

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

February 1, 2007

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

MOTORCOACH EXPO 2007



Early Mardi Gras

New Orleans' famed Mardi Gras was a popular theme for exhibitors at this year's Motorcoach Expo. A healthy industry, along with the enigma that is stormed-battered New Orleans, combined to produce record attendance, including Brenda Tidwell of Leisure Time Charter & Tours of Emerson, Ga., and Jo Lynn Anderson of Spirit Coach of Huntsville, Ala., at right. Prevost Car Vice President Dann Wiltgen, below, was one of scores of Expo attendees who volunteered for New Orleans' Habitat for Humanity project. Expo coverage on this page and in Section Two.



FMCSA administrator vows to upgrade fed's coach safety oversight

NEW ORLEANS — Although motorcoach companies make up only a small fraction of the 675,000 motor carriers registered with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the industry can expect increased attention from federal and state safety regulators over the next many months.

John Hill, new head of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, told coach operators at the Motorcoach Expo 2007 that he has loaded his agenda with issues aimed at improving safety in the over-the-road bus industry.

A former Indiana state police officer who was FMCSA's chief safety officer for more than three years before taking over the agency

in August, Hill said federal regulators have taken a fresh look at the motorcoach industry and identified five key areas that need urgent attention.

They include compliance inspections, safety audits for new companies, state inspection programs, expanded data on the industry, and early warnings for potential safety problems.

Hill said more annual compliance inspections are badly needed and the agency is stepping up its inspection program, although he did not say by how much.

Additionally, he said inspectors will pay closer attention to companies that have never received a

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UMA launches academy for bus, coach industry

NEW ORLEANS — The United Motorcoach Association has announced the launch of the Bus & Motorcoach Academy, a major continuing education program for the industry.

The academy will tackle a pair of the private bus industry's most pressing and longest running challenges: The need to broaden and deepen the business acumen of operators — especially small operators, and the dearth of readily accessible industry-specific resources available to bus company owners, executives and managers to develop business and operational skills.

The solution, says UMA President and CEO Victor Parra is to establish "an institution of comprehensive learning. One that consolidates and coordinates existing and

new talent to provide authoritative business knowledge to not only motorcoach owners and operators but also to drivers, school bus operators and other key industry personnel."

To execute its plan, UMA is establishing a relationship with the College of Southern Maryland, which will host the Bus & Motorcoach Academy, and has lined up industry consultant Carmen Daecher to be dean.

The various programs to be offered by the academy will carry either a certification or an accreditation. For example, there will be an Accredited Passenger Transportation Operator module and a Certified Motorcoach and Bus Operator program.

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Security grant program gets more money for '07

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security says it will award \$11.6 million in over-the-road bus security grants in fiscal 2007.

The deadline for coach operators to apply for the money is March 6.

The amount being awarded this year — to help operators pay to beef up passenger, bus and facilities security — is the most since fiscal 2003, when more than \$19 million was awarded. In the past three years, less than \$10 million was handed out annually.

And, in keeping with what has become tradition, the Department of Homeland Security has changed the program parameters. This year, the department appears to be making an effort to reduce the perception that small operators must compete with large operators for the money.

To do that, it has broken the program into two tiers:

- Tier I: \$8.1 million for operators that have 250 or more over-the-road buses.
- Tier II: \$3.5 million for operators that own 249 or fewer over-the-road buses.

Obviously, the ploy doesn't exactly work because nearly 70 percent of the money is going to large operators and there are only 10 or 11 operators nationwide that qualify as Tier I operators under the DHS criteria.

The remaining 3,000+ U.S. operators have fewer than 250 coaches and they will be competing for only 30 percent of the money.

Also, Congress authorized \$12 million for the program this year but there was no explanation in the announcement why the agency skimmed \$360,000 off the top, reducing the amount to be awarded to \$11.6 million.

Under the new criteria, the minimum grant to be awarded in Tier I for infrastructure improvements is \$100,000 and the minimum award for training purposes is \$50,000.

Under Tier II, the minimum award will be \$25,000 for infrastructure uses and \$5,000 for training.

While there is no minimum number of motorcoaches necessary for an operator to apply, those seeking the money must provide at least 50 trips annually into areas the Department of Homeland Security has determined to be most at risk of a terrorist attack.

To get a copy of the complete grant announcement, go to www.grants.gov, click on "Grant Search" on the right side, and type in the following "funding opportu-

nity number": DHS-OGT-057-1548. The Web site is busy and users may get an error message. In that case, the department says to keep trying.

In addition, the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Security Administration are hosting conference call question-and-answer sessions. Access these Q&A sessions by calling, (888) 323-4702 at 1 p.m. Washington time Feb. 2 or 16. On the 2nd, enter passcode 1278 to gain access, and on Feb. 16, punch in 2356 as the passcode.

The awards are scheduled to be announced in April, and officials encourage early registration and applications.

In fiscal 2006, grants totaling \$9.5 million were awarded to 35 motorcoach companies. Most of the money was to be used to improve driver, vehicle and facility security; install systems to monitor, track and communicate with coaches, and provide training.

Only 111 operators nationwide applied for the grants. Those applications represented 181 projects, with 163 of the projects judged eligible for consideration. A total of 42 projects were funded in '06.

For more information, contact DHS/TSA by e-mailing askcsid@dhs.gov or call (800) 368-6498.

Violations cost Peter Pan \$237,000

BOSTON — Peter Pan Bus Lines and two of its subsidiaries will pay \$237,179 and will install filters on most of its buses to settle violations of federal clean air and clean water rules, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced.

The settlement involves violations by Peter Pan in Massachusetts, Arrow Lines in Connecticut and Bonanza Bus in Rhode Island.

The EPA said all three companies violated Clean Water Act storm water permit requirements, as well as federal oil spill prevention regulations and associated spill prevention plan requirements. Additionally, Peter Pan violated Massachusetts' anti-idling laws.

Massachusetts anti-idling rules prohibit engine idling for more than five minutes, with certain

exceptions. According to the settlement consent agreement, Peter Pan violated the anti-idling law at least 45 times from February through April of last year in and around Boston and Springfield, Mass.

"Diesel pollution is very harmful, especially for sensitive populations such as the young, elderly and people who suffer from asthma," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA's New England Office.

"Companies like Peter Pan can play a big role in improving New England's air quality by ensuring their vehicles don't idle for long periods of time."

Christopher Crean, Peter Pan's director of safety and security, was quoted as saying the company thought it was in compliance with

EPA rules. "But once we were made aware that we weren't, we've been working to make sure we meet and exceed their standards."

EPA says Peter Pan maintenance facilities in Providence, R.I., and Chelsea, Mass., failed to obtain storm water discharge permits, and failed to prepare and fully implement oil spill prevention plans. Storm water permits are critical to reducing pollutants in storm water runoff, according to the EPA. Fuel spills and oil leaks from maintenance activities at these garages can contaminate storm water runoff and nearby rivers, the agency added.

The three Peter Pan garages in Milford, Waterford and East Hartford, Conn., all had storm water permit coverage through prior

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Texas bus owner gets probation

McALLEN, Texas — The owner of the Texas motorcoach company whose bus caught fire, resulting in the death of 23 people during the Hurricane Rita evacuation in 2005, has escaped jail time, receiving instead a sentence of five years probation.

James Maples, a former player in the NFL and owner of Global Limo, could have received up to two years in jail.

In early October, Maples was convicted of poorly managing his

company, but was acquitted of the more serious charge of falsifying driver logbooks. (See Oct. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

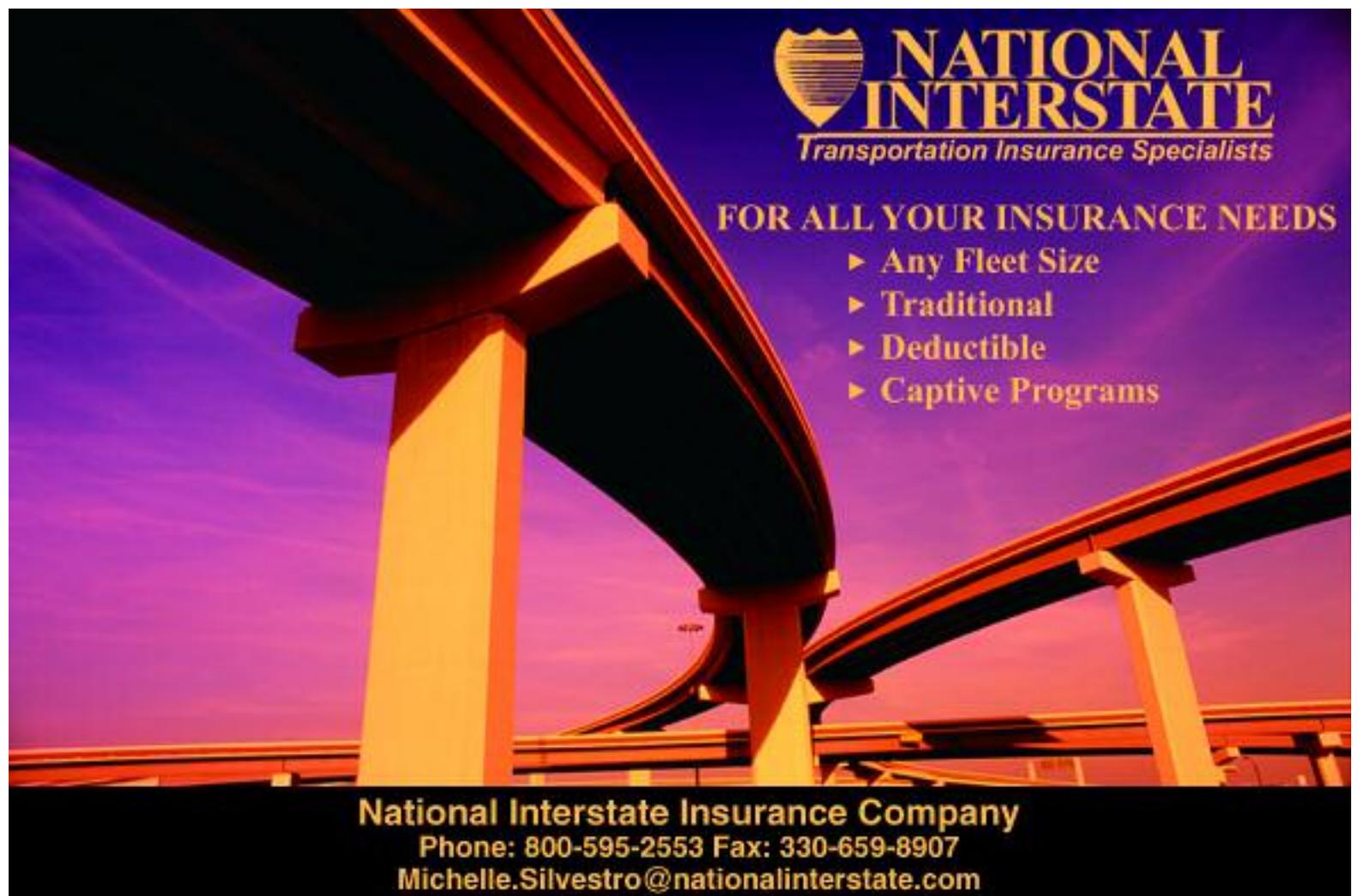
As part of his probation, the judge said Maples can no longer work for the bus company he has been working for or any other bus company. He will be confined during the first year — six months in a halfway house and six months at home with electronic surveillance, but he will be allowed to work.

Maples also was fined \$10,000,

and his defunct company was fined \$100,000 and placed on probation for five years. The company was convicted of all three charges and faced up to a \$500,000 fine on the conspiracy count and a \$200,000 fine on each of two other convictions.

Maples' trail last summer focused almost entirely on the management of his company and buses and vehicle inspections and not the catastrophic fire.

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THE DOCKET

Aimed at hours violators *Onboard recorder rule proposed*

WASHINGTON — Reaction is mixed to a proposal by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration that bus and truck companies with a history of serious hours-of-service violations be required to install electronic onboard recorders in all of their vehicles for a minimum of two years.

The American Trucking Associations announced its support for the proposed rule, while Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen, termed the FMCSA proposal "a weak standard" for electronic onboard recorders.

The United Motorcoach Association reiterated its long-time opposition to mandated onboard recorders because of the absence of evidence of widespread driver-hours violations by the charter-and-tour bus industry.

"However, we do think FMCSA should have the authority to direct specific carriers that have demonstrated a degree of hours-of-service violations to install onboard recorders for increased monitoring," said UMA Vice President of Industry Relations Ken Presley.

Many in the commercial vehicle industry see the proposed federal regulation as a sensible first-step approach to wider adoption of technology designed to improve safety and document driver compliance with work and rest rules.

Presley believes that as onboard recorders become standard-

ized and less costly, more bus and motorcoach operators will begin to incorporate them into their operations, just as they have other technologies that have a high degree of cost efficiency and accuracy.

When electronic onboard recorders were proposed nearly a decade ago in the Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1999, UMA took the position that to mandate them would be unduly and unfairly burdensome to small operators. "The motorcoach industry's responsibility is to operate safely, not to pay for the FMCSA enforcement tools," UMA told then-U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater. The FMCSA rule proposed last month contains three main components. It:

- Identifies the performance specifications for the new technology
- Outlines regulatory incentives to encourage commercial vehicle operators to adopt onboard recorders.
- Establishes criteria that would trigger a requirement for certain motor carriers to equip their buses or trucks with onboard recorders if they were found to have serious and continuing problems complying with mandatory driver work-and-rest rules.

Claybrook of Public Citizen issued a harsh statement criticizing the proposal. "Instead of mandating onboard recorders in all commercial (vehicles) with a fair, across-

the-board standard, FMCSA ... released a proposed rule that would require recorders only for companies that have been caught significantly violating hours of service rules. We know that many more companies violate these rules because their drivers keep fake log books, which are so legendarily erroneous that they are known in the trade as 'comic books,' but they are not detected. Under the FMCSA rule, these scofflaws can continue to violate the law without consequences and put the public at risk."

If adopted, FMCSA estimates that within the first two years the rule is enforced about 930 carriers, with 17,500 drivers, would be required to use electronic onboard recorders.

To expand use of the devices among the more than 650,000 motor carriers in the U.S., the incentives for voluntarily installation include using an examination of a random sample of drivers' records of duty status as part of a company compliance review and partial relief from hours-of-service supporting documents requirements.

Additionally, the agency welcomes suggestions from the public for additional incentives.

The full notice of proposed rule-making was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 18, and public comments will be accepted until April 18. To request a copy of the notice, e-mail: news@fmcsa.dot.gov.

Drivers like onboard recorders

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Few commercial vehicle operators use electronic onboard recorders but those that do have told researchers they increase driver morale.

The American Transportation Research Institute conducted an analysis last year of the use of electronic recorders to monitor driver hours.

The project included surveys and interviews of users, nonusers and vendors, as well as analysis of secondary research and comments submitted to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The research indicated that onboard recorder use is low for several reasons, including cost, a lack of return on investment, and uncertainty about what standards might be mandated by the FMCSA.

The enforcement community

also expressed concern about data privacy and data access issues, since few protocols exist.

However, the ATRI research does contradict perceptions the devices hurt driver morale and retention.

A surprising 76 percent of users said the recorders had improved driver morale, and 19 percent said they had improved driver retention.

No users said driver retention had been harmed by the devices.

"We know there are longstanding perceptions associated with (onboard recorders), but this research gives us insight into the statistical realities that can only be provided by EOBR users," said Doug Duncan, ATRI chairman and president of FedEx Freight.

ATRI considered the impact that an onboard recorder mandate might have on different industry sectors

and fleet sizes. Based on unit pricing, estimated returns on investment and overall management costs, the research determined that small fleets and independent operators would be hardest hit by a mandate. Investment tax credits and bulk-purchase pricing options could help, the study said.

There was considerable consensus among users, non-users and vendors that recorders are effective at managing and monitoring hours compliance, but more research is needed to document the role that hours compliance plays in fatigue management and safety improvements, ATRI reported.

"As a compliance tool, it appears that (onboard recorders) can meet FMCSA's need for improved hours-of-service monitoring," said Al Koenig, president of Midwest Specialized Transportation.

Delaware may lease its toll roads, paper reports

DOVER, Del. — Delaware has become the latest state to consider leasing its toll roads to raise money to pay for highway construction.

If the state takes advantage of a never-used state law, the toll roads could create a windfall for the state Transportation Trust Fund. Leasing the roads could bring in as much as \$4 billion, the *Delaware News Journal* reported.

The \$118 million brought in from tolls along Interstate 95 and Delaware 1 in the last fiscal year does not go far in covering the \$2.7

billion the state is short to build the projects officials say are needed in the next six years, the paper said. Maintenance and operations alone carry an \$80 million price tag, the paper said.

In her State of the State address, Gov. Ruth Ann Minner said the state would explore the possibility of a private-public partnership or other financing plans for critical needs.

Delaware is one of 21 states with laws that allow public-private arrangements to develop transportation infrastructure.

Ohio hikes turnpike tolls

BEREA, Ohio — Tolls on the Ohio Turnpike have moved higher after a temporary reduction — that lasted two years — was allowed to expire.

Rates for buses rose to pre-reduction levels, while those for over-the-road trucks increased but not to the levels they had been two years ago.

The rate for two- and three-axle motorcoaches increased to \$24 to cross the state on the 241-mile turnpike. Previously, coaches weighing between 33,001 and 42,000 pounds paid \$21.50. The increase

amounts to just over a penny a mile. On a percentage basis, it is 11.6 percent.

The toll for an auto rises to \$10.25, from \$8.95, or a 14.5 percent increase.

A Class 8 truck now pays \$33.50, up from \$31, or 8.1 percent more.

Ohio temporarily cut turnpike toll rates two years ago in an experiment to get more truckers to use the highway. The test worked, with commercial vehicle traffic increasing 20 percent in 2005 over the year before. However, revenue dropped because of the reduced tolls.

Indiana Toll Road to get passes

GRANGER, Ind. — The Indiana Toll Road will have an electronic pass system by this fall, says the private company that operates the highway.

The passes will give users discounts on the higher tolls that are coming, the spokesman for ITR Concession Co. told a news service. The passes are part of a \$40 million electronic toll collection project mandated by the toll road lease.

The roadway is joining the E-Z Pass network, meaning coach operators that have a transponder for

the Illinois tollway system (I-Pass) will be able to use it on the Indiana Toll Road, as well as the Chicago Skyway.

While the system could become operational in September, the transponders are expected to go on sale this spring on the toll road Web site, www.indianarollroad.org.

Last June, Indiana completed a 75-year lease of the northern Indiana highway to Spain's Cintra and Australia's Macquarie Infrastructure Group. (See July 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Tolls rising on Toronto 407 ETR

TORONTO — Stretching around Toronto, from Burlington on the south to Pickering on the north, is a roadway that's billed as the world's first all-electronic, barrier-free toll highway.

407 ETR (for electronic toll route) is leased by Ontario to a syndicate composed of the Spanish company Cintra and the Australian company Macquarie, the same outfits that leased the Indiana Toll Road.

The roadway uses license-plate readers and transponders to collect the tolls; it has no tollbooths.

Despite the sophisticated system the highway loses money and its operators admit toll evasion is a serious problem. Effective Feb. 1, there will be another increase in the toll rate.

The peak toll for motorcoaches will go up about 3 cents Canadian per kilometer, to more than 35 cents. That's about 48 cents U.S. per mile.

Cincinnati transit agency asks for info it shouldn't

CINCINNATI — The Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority has sent area private charter bus operators a letter that appears to violate Federal Transit Administration rules.

The letter notes that the transit agency, which goes by the name of Metro, is required to issue a charter service notice, and to contact private charter carriers about the notice. FTA rules require both.

However, attached to the letter is a questionnaire that clearly exceeds the scope of the FTA charter bus regulations. The letter tells operators to "please" complete the form and return it to Metro's director of marketing and communications, Rita D. Potts.

The questionnaire contains five questions that are not permitted by FTA rules. The first three questions ask operators to identify the type of equipment they have, the number of passengers their buses can accommodate, and whether their buses are wheelchair-lift equipped.

The next two questions are statements to be answered "Yes" or "No":

Do you consider your organization a willing-and-able private charter operator to provide service to those who need a city-type bus with wheelchair lifts and tie-downs?

If you have customers who request more service than you can provide, would you be interested in having Metro provide buses to you

Transits seek charter firms

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:

Crawford County, Mich.
Deadline: Jan. 31, 2007. Write to: Julie Dean, Manager, Crawford County Transportation Authority, 4276 W. North Down River Rd., Grayling, MI 49738. Phone: (989) 348-8215.

Comanche County, Okla.
Deadline: Feb. 3, 2007. Write to: Steve Sherrer, General Manager, Lawton Transit Management Inc., P.O. Box 286, Lawton, OK 73502. Phone: (520) 248-5252.

Williamsburg County, S.C.
Deadline: Feb. 3, 2007. Write to: Michael Burgess, Executive Director, Williamsburg County Transit Authority, 2085 Thurgood Marshall Highway, Kingstree, SC 29556. Phone: (843) 355-9706.

South Bend, Ind. Deadline: Feb. 15, 2007. Write to: Henry F. Lohmeyer, Assistant General Manager, South Bend Public Transportation Corporation, P.O. Box 1437 (901 E. Northside Blvd.), South Bend, IN 46624. Phone: (574) 232-9901.

so you could handle the charter?

Federal charter regulations are very specific about the kind of information public transit agencies can request when issuing charter service notices.

"The notice must not require anything beyond: (1) A statement that the private operator has the

desire to provide the (charter) service described and the physical capability to do so, and (2) submission of documents showing that it possesses the requisite legal authority," states the FTA in documents explaining the regulations.

The FTA goes on to say that the charter notice "must not be worded

in a way that would discourage a response from any person who meets the **minimum** (emphasis added) criteria for a willing-and-able operator. Regardless of how the grantee describes its own service, the grantee must make it clear in the notice that private operators are not required to respond in sim-

ilar detail.

"Instead, private operators are required to show only that they have the requisite legal authority and the desire to perform the service, plus at least one bus or van."

Ohio and Kentucky operators should respond to Potts questionnaire accordingly.



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Ohio tax is raking in money

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio's new commercial activities (gross receipts) tax on businesses is bringing in more money than anticipated, newspapers in the state report.

The tax, which went into effect in mid-2005 and is known as CAT, is being phased in over a four-year period. It replaces the state's corporate income and personal property taxes. (See 10/1/05 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The law imposing the tax provides for legislative adjustment of the rates of the CAT, if revenues exceed projections by more than 10 percent.

Businesses, which have generally been critical of the CAT, are urging a tax cut; local governments are looking for ways of recoup-

ing lost property tax monies.

So far, however, the legislature and new governor say they want to give the CAT and other tax changes a chance to work a while longer.

The CAT is essentially an annual tax for the privilege of doing business in Ohio. It is based on a business' gross receipts, with the amount of taxable gross receipts determining whether or how the tax applies.

Ohio-based motorcoach operators that have annual taxable gross receipts of at least \$150,000 are subject to the tax. Out-of-state operators having more than \$500,000 in Ohio taxable gross receipts and driving more than 25 percent of their miles in Ohio are also subject to the tax.

New York facing bus wreck

NEW YORK — New York City appears to be on a collision course that isn't going to be fun for tour-and-charter bus operators.

Forty-four million domestic and international travelers visited New York City last year. That was up from 41 million in 2005, and topped projections.

The increase, according to NYC & Company, represents "a major step towards the city's goal of attracting 50 million tourists by 2015."

At the same time, a panel of experts convened by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg warns that by 2030, New York City could have so many people straining its infrastructure that rush-hour traffic will last all day.

The experts say the city of 8.2 million people must start planning and building now

for the expected growth of 1 million more people over the next 25 years.

Other findings by the expert team of city planners, academics, scientists and environmentalists include:

- Energy demand could exceed supply by as early as 2012.

- In 25 years, roads and rails will be "crammed beyond capacity."

- There won't be enough housing to meet demand by 2030.

Oh, yes, and among suggestions offered by the experts was to tax vehicles that drive into Manhattan's most heavily trafficked areas.

As for this year, NYC & Company projects a total of 45.5 million tourists will visit the city, an increase of 3.2 percent over last year.

Probation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The judge in the case told the bumbling prosecutors that because the fire was not mentioned in the charges of the indictment, it could not be brought up before the jury.

Maples was acquitted of the most serious charge of conspiring to falsify driver time logs so drivers could work longer than federal law allows. He was convicted on two lesser allegations of poorly managing his fleet and not requiring driv-

ers to fill out vehicle inspection reports.

Maples declined to speak before sentencing, with his attorney telling U.S. District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa that Maples faced pending civil litigation. He also didn't speak to reporters outside court.

During the sentencing hearing, Hinojosa admonished both sides, lecturing Maples that it was "no way to run a business to endanger the individuals who are putting trust in a carrier."

The judge also chided prosecutors for seeking two years in prison on two misdemeanor convictions. He said it was troubling that prosecutors couldn't recall another case when the government brought such management-related charges against a motor carrier to federal district court.

He reminded the government lawyers that testimony showed Global Limo had been given a satisfactory rating the year before the fire.

Much of the 90-minute sen-

tencing hearing focused on the fact that Maples was again working for a bus company — in this case a company owned by a longtime associate, operated out of Global Limo's office building, and using as the consultant Global used to keep in compliance with government regulations.

Prosecutors said that showed Maples was not taking his conviction seriously and that he should get the maximum sentence for continuing to show "callous disregard"

and because motor carrier operators should be held to a higher standard.

Maples told the judge he was working as a sales consultant.

Manfred Wallner, the owner of the newly formed Universal Tours, was the only witness during the hearing. He said he approached Maples about starting up the company with hopes Maples could provide "connections." Wallner admitted after some prodding that he had considered using Maples as a driver.

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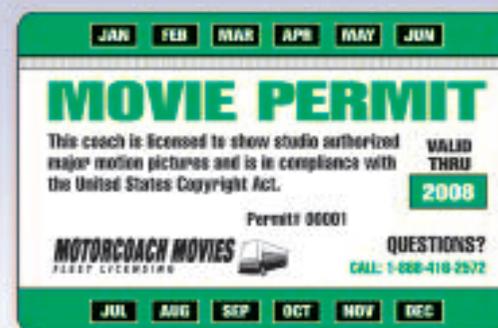
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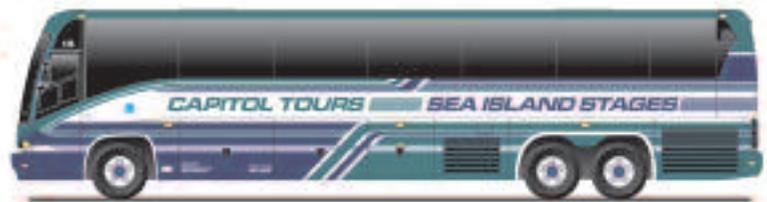
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FYI / FYI / FYI

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has sent letters to roughly 3,000 U.S. passenger carriers, including scores of motorcoach operators, requesting they update and correct company information the U.S. Department of Transportation has in its safety databases.

There's an incentive for bus operators to comply with the request: Failure to provide the required data may result in loss of operating authority and/or civil penalties.

"If a carrier ignores the notice, it gets assessed a fine and if it ignores that, FMCSA pulls its authority," explains a commercial vehicle safety expert who watches the agency closely.

The FMCSA database clean-up is being conducted by the FMCSA Office of Enforcement and Compliance, Commercial Passenger Carrier Safety Division, and is part of the agency's program to improve the accuracy of all its census, licensing and safety records.

In particular, the agency is looking for missing information and discrepancies. The notification letters that have gone out to operators identify specific data deficiencies and contain instructions for correcting or completing the records.

Operators are urged to always file complete and accurate information. On the MSC-150 there is a perjury provision at the bottom of the form.

New Mexico cab cards

New Mexico is late, again, in issuing its 2007 weight-distance tax cab cards. The state Taxation & Revenue Department, which administers the tax, has asked New Mexico law enforcement to sus-

pend all enforcement of the 2007 credential until April 1.

Operators that have not yet received 2007 cab cards for their vehicles must continue to carry the 2006 cards, which have expired. The department provided no guidance for what to do with vehicles first put into service during the first 90 days of this year. The department's excuse this year is that it's installing a new computer system.

Reach the department at (505) 476-1555, -1556, -1557 and -1558.

Calif. Seeks extension

The California Department of Motor Vehicles has asked all the other member jurisdictions of the International Registration Plan to hold off through the end of February on any enforcement action against California-based IRP vehicles bearing 2006 credentials.

All California credentials for IRP expired Dec. 31, and the state always needs at least a 60-day extension for its operators. The department plans to implement staggered registration for IRP in a few more years.

For more information, call the department at (916) 657-7971.

Michigan gets new plates

The Michigan Secretary of State's office, which administers vehicle registration in that state, says it will be reissuing all standard Michigan plates over the next several years, including those for IRP vehicles.

Reissuing began Jan. 1, and will proceed as each current vehicle registration expires.

For more information, call Kirk Forbes, Michigan's IRP manager, at (517) 322-6280, or e-mail forbesk@michigan.gov.

Super Bowl subcontractor responds to motorcoach operator assertions

I read your recent article in *Bus & Motorcoach News* and was taken aback by the inaccuracies and felt compelled to respond. ("Mark-up is hefty for Super Bowl Service; operator cries foul," January issue).

First, I was surprised that you would assert as fact information provided by one operator providing a few coaches on a project involving well over 400 buses on the day of game alone. Further, it is simply amazing to me that you wouldn't contact TMS (Transportation Management Services) or Gameday (Management Group) to ask if what you had heard was factual and to secure our perspective on this situation. It certainly doesn't seem to me that your fact checking and research have proven to be very effective in this case.

To that end, I'd like to set the record straight as it pertains to TMS.

First, we are providing less than 20 percent of the vehicles for this event, and I can only speak to that portion of the equipment. Second, TMS procures many coaches around the country for numerous events and we possess strong relationships with many motorcoach operators around the country.

In fact, one such operator that was dismayed at how we were denigrated in this article forwarded us the article for review. We often procure buses across events and try hard to be fair with small and large operators alike, as we rely upon them to conduct our business throughout the course of the year.

Many of the vehicles we con-

tracted for the Super Bowl will also be used on subsequent events, including a large convention the following week in Orlando. Our negotiated rates include consideration for this multi-event approach and our ability to provide addi-

'The bus operators have a business decision to make as to whether they wish to work for the offered rates'

tional business for regional operators throughout the year.

The bus operators have a business decision to make as to whether they wish to work for the offered rates, and the operator you referenced evidently decided it was worth it. Nevertheless, the same operator chose to malign the very company(ies) it contracted with for this work. More importantly, the bold claims (by the operator) regarding our profits are untrue.

In fact, TMS does incur many other costs associated with this work, including staff costs which are not reimbursed separately, almost 150 hours of senior manager time to prepare for and manage the work, travel expenses for a number of staff and the manager, long-distance charges, insurance expense and other hard and soft costs. All toll, these costs for TMS on the Super Bowl alone run

into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Further, we take on great risk and liability, contrary to your operator's claims. When all these costs are factored in, TMS' contract profit on the Super Bowl will likely be less than 20 percent, reasonable by any standard, and far lower than (the operator's) ridiculous assertions.

My understanding is that our friends at Gameday also incur significant expenses above and beyond the bus costs paid to operators, including costs for establishing the local office, paying for the many staff they have on-site, (including labor and travel/lodging expense), hotel accommodations for drivers, insurance, and the like as well, and my understanding is these costs are covered out of the bus revenue.

I suspect the operator you quoted had no knowledge of these costs being borne by Gameday in execution of this contract.

In any event, I would encourage your publication to take greater care when you malign a company publicly with disregard for appropriate standards for fact gathering and fact checking and without request for comment from the party you are maligning. To take what you've heard from one small operator, providing a tiny percentage of buses for this job, and assume that the facts are true, and publish it as such, is both unprofessional and inappropriate.

—Kevin O'Connor
Chief Operating Officer
Transportation
Management Services

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:

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E-mail: ebalm@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Fax: (866) 930-8426

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

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Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

ISSUE NO. 93

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

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Gameday Management explains Super Bowl pricing

I am writing in response to your article entitled "Mark-up is hefty for Super Bowl service; operator cries foul" in your January edition. The article was filled with such a significant amount of erroneous information that I felt it necessary to supply you with all of the facts as it relates to our contract with the National Football League and the pricing set for buses.

First, let me start out by saying that our responsibility for the Super Bowl transportation plan goes far beyond the procurement of buses. Beginning in April of each year, we assign full-time project managers to the Super Bowl. This year, we have five.

These planners are responsible for venue plans (to include traffic management, parking, permitting, vehicle screening, signage, etc.) as well as system plans for which we procure buses. As it relates to the system plans, each route for each bus within each system is carefully calculated in coordination with law enforcement and then mapped.

In the end, each system has a system plan with over 25 sub-sections to it, which includes these routes, driver training, schedules, NFL security requirements, maintenance of traffic devices, just to name a few. In short, the amount of work that goes into what we do for an entire year is staggering.

Our contract with the NFL pays us for this planning and development, as well as for the on-site operations in the Super Bowl host city.

On site, we will provide over 200 managers, a fully operational bus dispatch facility (including ITS applications), an overnight bus staging yard and driver housing (at a cost of three-to-four day minimums per room, plus an additional room night where applicable for the night before service that a driver arrives into town).

All of this is done on behalf of each operator involved with Super Bowl and none of it is at their expense. In addition, as an NFL requirement, we carry \$25 million in liability insurance. A requirement that is costly and one that most (if not any) bus operator can satisfy.

I invite any operator interested in learning the truth about our involvement to visit the Calder Race Course just north of Dolphin Stadium. That is from where we will be operating and I think it would be a huge eye opener.

Dollars, cents

I think you get the picture here,

so on to dollars and cents.

We have three pricing tiers for Super Bowl; one for the NFL, one for the NFL Extended Family (i.e. the official sponsors), and one for general charters. The breakdown of what is charged to each of these clients versus what is paid out to the bus operators is as follows:

NFL Buses. The NFL pays us separately for everything (including a management fee) except for driver hotel rooms. The difference in the charges to the NFL and the payout to the bus operator listed below go toward covering the cost of these hotel rooms. Should the cost of the hotel rooms be less than what is charged to the NFL using this formula, it is reconciled at the end of the event and a rebate is paid to the NFL.

Hence, between bus operator payout and the driver hotel room cost, everything charged to the NFL is a pass-through cost with no mark-up involved:

Sunday, Jan. 28 through Thursday, Feb. 1:

Charge to NFL: \$880/8-hour minimum

Payout to bus operator: \$738/8-hour minimum

Net to pay for driver room night \$142 reconciled against true cost at end of event)

Charge for additional hours: \$110/per hour

Payout to bus operator for additional hours: \$89.25/hour

Net — extra to pay for driver room night if needed \$20.75/hour otherwise rebated back to NFL)

Charge for additional driver (if needed): \$500 + hotel room cost

Payout to bus operator for additional driver: \$500

Friday, Feb. 2, through Sunday, Feb. 4 (three-day minimum)

Charge to NFL: \$4,320

Payout to bus operator: \$3,735

Net — to pay for driver room nights \$585 reconciled against true cost at end of event)

Charge for additional hours: \$120/hour

Payout to bus operator for additional hours: \$99.75/hour

Net — extra to pay for driver room nights if needed \$20.25/hour (otherwise rebated back to NFL)

Charge for additional driver (if needed): \$500 + hotel room cost

Payout to bus operator for additional driver: \$500

NFL Extended Family Buses.

As a part of our service to the NFL, we provide buses and management to the "NFL Extended Family",

most of which are official sponsors. Under this pricing structure, we add in the cost of staffing (which in this case the NFL does not pay for) to the prices listed above. Each group is assigned staff coordinators and those coordinators are our contracted staff which are brought into the host city and have related costs such as flights, hotel, rental car, etc.

Hence, between bus operator payout, driver hotel room cost, staff coordinator payout, staff flights, staff hotel room, staff per diem and staff rental car (each of which are for more days than just those when buses are scheduled), everything charged to the NFL extended family is a pass through cost with no mark-up involved:

'Here we are, bringing business to bus vendors all over the country on a daily basis because of the magnitude of events that we operate each year, yet no one does their homework before they fly off the handle.'

Sunday, Jan. 28 through Thursday, Feb 1:

Charge to NFL Extended Family: \$1,580/8-hour minimum

Payout to bus operator: \$738/8-hour minimum

Payout to staff coordinator: \$350

Net — to pay for driver room night \$142 (reconciled against true cost at end of event)

Net — to pay for staff room night, rental car, per diem, flights, \$350

Charge for additional hours: \$110/hour

Payout to bus operator for additional hours: \$89.25/hour

Net — extra to pay for driver room night if needed \$20.75/hour otherwise rebated back to NFL)

Charge for additional driver (if needed): \$500 + hotel room cost

Payout to bus operator for additional driver: \$500

Friday, Feb. 2 through Sunday, Feb. 4 (three-day minimum)

Charge to NFL Extended Family: 6,420

Payout to bus operator: \$3,735

Payout to staff coordinator:

\$1,050

Net — to pay for driver room nights \$585 (reconciled against true cost at end of event)

Net — to pay for staff room nights, rental car, per diem, flights \$1,050

Charge for additional hours: \$120/hour

Payout to bus operator for additional hours: \$99.75/hour

Net — extra to pay for driver room nights if needed \$20.25/hour (otherwise rebated back to NFL)

Charge for additional driver (if needed): \$500 + hotel room cost

Payout to bus operator for additional driver: \$500

General Charters. These are charters the NFL has no ties to and we are paid nothing by the NFL to handle. These are the only charters for which we do add a mark-up (15-18 percent — not the ridiculous 200-300 percent mentioned in your article) to our actual costs in order to make a management fee for handling them:

Sunday, Jan. 28 through Thursday, Feb. 1:

Charge to NFL Extended Family: \$1,825/8-hour minimum

Payout to bus operator: \$738/8-hour minimum

Payout to staff coordinator: \$350

Net — to pay for driver room night \$142 reconciled against true cost at end of event)

Net — to pay for staff room night, rental car, per diem, fights \$350

Net — 15 percent management fee \$245

Charge for additional hours: \$130/hour

Payout to bus operator for additional hours: \$89.25/hour

Net — extra to pay for driver room night if needed \$20.75/hour (otherwise rebated back to NFL)

Net — 18 percent management fee \$20/hour

Charge for additional driver (if needed): \$500 + hotel room cost

Payout to bus operator for additional driver: \$500

Friday, Feb. 2 through Sunday, Feb. 4 (three-day minimum)

Charge to NFL Extended Family: \$7,350

Payout to bus operator: \$3,735

Payout to staff coordinator: \$1,050

Net — to pay for driver room nights \$585 (reconciled against true cost at end of event)

Net — to pay for staff room nights, rental car, per diem, flights

\$1,050

Net — 15 percent management fee \$930

Charge for additional hours: \$120/hour

Payout to bus operator for additional hours: \$99.75/hour

Net — extra to pay for driver room nights if needed \$20.25/hour (otherwise rebated back to NFL)

Net — 16 percent management fee \$20/hour

Charge for additional driver (if needed): \$500 + hotel room cost

Payout to bus operator for additional driver: \$500

As you can see, the retail rate in all three cases includes costs for many things, including the payout to the bus operator, driver hotel, the on-site staff, staff flights, staff hotel, staff per diem, staff rental car, etc. Since the NFL pays for our management fee separately, the only time there is a mark-up on the bus cost is under the No. 3 scenario above for general charters and that mark-up is a reasonable 15-18 percent, not the ridiculous 200-300 percent cited in your article.

I can understand the bus operator not understanding all of the facts. This seems to happen all of the time and it's humorous. Here we are, bringing business to bus vendors all over the country on a daily basis because of the magnitude of events that we operate each year, yet no one does their homework before they fly off the handle. And the services we provide go far beyond buses.

For more information about our companies I suggest that you go to www.gamedaymanagementgroup.com and www.clickandpark.com.

What I can't understand is how a publication such as yours can print such an article (one that borders on slanderous) without doing any research before doing so. If you had, I would have gladly provided you with all of the information contained in this letter so you could report the facts, not the rumors.

I also find it humorous that, when we first began our search for buses in south Florida, many of the operators wanted to charge us a five-day minimum of \$2,000-\$3,000/day. Forgive me for controlling what is truly price gouging on behalf of our client, the National Football League.

—Tony Vitrano
President, Gameday
Management Group

Trailways to provide coaches for senior communities

FAIRFAX, Va. — Trailways Transportation System has been named the preferred transportation provider for commercial bus charters and services by one of the nation's premier operators of senior living communities.

The three-year agreement between Sunrise Senior Living of McLean, Va., and Trailways covers the 420 senior communities operat-

ed by Sunrise in 37 states.

"Sunrise seeks to do business with companies that understand the needs of the seniors we serve," said Daniel Schwartz, senior vice president of North American operations at Sunrise. "Trailways nationwide reach and focus on the safety and comfort of our traveling residents gives us greater peace of mind.

"This 'first-of-its-kind' rela-

tionship between a major provider of senior living services and a nationwide transportation provider demonstrates Sunrise's commitment to providing a superior level of service to our residents," Schwartz added.

"We look forward to fulfilling Sunrise's expectations for its transport service needs," said Gale Ellsworth, Trailways president and

CEO. "Team Trailways has maintained an exemplary safety and security record for the seven decades it has been serving the public. And, we have elevated those standards in recent years to meet contemporary demands. While price for transport services is an important consideration, we recognize that passenger safety trumps all other considerations by our clients."

In addition to existing communities, Sunrise has an additional 46 communities under construction with a combined capacity for more than 6,000 residents.

Sunrise offers a wide range of senior services, including independent living, assisted living, and care for individuals with memory loss, as well as nursing, rehabilitative and hospice care.

Academy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The academy's wide range of courses will be developed and offered in single units, or the individual courses may be combined to culminate in an accreditation. Likewise, an instruction program will be developed that will culminate in driver certification.

"We will expand the business and operational knowledge of the motorcoach and bus industry," said Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at UMA and the driving force behind the academy. "And, in doing that, we will considerably improve and increase the confidence necessary for operators to take the measured business risk needed to seize and expand opportunities offered by an increasingly mobile society," said Presley.

"Bus & Motorcoach Academy will be a single, reputable and affordable resource available to oper-

ators for comprehensive instruction and certification of achievement in such areas as business operations, accounting, marketing, human resources, safe operations and driver training," he added.

Most of the academy's courses and programs will be delivered via the Internet, which in the past decade has become widely accepted as a credible and often preferred structure for distance education. The method is particularly favorable for individuals whose schedules do not permit attending structured classroom instruction.

The College of Southern Maryland has extensive experience in industrial and online training. Currently, 2,000 students are enrolled in almost 150 distance learning courses offered via the Internet by the college.

"The college's success in distance learning is due in large part to a commitment to teach and reach adult learners wherever learning

occurs through an academically sound approach," said Presley.

The college, which traces its roots back nearly 50 years, is a four-campus community college located, as its name implies, in southern Maryland, directly south of Washington, D.C.

It offers associate degree programs, industry certifications, career training, and is home to the Corporate and Community Training Institute. It prides itself on offering quality educational services and providing the resources and tools needed to succeed in a competitive marketplace.

The college's background, proximity to UMA, which has its office in nearby Alexandria, Va., and previous experience with industry leaders makes it a natural choice to host the academy and help develop its programs, according to Presley.

To lead the academy, UMA turned to Daecher, a motorcoach

industry and transportation specialist with more than 30 years of experience. He holds a master's degree in transportation engineering from Villanova University.

Daecher has developed and provided training to motor carriers, insurance companies, attorneys and other groups in the areas of accident investigation, empathic communication, and safety and loss prevention techniques and processes.

He consults with public and private clients, including municipalities, attorneys, insurance companies, commercial motor carriers and other professional groups.

Peter Pan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

owners, but failed to conduct monthly inspections and site evaluations, thus increasing the chance that potential storm water pollution sources would not be identified in a timely manner, the EPA said.

Also assisting in development of the academy has been Spader Business Management, the Sioux Falls, S.D.-based organization that developed the 20 Group business development concept for the motorcoach industry.

"The content expertise of the United Motorcoach Association, Carmen Daecher and other industry professionals, combined with the College of Southern Maryland's experience in developing and delivering quality distance learning courses, will result in a sound and effective education program for the passenger transportation industry," said Parra.

The Milford garage also lacked "secondary containment" for oil storage tanks, and failed to adequately respond to a June 2006 bus fueling accident that spilled about 156 gallons of diesel fuel in an outside parking lot, EPA reported.

"Oil spills can do significant damage to the environment, including to neighboring wetlands and surface waters," said Varney. "EPA will continue to ensure that facilities handling oil follow established procedures to minimize risks of oil spills."

In addition to the fine, Peter Pan also agreed to perform what the EPA calls "an environmental project." Peter Pan will equip nearly its entire New England fleet with new crankcase filters that will minimize potential storm water pollution from oil leaks.

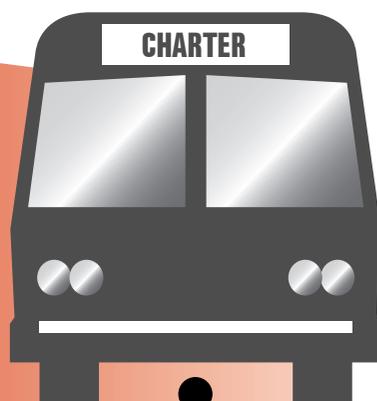
The filters will reduce leaks from each bus by one to six gallons of oil annually, thereby reducing what the EPA says is a "significant source" of storm water runoff contamination from the company's outdoor parking lots.

Peter Pan will install the filters on 268 buses by the end of the year, and EPA will require documentation to confirm the work has been performed.

Crean said the filter project will cost the company about \$84,000.

After EPA contacted Peter Pan regarding its air and water compliance, the company took steps to reduce idling and upgrade its monitoring of idling by drivers. The company is using the GPS system on its coaches to monitor idling in real time.

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Tough quarter for Greyhound revenue, earnings dip

NAPERVILLE, Ill. — The turnaround drive at Greyhound Lines hit a pothole during the first quarter of the company fiscal year, sending both revenue and earnings tumbling.

The nation's largest line-haul operator had revenue of \$279.5 million for the three months ended Nov. 30, down 8.2 percent from year-ago revenue of \$304.6 million.

Greyhound's parent company, Laidlaw International, said the revenue decline was due in part to a strong quarter a year earlier when ridership jumped following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Hundreds of people, displaced by the storms, rode Greyhound back and forth from their relocated residences to their former homes in the storm-ravaged Gulf Coast.

Additionally, and disturbing from a long-term perspective, was a decline in passengers caused by travelers balking at higher ticket prices.

Greyhound's turnaround thus far has relied heavily on cost savings stemming from the massive restructuring of its route system that eliminated hundreds of stops, jobs and buses.

For a successful future, however, the company needs to figure out a way to attract more passengers and to make higher ticket prices palatable to potential customers. And, as all bus operators know, in an era of cut-rate airlines and an automobile industry bent on putting anyone with \$200 behind the wheel of a car, that is no easy chore.

Earnings during Greyhound's first fiscal quarter also declined, even after eliminating the impact of a one-time gain it experienced the prior year.

Greyhound's EBITDA for the three months ended Nov. 30 was \$25.6 million, down from \$34.9 million for the same period in 2005. However, \$5 million of the 2005 figure resulted from a settlement the company received on a business interruption claim it filed after Sept. 11, 2001.

Excluding the one-time gain, Greyhound was more profitable during the 2005 period because of the increased volume resulting from the post-hurricane travel.

The lackluster results at Greyhound were a factor in the overall quarterly performance of corporate parent Laidlaw. Revenues at Laidlaw rose a modest 1 percent, while profits dropped 14 percent. Laidlaw CEO Kevin Benson said the company "enjoyed a solid first quarter."

Wall Street certainly didn't see it that way, however. Investors dropped shares of Laidlaw nearly 5 percent on news of the weaker-than-expected quarter.

Still, in spite the uninspired

quarter, Laidlaw said it is sticking to its original fiscal 2007 forecast, which calls for year-over-year revenue growth of 2 to 4 percent and earnings from continuing operations of \$1.35 to \$1.55 per share.

Laidlaw's board approved a quarterly dividend of 17 cents per share, payable Feb. 6, to all stock-

holders of record Jan. 16.

Labor negotiations

Greyhound's contract with Local 1700 of the Amalgamated Transit Union expires on the last day of January. Bargaining began Jan. 8 in Washington, D.C.

One point of contention, accord-

ing to the union, is a drive by Greyhound to subcontract some driver work to non-unionized Spanish speaking drivers.

Seeks new ad agency

Greyhound Lines is looking for a new advertising and public relations agency.

Three years ago, Greyhound hired The Richards Group, a Dallas agency, to handle the company's \$12 million account. Richards is not seeking to retain the account.

Greyhound is interviewing agencies and plans to integrate advertising, public relations and other marketing services at a single shop.

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MOTORCOACH EXPO 2007

Operator offers high-tech view of industry future

NEW ORLEANS — Hang on to your steering wheel because the world of high tech may be about to give the motorcoach industry a boost.

That, anyway, is what one coach operator thinks, and he provided attendees at Motorcoach Expo with a hands-on glimpse of his vision of the industry future.

And that vision consists of a

coach outfitted with the latest cellular and satellite technology; large, high-definition television monitors, and a personal computer that uses a touch-screen to operate a system that serves up vast amounts of information and entertainment to passengers and new revenue opportunities to operators.

The multi-purpose electronic system that was two years in the

making is called VuStar and is on the verge of being taken commercial by an operator who in years to come could be seen as a pioneer in the industry.

"I'm just taking a chance with it," says Dave Bolin, president of New World Tours of Bristow, Va., who unveiled his brainchild at Expo.

"Who knows where it will go.

Its future is virtually unlimited," adds Bolin, who led development of the system and is installing it on 32 of his coaches.

The VuStar-equipped Van Hool C2045E that New World had on the Expo showroom floor drew large crowds and considerable interest from operators who grilled Bolin and VuStar executives about the system's potential.

Driving for dollars

Bolin said he came up with the concept while searching for new revenue streams for his company. After lengthy exploratory talks, he partnered with high-tech innovators VuStar to develop the system and ABC Companies and Van Hool to help integrate it into a coach.

"I figured from the start that it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ►

Motorcoach operators return to New Orleans in big show of support

NEW ORLEANS — The motorcoach industry "returned" to New Orleans in a big way during mid-January, with hundreds of operators and vendors descending on the city for Motorcoach Expo 2007.

The show came 16 months after hundreds of motorcoaches — some from as far away as Washington state — were sent to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast to evacuate tens of thousands of residents stranded by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Even before the show opened it was apparent the event was going to be a huge success. Pre-registration was up more than 10 percent from early registration for Expo '06 in Tampa and 7 percent higher than pre-registration for Expo 2005 in Las Vegas.

Then, when the staff from the United Motorcoach Association

arrived in the Crescent City, they were met by unusually heavy on-site registration, boosting total attendance to new highs.

In the end, more than 2,000 motorcoach owners, operators, vendors and other attendees came from as far away as China and Turkey, producing an 11 percent increase compared with Tampa and Las Vegas.

By having the show in New Orleans, the industry demonstrated that the city remains a viable tourist destination, said Victor Parra, UMA president and chief executive. "We're just really, really pleased how the travel and tourism industry has turned out to support the city."

Attendees and exhibitors alike seemed pleased with the event.

"This is our first year — and I had always heard in the past that this was not the show for (destina-



All Expo photographs by David Braun, David Braun Photography, Las Vegas

tion management companies). That it was more about equipment," said Deanna Sorge, group sales manager for the Pigeon Forge (Tenn.) Department of Tourism. "But I walked into the room and thought — 'wow' — these are the folks we're trying to grab hold of, and we can now see them in a relaxed atmosphere. It is not a pressure sell."

Added Tami Dion of HMS Host Restaurants: "This has been a phenomenal show for us. The peo-

ple that are here are qualified operators. They want to do business with us. They thanked us for being here. You don't normally get that in a show. This is a great show for us."

More than 160 Expo attendees came to New Orleans one day early to spend most of one day helping build houses at the New Orleans Musicians' Village project of Habitat for Humanity.

Among the show's many highlights was the launch of the first

Chinese-designed and built motorcoaches and buses to be sold in North America.

There were buses from seven nations on display and for sale at Expo.

Also on display for the first time were motorcoaches equipped with 2007-Environmental Protection Agency compliant, reduce-emission diesel engines that produce fewer exhaust pollutants per passenger than new automobiles.

35-foot coaches make splashy, upbeat showing at Expo

NEW ORLEANS — The search for the elusive 35-foot motorcoach may be over.

Manufacturers brought several versions of the sought-after model to Motorcoach Expo 2007 and the response was overwhelming.

"We've been jamming all day," said Cliff Clare Jr., president and chief executive of Stallion Bus Industries, a New York-based manufacturer that introduced the 35-foot Sunliner Coach at the show.

He said operators from throughout the country were all telling him the same thing — "Finally, someone has come up with a product we really need."

Jason Cash of Trident Industries in Cumming, Ga., said he got

the same response from operators who stopped by to see the Temsa TS 35, a 35-foot monocoque coach that his company introduced at the show.

"The reaction has been fabulous," he said. "The operators are telling us that we have something they really need."

A similar reaction was heard at the IC Corp. display where the 36-foot FC Series was unveiled. It's billed as a day-tour coach.

"We're filling a need that exists in the marketplace today," observed Ian Shackleton, manager of IC's new truck sales in the Northeast.

Operators for the past several years have been clamoring for a small coach that offers a big coach

ride, saying charter groups have dropped in size, so in some situations it is no longer financially feasible to run full-size coaches.

Major manufacturers, however, said although they recognize the need for a smaller coach, most have been unable to produce one with a price tag that would satisfy operators.

Now, Stallion, Trident and IC say they've managed to do it, with help from bus builders from other countries where smaller, over-the-road buses are commonplace — China, Turkey and Brazil. The U.S. have a sticker price ranges of from \$230,000 to \$300,000, a target most operators believe they could manage.



Trident Industries of Cumming, Ga., is importing the Temsa TS 35 motorcoach from Turkey. It features stainless steel monocoque construction.

"All of the big guys were looking at building the 35-foot model by shrinking the larger coaches,

and that wasn't cost effective," noted Shackleton. "We did it the

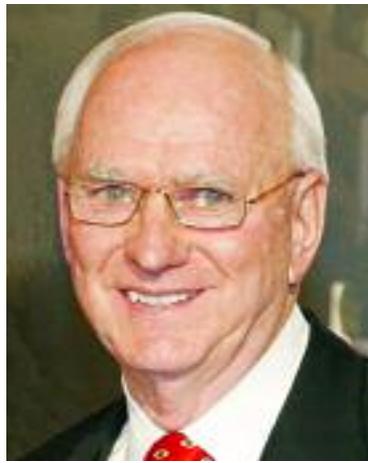
CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ►



Donald Storer



Darren Berg



Jack W. Haugslund



Randy Futral



Callen Hotard

Coach operators are honored at gala Vision Awards

NEW ORLEANS — During the past three years, the motorcoach industry's "best-and-brightest" operators have been honored with awards presented at Motorcoach Expo's gala Vision Awards Banquet.

The banquet, which has become the social highlight of Expo and the premier industry event for honoring coach operators, invariably turns into a festive evening that contains more than a few surprises.

This year's fourth annual Vision Awards sustained the tradition.

In opening remarks, UMA President and CEO Victor Parra thanked those attending for making Motorcoach Expo 2007 one of the most successful ever, with record attendance, double-digit exhibit space growth, and demonstrating strong industry support for the recovery of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region.

He singled out for special attention those Expo attendees who came to New Orleans a day early to volunteer their time for the local Habitat for Humanity project to build homes for displaced musicians. (See photos on page 17.)

Upwards of 160 people turned out for the Habitat project in miserably cold and damp weather.

Immediately following Expo, there was talk of finding a volunteer project that could be conducted in conjunction with next year's Expo in San Francisco.

Many veteran Expo attendees expect San Francisco to be a strong draw for Expo 2008 — in no small measure because it is one of the nation's most iconic cities and also ranks as one of the most-popular motorcoach destinations.

Parra used the Vision Awards to reaffirm UMA's commitment to its roots as an association dedicated to

helping small bus and motorcoach operators. "Our core values will always remain those of the United Bus Owners of America and support for small, independent operators," said Parra. UMA changed its name from UBOA to United Motorcoach Association in 1996 to more accurately reflect the industry and operators it serves.

Five major industry awards were presented at the banquet. Here are the winners:

UMA Safety Leader of the Year: Donald Storer of Storer Coachways in Modesto, Calif. Award presenter Matthew Daecher of Daecher Consulting Group said the award was being presented to Storer because of the company's commitment to trust, safety and integrity. Storer Coachways is an unusual company, with 60 percent of its business derived from transporting disadvantaged individuals

and people with disabilities. It operates a fleet of more than 300 vehicles. Company President, CEO and Safety Director Donald Storer said the company never compromises safety. "Everything we do revolves around safety," he said.

BusRide Motorcoach Industry Achievement Award: MTR Western of Seattle. The company and its president and founder, Darren Berg, were said to demonstrate excellence and innovation throughout company operations and business achievements. MTR Western was founded about four years ago and operates more than 100 vehicles.

Metro Magazine Motorcoach Operator of the Year: Jack W. Haugslund, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Greyhound Lines. Haugslund's selection was at once surprising, ironic and deserving. Ironic and

surprising because it came at an event sponsored by an organization that was founded in large measure because small operators resented Greyhound's industry dominance in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And it was deserving because anyone who could weather the storms at Greyhound for 40 years, including more than 20 years as a senior officer, warrants high honors. It was announced in August that Haugslund, who began his Greyhound career as a part-time driver while attending college, would retire from the company in January.

UMA Vision Award/Small Operator (less than 15 coaches): Randy Futral and Starkville Trailways of Starkville, Miss.

UMA Vision Award/Large Operator (15 or more coaches): Callen Hotard of Calco Travel in Geismar, La.

UMA Treasurer Jeff Polzien, who chairs the association's Vision Awards Committee, said both Starkville Trailways and Calco Travel exhibit the highest standards that other motorcoach operators should measure themselves against.

New to Expo this year was the **Maintenance Interchange Maintenance Competition**. Those individuals attending the interchange were invited to participate in a competition involving a written test and a timed diagnostic inspection.

The winner was Peter Manco of Classic Tours in Lakewood, N.J. Early in his career, Manco had been a bus mechanic but he spent the past 18 years as a mechanic with UPS. He joined Classic seven months ago after retiring from UPS.

Manco was presented with a plaque and a \$500 gift certificate for Snap-On Tools at the awards banquet by Kevin Whitworth of Whitworth Bus, who coordinates the Maintenance Interchange and Maintenance Competition. Louis Hotard of ABC Companies assisted Whitworth in designing the new maintenance event.

Runners up in the competition were Gene Wordekemper of Arrow Stages Lines in Denver, and Shane Campbell of Champion Coach in Greenville, S.C. (See photos on page 16.)



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Peter Manco of Classic Tours in Lakewood, N.J., left, won the first Maintenance Competition held in conjunction with Motorcoach Expo. Judging Manco is competition and Maintenance Interchange coordinator Kevin Whitworth of Whitworth Bus in Dayton, Ohio.



Wes Kanaga of Peoria Charter Coach in Peoria, Ill., at left speaking, discusses a maintenance issue during the Motorcoach Expo Maintenance Interchange.



Greg Lammers of Cavalier Coaches in Albert Lea, Minn. looks for hidden defects during the Maintenance Competition, which also featured a written test.



Shane Campbell of Champion Coach in Greenville, S.C., left, took second place in the Maintenance Competition, while Gene Wordekemper, right, of Arrow Stages Lines in Denver, finished third. They are joined by competition coordinator Kevin Whitworth.

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Rebuilding New Orleans

More than 160 attendees arrived at Motorcoach Expo one day early so they could volunteer their time and building skills for New Orleans' Habitat for Humanity Musicians Village project. At left, a supervisor for Habitat for Humanity briefs the volunteers. Below left, J.H. Byrd Jr. of Salter Trailways in Jonesboro, La. (brown coat), Bob Graf of El Camino Trailways in South San Francisco (red coat), Jason Willingham of Willingham Inc. (with saw), and Dan Eisentrager of Coach America cut the frame for a set of stairs. Below, Michael Power of Prevost Car uses his height to good advantage during house framing.



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FMCSA

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safety rating from federal regulators.

"We are going to make a concentrated effort to get them," he noted.

Roughly 12,000 compliance inspections are conducted each year and for the past several years regulators have been discussing ways to increase that number.

Hill said the agency also wants to get to new motorcoach companies quicker and has written a new rule that will reduce the time it takes for regulators to conduct initial safety audits of the equipment and operations of new entrant businesses from 18 months to 9 months. (See January issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

"They're either going to play by the rules or not participate," he warned.

He also emphasized that states need to get more involved in motorcoach safety issues and said



John Hill

he will encourage them to do so by withholding federal grants from those states that do not have inspection programs and trained people to run them.

"I was shocked to find that some states do not have a single person trained and in place to do safety inspections," he added.

Additionally, he said he also is taking steps to gather more safety data on the motorcoach industry and develop a program that could provide inspectors with early warnings of potential safety problems during inspections.

Beyond the five key areas, Hill said several other issues will be drawing the attention of the FMCSA as well.

Among them is a plan to merge the commercial driver license with medical certifications so inspectors and law enforcement authorities can easily tell if a certificate is valid and current. That is among several recommendations that the National Transportation and Safety Board has been urging for several years. (See related article on this page.)

Hill urged motorcoach operators to watch for publication of the

NTSB official chides regulators

NEW ORLEANS — The National Transportation Safety Board is continuing its campaign to get federal regulators to tighten their medical standards for certifying commercial bus and truck drivers.

NTSB Vice Chairman Robert Sumwalt told operators at the opening session of the Motorcoach Expo 2007 that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is not moving quickly enough to adopt regulations that could keep unsafe drivers off the road.

The safety board has been calling for strong medical certification regulations for about seven years and has placed its proposed improvements on its "most-wanted"

proposed medical rule and to participate in the process of getting it implemented.

He called, too, for the industry to take advantage of new technologies to improve highway safety, including the use of devices that can alert drivers when they are drifting out of their lanes or are at risk of rolling their coaches.

list as a sign of their importance.

The suggestions call for an oversight program that would require medical personnel who examine drivers to be qualified and educated on occupational issues; development of a tracking system that would make the results of prior examinations of drivers be recorded and made available to those performing subsequent examinations; creation of a detection system that would make it easier for safety inspectors and others to recognize invalid certificates, and that medical examination regulations be reviewed periodically.

Sumwalt suggested that more effective regulations possibly could have prevented some serious

"Such devices could make a substantial difference in accidents," he added.

Hill said the FMCSA also is looking into possibly requiring carriers to install electronic monitoring devices on their vehicles when its drivers have demonstrated a series of violations over a two-year period.

motorcoach accidents. He specifically cited the Mother's Day 1999 crash east of New Orleans in which the coach driver was found to have had a serious heart condition and to have been on both legal and illegal drugs. Nearly two-dozen people died in the crash.

Sumwalt also called on motorcoach operators to continue to work hard to make sure only safe drivers are allowed behind the steering wheels of their buses and that they help push for more stringent regulations.

"While 82 percent of our recommendations get implemented, we can't do it alone," he said "We're partners and we all have an invested interest in this."

In addition, he said the agency is looking onto software that could review the safety records of every carrier in the country and, barring possible privacy issues, make such information available to the industry.

"Then you could deal with issues before there is a problem," he stressed.

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Uncovering business opportunities is key to growth

NEW ORLEANS — Motorcoach operators frustrated by the financial peaks and valleys common to operating a charter bus company can level things off if they stay alert to new business opportunities.

That was the conclusion of a panel of operators from different sections of the country who discussed the growth of their businesses at Motorcoach Expo '07.

Panel members agreed that the competition for charter and other business has stepped up so much that companies that don't look to broaden their services and price them right could be left behind.

"You have to get your people to think outside of the box," suggested Brian Kurtz, owner of Elite Coach in Lancaster, Pa.

Panelists Brain Scott of Escot Bus Lines in Largo, Fla., Jeff Polzien of Red Carpet Charters in Oklahoma City, and John Walker of Star Shuttle and Charters in San Antonio, Texas, agreed, noting that there are many business opportunities available and operators interested in growing their businesses need only look for them and be willing to give them a try.

Among the hottest opportunities could be the school bus market, which the panelists said could be on the verge of a growth spurt.

"Schools are starting to outsource more because they don't want to have to maintain their own buses," said Walker.

About one-third of the school districts throughout the country have private companies operate their school buses.

Scott reported that government officials in Florida are looking at privatizing school bus operations in that state, which would open business opportunities to private coach operators.

Polzien, who added a school bus division to his company a couple of years ago, said that while student transportation work can give a company a financial boost, landing the first contract can be difficult and time consuming.

He said it took him about five years before he won his first contract. "I just couldn't get my foot in the door," he said. "But persistence finally paid off."

Among the lessons he learned, he said, was that schools don't always go for the lowest bid, but



John Walker of Star Shuttle and Charters in San Antonio, left, and Brian Kurtz of Elite Coach in Lancaster, Pa., urges operators to seek out new opportunities.

look for numerous other factors in a company before settling on who will get the contract. "They sometimes even go with the highest bid," he said.

While getting that all-important first contract was tough, he said the transition into schools from charter was easy because he was able to move his drivers between the different types of work without any difficulty.

Airport shuttle service, specialized tours, contract, paratransit

and public transit work also offer operators a chance to find new business for their companies.

The panelists suggested everyone in the company can help in the hunt for new business, and owners should encourage employees to bring up their ideas for consideration.

"And, if someone comes to you with an idea, don't shoot it down," stressed Kurtz.

He said even if an operator doesn't have the right equipment

to handle a suggested improvement or expansion, it still is worth a look by the owner.

The panel also suggested that operators get involved in their local governmental activities by attending meetings of transit boards and metropolitan growth agencies where new motorcoach opportunities often are hatched.

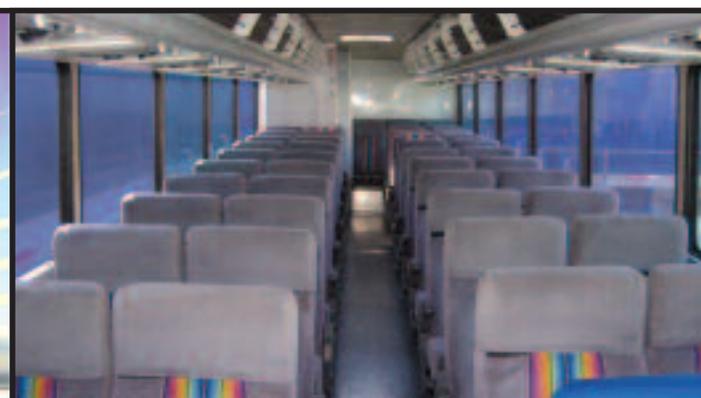
"It'll never happen sitting behind your desk," emphasized Scott.

There also was consensus among the panel members that pricing remains a key to not only keeping pace in the industry, but also in being able to expand.

Kurtz suggested that competition has raised the bar in the industry and pricing your bus and motorcoach services right is becoming even more important. "You need to price for it because if you don't have the money you can't keep up," he warned.

And, according to Polzien, the time just might be ripe for new pricing levels.

"Our customers are expecting more these days, but they seem willing to pay for it, too," he said. "I see less pricing sensitivity now."



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Tom Sorrells, president and CEO of Motor Coach Industries (standing far left), speaks during company ceremony honoring Gulf Coast operators.



MCI Vice President Pat Ziska talks with New Orleans' operator Harold Lewis Sr. of Lewis Coaches, following the MCI ceremony.

MCI honors Katrina-hit motorcoach operators at Expo

NEW ORLEANS — When Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and Mississippi in late summer 2005, many of the region's motorcoach operators suffered devastating business losses.

Motor Coach Industries recognized 15 of those operators with "Gulf Spirit" awards during a ceremony at Motorcoach Expo 2007 here.

Honored were:

- David Ainey, David Tours,

New Orleans

- Norman Augusta, Dixieland Tours, Baton Rouge, La.
- James and Nancy Callahan, Callahan Bus Lines, Oxford, Miss.
- Tom Curtis, The Express (Shuttle Service), Hattiesburg, Miss.
- Randy and Stephanie Futral, Starkville Trailways, Starkville, Miss.
- Clarence Gaten, Gaten's Adventures Unlimited, Hammond, La.

• Callen and Coleen Hotard, Calco Travel, Geismar, La.

- Harold Lewis Sr., Lewis Coaches, New Orleans
- James Mayo, Mayo Tours, Monroe, La.
- John and Donna McCommon, Cline Tours, Ridgeland, Miss.
- Don and Louis Sanders, Louisiana Coaches Trailways, Marrero, La.
- Henry and Sandy Smith, Starcoach, New Orleans

• Jim Smith, New Orleans Tours
• Jim Szesycki, Hotard Coaches, Baton Rouge, La.

- John Williams, DJ Shuttle & Tour, Hattiesburg, Miss.

Gulf Spirit award honorees were sent letters of congratulation signed by NFL broadcaster and MCI spokesman John Madden, who participated in the Gulf Coast relief effort himself by sending one of his private coaches to New Orleans to serve as sleeping quar-

ters for volunteer drivers and mechanics. MCI also presented the operators with plaques of appreciation.

"We were so impressed with these operators for giving so much of themselves during and after Hurricane Katrina," said Tom Sorrells, MCI president and CEO.

"The motorcoach industry has always been one built largely on relationships, and we've never been prouder to be part of that family."

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Two new directors join board of UMA

NEW ORLEANS — Two newcomers have become directors of the United Motorcoach Association, taking seats on the UMA board at its semi-annual meeting following Motorcoach Expo 2007 here in mid-January.

Joining the board from UMA Region I was Gladys Gillis of Starline Luxury Coaches in Seattle. Starline is a 9-year-old, 50-bus operation with three distinct profit centers: charter service, shuttle contracting and paratransit service.

UMA Region I includes the western two-thirds of the U.S., plus the western provinces in Canada.

Elected to the UMA board from Region III was Marcia Milton of First Priority Trailways in District Heights, Md. First Priority's fleet of 17 coaches provides corporate

transfers, private charters and tours, convention shuttle service, executive outings, airport transfers, concert service, ski tours, shopping excursions, weddings, sporting events and sightseeing tours.

Region III of UMA is comprised of 13 northeastern states and the eastern provinces of Canada.

Four UMA directors were re-elected to three-year terms.

David Brown of Holiday Tours in Randleman, N.C., and Brian Scott of Escot Bus Lines in Largo, Fla., were re-elected from Region II (the Midwest and Southeast).

Bill Allen of Amador Stage Lines in Sacramento, Calif., was

re-elected from Region I, and Dale Krapf of Krapf Coaches in West Chester, Pa., was re-elected from Region III.

The new and returning directors were elected in balloting that took place in the fall.

Todd Holland of Ramblin' Express in Colorado Springs/Denver



Gladys Gillis



Marcia Milton

and Steve Haddad of Bieber Tourways in Kutztown, Pa., did not seek re-election

Nat'l Interstate has big quarter, strong full year

RICHFIELD, Ohio — In a preliminary report on its 2006 financial results, National Interstate Corp. has posted double-digit revenue and earnings gains.

The coach industry insurer said gross premiums written last year totaled \$305.5 million, an increase of 13.1 percent over premiums of \$270 million in 2005.

For the fourth quarter of last year, gross premiums totaled \$61.5 million, up nearly 65 percent from fourth-quarter 2005 premiums of \$37.3 million. The fourth-quarter '06 jump was largely attributable to new insurance programs.

National Interstate said it expects full-year 2006 net income to equal \$1.80 to \$1.86 per share fully diluted. That compares to \$1.60 per diluted share for 2005.

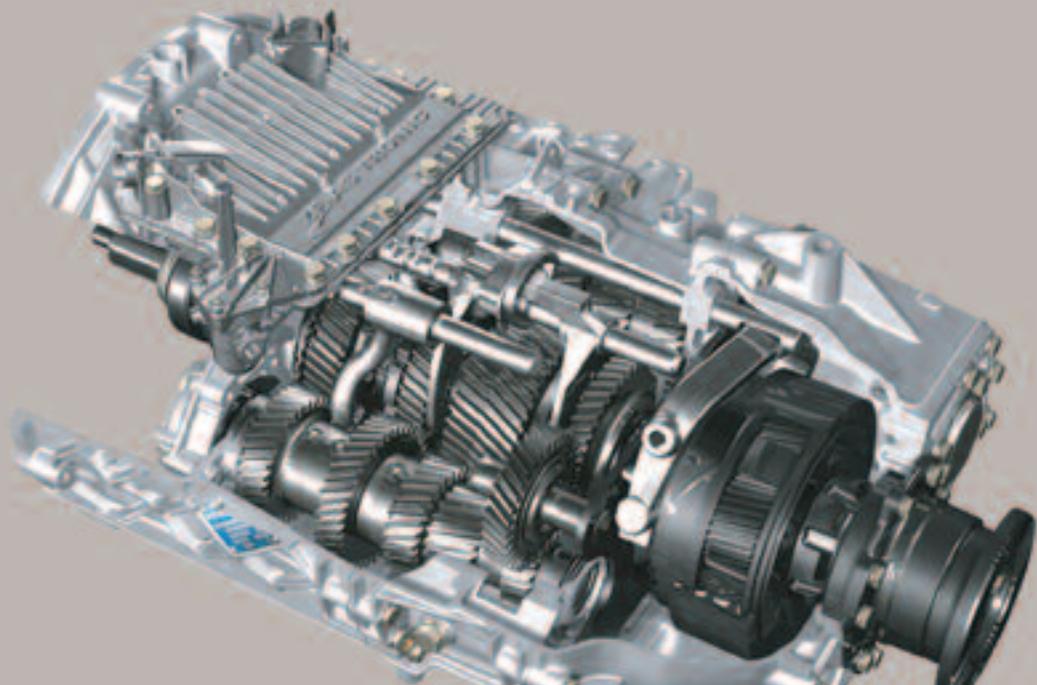
The company anticipates 2006 fourth-quarter net income in the range of 54 to 60 cents per share fully diluted, compared to 41 cents per share diluted for the final quarter of 2005. The improved '06 fourth-quarter net income is primarily due to favorable losses and loss adjustment expenses.

National Interstate does not normally release preliminary results but Chairman and CEO Alan Spachman said that because the company had indicated in earlier conference calls the fourth quarter would be strong it thought it prudent to release the numbers.

The company will announce its complete 2006 results Feb. 26.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

was something that could get my passengers to want to ride again and help attract new customers as well," he said.

Since then, it has evolved further and Bolin and his partners see far more potential, including drawing in hundreds of tourism-related businesses that would like to market to a captive audience.

"I can't really do this alone," he stresses. "It's going to take bus companies and destinations working together to develop the potential and take it to where it goes."

For passengers, the system offers entertainment options that range from compact discs, to satellite television and radio broadcasts, to the Internet. The six, 23-inch monitors on the buses can be tuned to different stations at the same time and passengers can connect their head sets into any one of them or any number of satellite radio stations from their seats.

Size impresses

The integration of the oversize monitors into a traditional seated-coach interior is a masterpiece of

design. The parcel rack system was extensively modified, opening up space for the monitors. The impact of the large viewing screens on passengers probably cannot be overstated.

A group leader can use the touch-screen control unit mounted in front of the passenger-side front seat to play movies or special tapes specific to the people onboard the coach.

Business groups traveling together can skip the entertainment and conduct meetings, complete with special videos and slideshows and connections to the Internet.

"It's all about options for the passengers," says Matt Duff of Falls Church, Va.-based VuStar.

While such a system could help retain existing customers and attract new ones, it also opens up an opportunity that Bolin and his partners say has the potential of increasing revenue streams.

Endless possibilities

The idea is to sell video airtime to travel-related businesses such as motels and hotels, restaurants, destinations, sports venues, theaters and many others. Passengers could look at menus and order food that



Dave Bolin of New World Tours, right front, demonstrates the onboard VuStar information and entertainment system for Randy O'Neill, right front, and Bob Crescenzo, left rear, of Lancer Insurance, and Patrick Marks of Nationwide Travelers in Appleton, Wis., right rear.

could be ready when the bus arrives, check out hotels and book rooms while on the road, and review the highlights of activities planned at the next destination where the bus is headed.

Bolin says the interactive feature of the system also would allow theaters to message the bus whenever they have extra seats for a per-

formance and offer them to passengers who are heading to town.

While the system is aimed at providing passengers with new services and operators with new revenue potential, it also can help save bus owners operation and maintenance expenses.

Using VuStar's operation center, the system can monitor each

vehicle within an operator's fleet. It can track the location of each vehicle, predict vehicle maintenance needs, schedule parts purchases, and provide assistance during breakdowns.

"We have all of our chips on the table, we're all in and hopefully we'll be successful," Bolin said.

35-foot coaches

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

other way around."

Stallion's Sunliner is built on a Freightliner XBR chassis that is merged with a body manufactured in China. It is powered by a 275-horsepower Cummins ISB rear-mounted engine and is equipped with an Allison transmission. A roof-top Thermo King air conditioning system provides the cooling.

Inside, the Stallion offers reclining high-back seats with a side slider on the aisle seats, allowing the passenger to move the seat about two inches away from its companion seat. An 18-inch aisle handles the extra space when the seat is moved out. The seats are made by the same Chinese company that makes the body.

The Sunliner sells for \$250,000 regardless of the seating arrangement or if a restroom is added to the coach.

"Our focus is to make it reliable, yet affordable," said Clare.

He said the first 10 coaches should be off the line in February or March and all of have been sold. He plans to team with Freightliner and others to offer service and parts for the coaches.

Trident's unibody-constructed Temsa is built in Turkey by the Sabanci Group, which sold about 1,000 coaches throughout Europe last year. It has a Caterpillar C9 350-horsepower engine at the rear of the coach, an Allison B500

transmission and a Carrier-Sutrak cooling system. Its seats are from Amaya.

"This is the flagship for our company," said Cash.

He said the coach sells for between \$280,000 and \$300,000 and the first ones are due for delivery to an operator in the Northwest in April or May. The company is negotiating with International and other large companies for after-market service and parts distribution, according to Cash.

International's FC Series offers a body manufactured in Brazil that is mounted on one of its own chassis. It has a Maxforce 225- to 245-horsepower engine at the front of the bus, an Allison B300 transmission, roof-top Trans/Air and Carrier air conditioning and seats built by the bus manufacturer.

"The engine noise is upfront and not where the passengers are," noted Shackleton, adding that the placement of the engine allows for an extra spacious luggage compartment at the rear of the coach.

International dealers will market the coach, which will sell for \$230,000. About two dozen of them already have been sold, according to Shackleton.

A rear-engine model, the RC, is expected later in the year.

ABC Companies also announced it intends to introduce a coach-like 35-foot model later this year. It will carry the ABC brand and be manufactured by the same company that builds the ABC M-series cutaway



Stallion Bus Industries of New York unveiled its Sunliner 35-foot coach at Expo.

buses.

Glaval Bus, the Elkhart, Ind.-based maker of cutaway buses, displayed its new Synergy model, a rear-engine, coach-like bus.

The 38-foot model, which seats up to 37 passengers, is built on nine-inch frame rails and is equipped with a 275-horsepower Cummins ISB engine, Allison 3000 transmission, and seats from either Amaya, American or National. It has typical coach amenities, including parcel racks, kneeling, overhead ventilation and lighting, and pantograph-hinged luggage bay doors. Luggage capacity is 275 cubic feet.

Glaval was one of five midsize bus manufacturers to have high-end cutaway models on the Expo floor.

Glaval had its Concorde II, which is built on a Ford F-650 air-porter-style chassis and available in lengths ranging from 30 to 40 feet. It comes standard with a Cummins engine (Caterpillar is optional) and Allison transmission.

Other cutaway models on the show floor included:

Two versions of Krystal Enterprises KK38, a 38-foot model that's built on an International 3200 chassis. KK38 models use a 285-horsepower International engine and Allison transmission. The two Krystal's at Expo were a conventional seated bus and a luxury limousine model.

The limo version has sofa-style seating, high-end A/V system, bar, glassware storage, special

interior lighting and a power privacy division.

Turtle Top of New Paris, Ind., brought its high-end Odyssey XL to Expo. Built on a Chevrolet C5500 chassis, the Odyssey XL seats up to 37 passengers in a 101-inch wide cabin. The side windows are tinted and flush mounted, while the 29-inch wide entrance door is electric and bi-fold.

IC Corp. had three cutaways on the show floor, including the LC, a low-floor model designed for accessibility; the large, medium-duty HC series, plus a smaller shuttle.

ABC Companies unveiled its second-generation M1235 luxury cutaway. (See 12/15/06 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Florida coach association picks new management firm

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Florida Motorcoach Association has retained Linda Morris of Morris Meeting Management of Brookneal, Va., to manage the association.

The Florida group becomes the sixth state coach association to be managed by Morris' company, plus it also manages the South Central Motorcoach Association, a regional organization whose membership is made up of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas operators.

"I am excited about the possibilities of making a positive impact on the Florida Motorcoach Association," said Morris. "I am honored that the Florida Motorcoach Association board of directors has allowed me this opportunity.

The Florida association had been managed by Crow-Segal Management Company of Winter Park, Fla., but had lost its momentum during the past couple of years. The association is considerably

smaller than the typical group managed by Crow-Segal.

Under the new arrangement, Morris' firm immediately takes over operation of the Florida association, and she becomes executive director and Mary Presley becomes association manager.

Morris and her staff will be responsible for day-to-day operations of the association, including membership recruitment and data management, publications, meetings management, and finance.

Morris feels strongly that successful state associations are a key element in making individual owner/operator motorcoach companies more successful. "Strong state associations are also beneficial to associate (vendor) members because of the opportunity to build good business relationships with operators face to face at annual meetings and other special meetings," she notes.

Rob Grassano of Bristol Trail-

ways is president of the association, while Bob Rial of Discovery Charter is vice president.

The first major association

event to be managed by the Morris group is the 2007 Appointment Show, July 9-12, at the Marriott Key Largo Bay Resort.

The new address of the association is P.O. Box 690852, Orlando, FL 32869. The phone number is (866) 376-7770.

Calendar

MARCH 2007

7-9 Trailways 71st Annual Conference and Meeting, Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Course, Miami Lakes, Fla. Info: Go to www.trailways.com, or call (703) 691-3052.

27 Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplace 2007, Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg. Info: Go to www.pabus.org.



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