a dock is falling apart, you can see that right away," he says. "Other times prob-

lems are not as clear. In those cases, we have been sending out a group of five, including park experts and planners, to spend a whole week doing an on-site inspection. They come up with a solution and write proposals."

Faulk says congestion in and around popular national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and other federal lands causes traffic delays and noise and air pollution that detract from visitor experiences and the protection of natural resources.

Program background

Congress established the Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands program under the five-year federal highway and public transportation law passed in August 2005.

Administered by the FTA in partnership with the Interior Department and the Forest Service, it funds capital and planning expenses for alternative transportation systems, such as shuttle buses, in national parks and public lands.

Eligible expenses for bus or shuttle projects can include purchase, replacement or rehabilitation of buses and related equipment, and construction of bus-related facilities such as shelters.

Another eligible expense, as

spelled out in federal guidelines, is the "purchase of rolling stock that incorporates clean-fuel technology or the replacement of buses of a type in use on Aug. 10, 2005, with clean fuel vehicles."

The guidelines state that capital projects may include those "operated by an outside entity, such as a public transportation agency, state or local government, private company engaged in public transportation, or private non-profit organization." Also encouraged are projects that include "the deployment/commercialization of alternative transportation vehicles that introduce innovative technologies or methods."

The leasing option

The capital cost of leasing vehicles is an eligible expense. Faulk of the FTA says parks can lease a bus from a private operator or purchase their own shuttle buses. "We recommend leasing," he says.

Federal guidelines state: "Leasing may be particularly cost effective in circumstances in which transit service is only needed during a peak visitation period that lasts only a few months. In these cases, leasing a vehicle for a few months during the year may be less expensive than purchasing a vehicle that is then only used for a few months

during the year."

The guidelines also encourage project sponsors to compare the cost effectiveness of providing service, versus contracting with the private sector. The capital portion of contracted service is an eligible capital expense under the program.

"For example," according to the guidelines, "if a public land contracts with a private bus company to provide a shuttle service with privately owned buses, the portion of the contract that covers the capital expense of the buses is an eligible expense under the ATPPL program. Operating expenses are not eligible under the program."

Federal officials caution that the demand for financial assistance through the program will significantly exceed the funds available, and thus the selection process will be highly competitive.

Selection process

Faulk of the FTA says proposed projects are submitted to his agency from various land agencies. "We rank the projects, pick out the strongest ones, and send them to Interior." The secretary of the Interior, after consultation with and in cooperation with the secretary of Transportation, determines the final selections and the amount of funding for each project.

The call for fiscal 2007 projects was issued in late November by James S. Simpson, FTA administrator. On Aug. 28, Simpson and Deputy Interior Secretary Lynn Scarlett announced the award of nearly \$20 million in grants for 42 projects in 21 states and Puerto Rico for fiscal 2006.

Among the bus-related projects for 2006 were: \$1.4 million to replace eight propane-powered buses for use at Acadia National Park in Maine; \$160,000 to purchase two alternative-fueled trams for use at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia; \$50,000 to fund shuttle bus leasing for Lewis and Clark Historical Park in Oregon; \$947,000 to purchase four buses for the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area in Washington state; \$1.68 million for the Maroon Bells — Snowmass Wilderness Area, White River National Forest, in Colorado, and \$400,000 to purchase five shuttle buses for the city of Visalia, Calif., to serve Sequoia National Park.

Scarlett said the program will help the Interior Department develop new alternatives "for enjoying our parks and public lands while protecting our resources. More visitors enjoy our parks and public lands each year and this program provides an additional tool to help enhance the visitor experience."

TAKING CARE OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FLEETS SINCE 1985

COACH CRAFTERS INC.

COLLISION REPAIR • RETROFIT • REMANUFACTURING

Lifts
Seating
Drive Trains

AC
Electric
Sales & Lease

800-334-2871

Minnesota
450 Armstrong Road
Northfield, MN 55057

buses@coachcrafters.com

Florida
27530 Cty Rd 561
Tavares, FL 32778

www.coachcrafters.com

Serving the nation from facilities in Florida and Minnesota.

NIMCO/Bus Division

973 589-9265 • Toll Free 800-526-8055
FAX 973-589-2253 • P.O. BOX 5157 • NEWARK, NJ 07105
www.nimcobus.com

*Supplying the Transportation Industry with
Used, Serviceable & Rebuildable Bus Parts
for Over 25 Years!*

VOLUME DISCOUNTS • PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE

DEEP DISCOUNTS!
on all Detroit Diesel & Allison
Transmissions

SAVE MONEY ~ SAVE TIME

We sell good running qualified bus components.

NO RISK PURCHASE PLAN

We unconditionally guarantee our customers satisfaction.

WE ALSO STOCK

- Front and Rear Axle Parts • Engine Accessories
- Alternators and other Electrical Components
- Air Conditioning Components • Body Parts

We Buy & Sell Buses... Call for a Quote

OMCA expands board; elects officers, directors

ONTARIO — The Ontario Motor Coach Association has nearly doubled the size of its board of directors and set up new councils to address issues important to various segments of its membership.

The governance changes, which had to be approved by OMCA's members, expand the board from 12 to 22 members and set up four councils.

"Over the last year, OMCA has worked on a proposal to revamp the structure of our governance, making the board of directors more inclusive of various membership categories," said association President and CEO Brian Crow.

"The new structure of the board, as well as the various councils, will allow for greater member participation as well as increased efficiency."

Elected board members were:
 Coach Operators: Dave Willis of Ayr Coach Lines, Jamie Murray of Parkinson Coach Lines, Ghislain Leduc of Leduc Bus Lines, Stu Kendrick of Greyhound Canada Transportation, John Crowley of Coach Canada/Trentway Wagar,

Ron Malette of Tisdale Bus Lines, and Ray DeNure of DeNure Tours.

Tour Operators: David Steele of Tartan Tours, a division of Hanover Holidays; Michael Zuccherato of Educational Travel Services; Bradley Walters of Bradley Walters Tours, and Sue LeClair of Shoreline Tours.

Suppliers: Rae McDaid of Best Western International and Barry Kidd of Country Inn of Lancaster.

Directors At Large: Allan Cherrey of Cherrey Bus Lines, Ray Burley of Swiftrans Services Ltd., Mark Hannah of Pacific Western Transportation, Wayne Asquith of Wayne Asquith Consulting, and Greg Hammond of Hammond Transportation.

The revamped board elected a new executive committee: Dave Willis of Ayr Coach Lines, chairman; Jamie Murray of Parkinson Coach Lines, vice chairman; Ron Malette of Tisdale Bus Lines, secretary-treasurer; Allan Cherrey of Cherrey Bus Lines, immediate past chairman; Sue LeClair of Shoreline Tours, and Wayne Asquith of Wayne Asquith Consulting.

Calendar

JANUARY 2007

15-17 International Motor Coach Group Maintenance & Safety Forum 2007, New Orleans Marriott. Info: Go to www.imgcoach.com, or call (913) 906-0111.

16 Motorcoach Expo 2007 Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Project, New Orleans. Info: Call (800) 424-8262.

16-21 United Motorcoach Association Motorcoach Expo 2007, Morial Convention Center, New Orleans. Info: Go to www.motorcoachexpo.com or call (800) 424-8262.

18 National Association of Motorcoach Operators, Morial Convention Center, New Orleans. Info: Gene Wright, B&W Charters, Kalamazoo, Mich. (800) 536-7000.

27-31 National School Transportation Association Midwinter Meeting, Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, Tucson, Ariz. Info: Go to www.yellow-buses.org.

Prevost Car receives top Volvo award for quality

SAINTE-CLAIRE, Quebec — Work by two employees in its quality department has resulted in Prevost Car being named winner of the 2006 Volvo Internal Quality Award. Prevost is owned by Volvo Bus Corp.

The Volvo Internal Quality Award is given to recognize an outstanding project that enhances quality in such areas as products, service or leadership.

Out of nearly 100 applications from within Volvo Group worldwide, the jury chose the work of Prevost quality department representatives Louise Demers and Robert Drouin.

Their "Customer Criteria Project" selected a handful of customers and involved them in con-

sultations throughout the purchase, manufacture, delivery, and after-sale follow-up to determine what was important to them.

Through the consultations, Demers and Drouin were able to draw up recommendations that focus various company units on actual customer priorities.

The results allowed Prevost to improve customer feedback channels and improve inspection of products throughout the manufacturing process.

"We are very proud of the efforts made by all employees in the development of the winning project; their vital work will contribute to the company moving forward," said Gaétan Bolduc, president and CEO of Prevost.

Minority operators meet at Expo

NEW ORLEANS — The National Association of Motorcoach Operators, an organization of small and minority motorcoach companies, will hold its semi-annual membership meeting in conjunction with Motorcoach Expo 2007 here this month.

The association, which works to unite small and minority operators from all across the U.S., will meet Friday, Jan. 19, at the Morial Convention Center, site of most Expo events. The time and meeting room will be available at the Expo Information Center.

Take Control of Your Costs and Odors!

Ultra PowrPak XL
 Better than ever. Controls odors all week long.



Call for Free Samples!
1-800-423-5350

339 Arco Drive • P.O. Box 3484 • Toledo, OH 43607
 419-535-0101 • Fax 419-535-0531 • www.chempace.com

MORE THAN 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE REFURBISHING BUSES



Full Range of Repair, Retrofit & Rehab Services
Collision & Fire Damage Repair
Installations for Heavy-Duty Buses & Coaches



CoachCrafters completes "midlife rehab" of four 1995 MCI 102D coaches for Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission

Bus Upgrades & Sales
State-of-the-Art Repair Facilities
Quality, Innovative & Affordable

800-334-2871

buses@coachcrafters.com • www.coachcrafters.com

Serving the nation from facilities in Florida and Minnesota.



Used transit buses are useful to private operators

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — When Krapf's Coaches of West Chester, Pa., lands a contract for a public transit route or shuttle service, it looks clear across the United States for the buses it uses to provide the transportation.

It relies on a company started by two enterprising California bus guys who have developed a niche for used transit buses in the pre-owned bus market.

Dean and Dale Carson own and operate Transit Sales International and

Shuttle Bus Leasing. The companies — by design — complement each other: Transit Sales sells used transit buses, Shuttle Bus Leasing offers short- to medium-term leases of transit buses.

While transit agencies are the Carsons' No. 1 customer group, the pair also recognized there was opportunity in today's ever-so-cost-conscious private bus sector as well.

TSI buys used transit buses and puts them back into service in a wide variety of applications. Primarily, they're used by local and state government entities, private and public shuttle operations

and parking facilities. But they also can be useful to just about anyone who needs a bus but does not need to transport passengers in an intercity coach.

Transit Sales and Shuttle Bus Leasing select the transit buses they purchase from transit agencies. Their location in Southern California is a benefit because they can purchase a large part of their inventory in states where mild weather does not deteriorate equipment. Prior to being put back into service, the buses are inspected, serviced and repaired.

In addition, TSI and SBL are able to quickly provide upgrades

or custom retrofits required by customers. For example, they can provide engine changes, alternate-fuel conversions, wheelchair-lift installations, interior refurbishing, mechanical repairs, and paint and body work.

The companies are headquartered in Riverside, and maintain a 20-acre lot in Murrieta, Calif., where a customer can choose from more than 1,000 transit buses. The TSI/SBL inventory includes virtually all makes and models, varying in size from 22-foot shuttles, to 60-foot articulating buses.

However, a potential customer need not travel to California to

take a look at the inventory. A Web site, www.transitsales.com, allows customers to click on a general description and view the buses that are in inventory.

The Carsons say Transit Sales International prides itself on customer service and experience, with part of the service including helping find reliable, low-cost solutions specifically tailored to a customer's needs.

Says Richard Sullivan, vice president of sales: "TSI and SBL are a one-stop source for all transit and shuttle bus needs."

Gary Krapf, president of Krapf's Coaches, regularly uses

buses from TSI/SBL; he compliments their efficiency in providing reliable buses in a timely manner.

"Business for the private contractor in many cases does not afford the time or money to order brand new transit equipment. Through TSI's vast fleet, and their attention to customer needs, we have the ability to respond to a new business opportunity with quick delivery and the confidence we are providing a quality product at an efficient price," said Krapf.

In addition to regular route service, private operators use TSI/SBL-supplied equipment for shuttle service of all kinds, parking lot transportation, local sight-seeing, airport transportation, any kind of temporary transportation such as construction work, and seasonal needs.

And, in contrast to school buses, which are often used in similar circumstances, TSI/SBL buses are designed to be comfortable for adult passengers, notes Sullivan.

For more information, go to the website or contact Sullivan at (951) 682-2557.

Bridgestone is purchasing Bandag for \$1.05 billion

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Bridgestone Americas Holding Inc. plans to acquire Bandag Inc. for approximately \$1.05 billion.

The deal, which is expected to close late in this quarter or early next quarter, is subject to shareholder and regulatory approvals, plus customary closing conditions.

Bandag is the leading manufacturer of tire retreading materi-

als and equipment. Based in Muscatine, Iowa, Bandag has a network of more than 900 franchised dealers that produce and market retread tires and provide tire management services.

In addition, Bandag owns and operates Tire Distribution Systems Inc., a commercial retail operation that sells and services new and retread tires, and it holds an 87.5

percent interest in Speedco Inc., a provider of on-highway truck lubrication and routine tire services to commercial fleets. In 2005, Bandag had sales of \$921 million.

Bridgestone Americas Holding is the U.S. subsidiary of the Bridgestone Corp., the world's largest tire and rubber company. It manufactures and markets Bridgestone, Firestone and Dayton tires.

Come and see us at booth 641
www.tcimaging.ca
 1-866-986-3039

By retaining Team Coach Imaging professional services, you will see how little time it can take to produce ready-to-apply graphics, manufactured using a variety of processes. We have an installation network throughout North America to serve you. Fleet graphics are an efficient, cost-effective way to display your message 24-7. From the most eye-catching to the most discreet, your corporate identity will pick up momentum with Team Coach Imaging. **We are committed to serving you with creative choices to meet your specific graphic needs.**

team[™]
 coach imaging

RBS, Inc. - Relational Bus Systems

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address http://www.rbs2000.com/



Home
 About RBS
 GoChart 2000
 GoMile 3000
 Driver Time 3000
 Supplemental Charter Modules
 Prophecy Mileage & Routing Subsystem
 Maintenance - RTA
 Go Tour Online - GTO
 Customers
 Contact US
 Evaluation
 Documentation
 Site Map
 Members Only

Start a New Search
 search
 powered by 

Welcome to the RBS Knowledgebase Website.

GoChart 2000 - Charter Management
 North America's Most Popular Charter Management System
[Click Here to Request Evaluation](#)

GoTour Online
 Internet Based Passenger Reservation and Tour Management Application
[Click Here to Test Drive](#)

Re-Designed Site
 Point your web browser to www.rbs2000.com for information and evaluation copies of North America's most popular tour and charter management systems.
[Or call us at 800-448-7001](tel:800-448-7001)

RBS, Inc.
 THE BEST SELLING TOUR AND CHARTER SOFTWARE IN THE BUSINESS
 10 LANCASTER ST.
 CHERRY VALLEY, NY 13320
 800-448-7001
 ADMIN@RBS2000.COM

UNDER the BUS?



NO PROBLEM

The safest lift on the market!



Where Safety Matters

800-826-3486

email us at: sefac@sefac.com

or, visit our site at: www.sefac.com



**MCI
PREVOST
VANHOOL**

WHY PAY FULL PRICE FOR AN O.E. DOOR WHEN IBP'S REMAN PROGRAM CAN SAVE YOU UP TO 40%

New or Reman Entrance, Service, and Baggage Doors



STOCK AVAILABLE

- Exterior Body Panels
- Save money and increase Up Time
- IBP panel's fit and finish is guaranteed
- Ready for shipment
- 2 Year warranty on all products.

INTERNATIONAL BUS & PARTS, INC.
 2055 Sprint Blvd. • Apopka, Florida 32703
 407-880-9700 • 800-468-5287 • Fax: 407-860-2026
www.1800intlbus.com
 IBP Creating Cost Savings Solutions Since 1987!

Inca Gold PRODUCTS LLC

You can always depend on INCA GOLD for bus restroom maintenance.
 A trusted name in the Transportation Industry since 1971!

CONCENTRATED CONVENIENT COST EFFECTIVE

INCA GOLD Powder



- Pre-measured packaging-hermetically sealed pouches
- Allows toilet to be charged in remote locations
- Effective management control over product application (cost control)
- Original formaldehyde and non-formaldehyde formulas
- Fresh pine scent
- Bulk packaging also available - 30 lb. pails & 180 lb. kegs

INCA LIQUID GOLD II



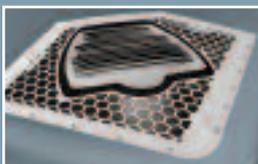
- Non-formaldehyde
- Biodegradable - completely safe for discharge into sewage treatment facilities
- Concentrated
- Packaged in 1-gallon bottle with pump dispenser, shipped 4 per case
- Pleasant "Airy" scent

Phone : (800) 789-9969 or (310) 808-9359 Fax : (310) 808-9369
 VISIT www.incagoldonline.com TODAY!!

It just keeps getting better!

Introducing new quality features

Unique 2007 Engine Installation



- Diesel Particulate Filter vertical installation
- Roof top diffuser mounting

Prevost Electronic Stability Program



- 1st system with rollover & over/under-steer protection*

To learn more, visit us
at the UMA booth # 131

H3
45



X3
45

For more information, USA: 1-877-773-8678 / CANADA: 418-883-3391

© Registered trademark of Prevost Car Inc. www.prevostcar.com

PREVOST

* Reduces risk of rollover and over/under-steer.