

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

May 15, 2003

THE NEWS RESOURCE FOR THE BUS AND MOTORCOACH INDUSTRY

FTA asked to boost penalties for charter violations

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — A motorcoach operator in Southern California is prodding the Federal Transit Administration to impose stiffer penalties when it finds a public transit agency has violated federal charter service regulations.

Bill Miller of Desert Resorts Transportation in Thousand

Bill Miller's quixotic battle with SunLine Transit

Palms, Calif., wants the FTA to withhold federal dollars or force transits to reimburse private operators when they break the rules that prohibit them from providing charter bus service.

Thus far, however, Miller hasn't had much luck. He keeps running into bureaucratic roadblocks thrown up by various FTA officials. They tell him they can't withhold federal financial assis-

tance from transit agencies or impose monetary penalties because there's no precedent for doing so. Or, they say they have no procedures for meting out fines or forcing transits to pay damages.

So, until FTA officials screw up the courage to break out of their self-imposed box, neither Miller nor the rest of the motorcoach industry is likely see real penalties for violations of the federal charter rules. Certainly, they aren't going to be reimbursed for the money

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County mounties hit coaches on Atlanta interstates

Good advice: Stay out of HOV lanes

ATLANTA — When is an over-the-road bus a truck?

When it crosses the state line in Georgia.

Not knowing—or ignoring—that fact is costing scores of coach drivers fines of \$250–\$275. Here's the story:

Like most states, Georgia has a law that prohibits big trucks

from using high-occupancy-vehicle lanes. But unlike other states, Georgia also has a law that defines any vehicle with more than six wheels as a truck. That means that 40- and 45-foot motorcoaches using HOV lanes in Georgia are violating the state law that prohibits trucks from driving in HOV lanes.

In recent weeks, Georgia law enforcement agencies have stepped up enforcement of the law, ticketing unsuspecting

motorcoach drivers right and left, according to the vice president of the Georgia Motorcoach Operators Association

The association has issued a blanket warning to unsuspecting drivers to watch out for aggressive county sheriff deputies who are handing out expensive tickets to coaches using HOV lanes, especially around metro Atlanta.

The ticketing has become so commonplace and egregious that

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Peter Pan purchase of five Coach USA companies wins OK

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Surface Transportation Board has turned aside a complaint aimed at blocking Peter Pan Bus Lines' purchase of five New England affiliates of Coach USA.

On May 9, the board voted to reject a complaint filed by Entertainment Tours Inc., of Braintree, Mass., and Franklin, Conn. Entertainment Tours, which operates under the name Coach New England, is a competitor of Peter Pan and Coach USA.

In its terse notice announcing approval of the deal, the Surface Transportation Board provided no comment on Entertainment Tours' request that the purchase be denied. The board vote was 2-0 and there was no indication why the third member of the three-member board did not participate in the voting.

Under federal law, the Surface

Transportation Board must approve coach industry mergers and acquisitions unless it deems the transactions are not in the public interest.

The decision appears to clear the way for Peter Pan to buy The Arrow Line of East Hartford, Milford and Waterford, Conn.; Bonanza Bus Lines of Providence, R.I.; The Maine Line in Portland; Pawtuxet Valley Lines of West Warwick, R.I., and Coach USA Boston.

The Surface Transportation Board had given tentative approval to the deal back in December with an effective date of mid-February, but it was held up three months pending a decision on the Entertainment Tours' challenge.

In a telephone interview, Robert Schwarz, executive vice

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THE DOCKET

No problema

CVSA expects roadside inspectors to have no difficulty enforcing separate hours-of-service rules for coach drivers and truckers. **Page 4**

Illinois Tax Grab

The governor of Illinois wants to take away the rolling stock sales tax exemption for coach operators and truckers. He's serious. **Page 4**

Bus Security

A Senate committee gives thumbs up to a \$99 million bus security bill. **Page 6**

School License

School bus licensing law in Illinois enters home stretch. **Page 6**

FMCSA Research

Industry representatives discuss important industry safety issues at a series of forums conducted by the FMCSA. **Page 6**

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Just Arrived...

50

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Roadcheck 2003: Watch out for it early next month

The 16th annual International Roadcheck will be June 3-5 throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

An army of nearly 9,000 bus and truck safety inspectors will be on the job night and day at inspection sites along major highways in the three countries. Roving patrols also will inspect commercial vehicles traveling other highways.

The 72-hour inspection marathon conducted under the aegis of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance is designed to focus attention on the roadside inspection program that operates year around.

Roughly three million roadside inspections were conducted last year throughout North America.

Nearly 50,000 vehicles, including 350 motorcoaches, and drivers were inspected during Roadcheck 2002. Both vehicles and drivers had lower out-of-service rates than in previous years.

Participating in Roadcheck are the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and Transport Canada.

Greyhound captures \$1 million in Florida grant money

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Greyhound Bus Lines has all but snookered a small group of public transit entities in Florida by capturing every cent of the federal grant money earmarked for intercity bus transportation in Florida.

All that remains to happen before the nearly \$1.02 million starts rolling Greyhound's way is for Gov. Jeb Bush to sign a bill that has passed both the Florida Senate and House (S.B. 2070). It becomes effective July 1.

The legislation granting the money to Greyhound also directs the Florida Department of Transportation to make intercity bus service a much bigger part of its planning and programs. Among other things, the department must:

- Add intercity bus services to its statewide transit plan.
- Formulate a program to finance intercity bus service projects.
- Provide technical and financial operating assistance to intercity bus companies.
- Make department-owned transit vehicles available for short-term lease to intercity bus services.
- Help develop and implement marketing and passenger-information programs.
- Include in its intermodal development program an assess-



ment of intercity bus service.

The bill also amends Florida statutes to specify that intercity bus services will receive the full amount of Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (f) nonurbanized area formula program funds available through the Florida Department of Transportation budget.

Greyhound stands to be the only recipient of all of this largesse because of the clever way the bill was drafted. The term "intercity

bus service" is so narrowly defined in the bill that it can only apply to Greyhound.

For example, the bill specifies that the "intercity bus service" must provide package express service along with its passenger transportation; maintain schedule information in Russell's Official National Motor Coach Guide, and be a private company regulated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Greyhound is the only company operating in Florida

meeting those criteria and a handful of others in the bill.

In the past, Polk County (Fla.) Transit Services and a few other public transit entities shared in the federal nonurbanized grant dollars with Greyhound. The new bill locks the public agencies—and anyone else—out of the money.

Greyhound has picked up other federal money in Florida, including a \$194,000 operating subsidy for its Florida Keys/Monroe County route.

Diesel drops to \$1.44

For the first time since Christmas, diesel fuel prices across the U.S. average less than \$1.45 per gallon. Diesel prices have fallen for nine consecutive weeks.

The latest fuel price survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy shows diesel dipped nearly 6 cents a gallon between the end of April and mid-May, averaging \$1.44 a gallon. Just before Christmas 2002, diesel also averaged \$1.44 a gallon. In between, the price rocketed to as high as \$1.77 a gallon.

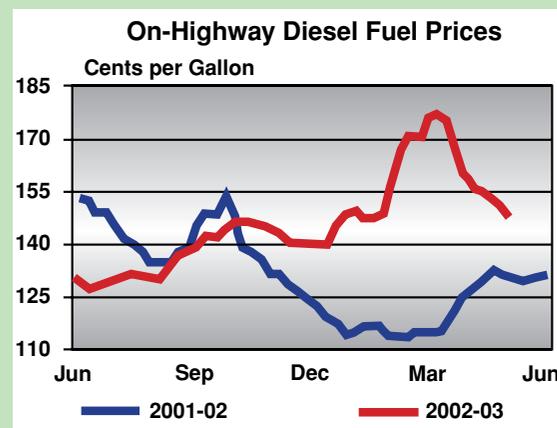
Regionally, the biggest price declines in the first half of May were in California and elsewhere along the West Coast, plus the lower Atlantic states and the East Coast. Prices in those areas generally dropped 7 cents a gallon.

New England continues to be the high-price leader with diesel fuel averaging \$1.61 a gallon, down a nickel in the most recent two-week period.

On the West Coast, diesel fuel prices average \$1.53 a gallon in California and \$1.49 in other coast states. Midwestern states average \$1.42 a gallon.

The lowest price for diesel fuel remains along the Gulf Coast where it averages \$1.36 a gallon, only 10 cents a gallon higher than it was a year ago.

The steady decline in diesel fuel prices clearly parallels the drop in crude oil prices. In recent days, crude oil prices have stabilized which may portend a slowing of the diesel price plunge.



Diesel Fuel Prices

| | Cents per Gallon | Change from | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|----------|
| | | Price | Week Ago | Year Ago |
| U.S. | 144.4 | | ▼ -4.0 | ▲ 14.5 |
| East Coast | 149.7 | | ▼ -5.0 | ▲ 18.9 |
| New England | 161.2 | | ▼ -2.3 | ▲ 21.3 |
| Central Atlantic | 160.7 | | ▼ -4.0 | ▲ 21.4 |
| Lower Atlantic | 144.0 | | ▼ -5.6 | ▲ 17.7 |
| Midwest | 142.2 | | ▼ -3.6 | ▲ 14.7 |
| Gulf Coast | 136.6 | | ▼ -2.4 | ▲ 10.0 |
| Rocky Mountain | 148.8 | | ▼ -3.7 | ▲ 13.1 |
| West Coast | 149.1 | | ▼ -5.3 | ▲ 11.6 |
| California | 153.4 | | ▼ -5.4 | ▲ 13.2 |

UMA, ABA members sent copyright compliance papers

Operator members of the United Motorcoach Association and the American Bus Association are receiving documents indicating they are in compliance with the federal copyright laws that apply to playing music on their coaches.

Two types of documents are being mailed to operators. The first is a Certificate of Compliance from Broadcast Music Inc., and the second is a vehicle decal from the American Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers.

The BMI certificate of compliance is issued in the name of the operator's trade association rather than in the operator's name.

BMI and ASCAP are the leading music copyrighting firms, representing virtually the entire copyrighted music library of the world.

About a year ago, UMA negotiated an industry-wide licensing agreement that provides UMA

and ABA members with an affordable and convenient way to meet their legal obligations. The negotiations took nearly 12 years.

Licenses from BMI and ASCAP are mandatory for any operator using commercially produced music on board a motorcoach. Well-established and court-proven federal laws allow ASCAP and BMI to bring expensive lawsuits against businesses that use copyrighted music without licenses.

Under the UMA-negotiated agreement, ABA and UMA members pay a licensing fee of \$40 annually (\$20 to each licensing organization, per vehicle) so they can legally play commercial tapes, CDs and DVDs.

Previously, ASCAP charged \$260 per year.

Independent coach operators must pay more than three times as much as UMA and ABA members to play music legally.

THE DOCKET

Federal Hours of Service Rules

Comparing the rules for truck and bus drivers

| | Motorcoach Drivers | Truck Drivers |
|---|---|---|
| Off-Duty Hours | 8 consecutive hours | 10 consecutive hours |
| Total On-Duty Hours | 15 hours non-consecutive (Driver may work longer than 15 hours, but may not drive until obtaining 8 hours off-duty.) | 14 consecutive hours (See description of new short-haul driver exemption below.) |
| Total Hours (On-Duty + Off-Duty) | 23 hours (Rule does not operate on "daily" cycle. Rather, it is a continuum.) | 24 hours |
| Driving Hours | 10 hours | 11 hours |
| Mandatory Rest Break During Shift | None | None |
| Cumulative On-Duty | 60 hours in 7 days, or 70 hours in 8 days* (* for carriers that operate 7 days a week) | 60 hours in 7 days, or 70 hours in 8 days* (* for carriers that operate 7 days a week) |
| Cumulative On-Duty "Restart" | None | Voluntary 34-hour restart at any point in a driver's 7- or 8-day cycle |
| Sleeper Berth: Splitting Off-Duty Time | Team and Solo Drivers: 2 periods totaling 8 hours, neither period may be less than 2 hours. | Team and Solo Drivers: 2 periods totaling ≥ 10 hours, neither period may be less than 2 hours |
| On-Board Recorders | Voluntary Use | Voluntary Use |
| Federal Exceptions & Exemptions | 14 exemptions and exceptions | All 14 existing exemptions remain. New short-haul driver exemption allows local drivers to operate up to 16 hours one day a week. |

Separate hours rules: No problem

Motorcoach operators and drivers apparently do not need to be concerned that roadside inspectors and highway patrolmen will have two sets of hours-of-service rules to enforce beginning in January.

Not to worry, says the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, the leading commercial vehicle safety enforcement organization in North America. CVSA members include enforcement agencies and industry representatives throughout North America.

Starting Sunday, Jan. 4, there will be one set of rules for over-the-road bus drivers and another set for big-rig truck drivers. While the rules are similar in many respects, there are important differences (see accompanying chart).

"While we expect there will

be some bumps to deal with (in implementing the rule for truckers), on balance it appears that enforcement of the rule itself it will not create a huge burden on the membership," CVSA said in a statement.

CVSA found comfort in the fact the new rules for truckers are easy to understand, uniform in

application and enforcement, and easy to enforce.

Between now and January, the FMCSA and the states will be modifying computer systems to reflect the regulatory changes and train the more than 8,000 U.S. personnel who will be enforcing the rules.

Public agencies seek private charter firms

The following public transit providers have informed the United Motorcoach Association of their intent to provide charter service unless willing and able private charter operators step forward to offer their services, or to bid on contract opportunities.

Operators are urged to take the time to respond to these public notices:

Madison, Wis. Deadline June 14, 2003. Write to: Karen Meudt,

Transit Accountant, Madison Metro Transit System, 1101 East Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703-3052. Phone: (608) 266-4904.

Norman, Okla./University of Oklahoma. Deadline: June 20, 2003. Write to: Theta Dempsey, Director; Parking & Transportation Services, The University of Oklahoma; 731 Elm Ave., ROBT #317; Norman, Okla. 73019. Phone: (405) 325-2046.

Illinois governor wants to kill tax exemption for buses and trucks

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — For nearly 50 years, motorcoach operators in Illinois have benefited from a "tax loophole" that Gov. Rod Blagojevich has declared he intends to trash.

The loophole is the state sales tax exemption on the rolling stock used by coach operators, truckers, aircraft operators and railroads. Blagojevich has vowed to get rid of the exemption as part of a package to boost state revenues and erase a \$5.2 billion budget deficit.

Eliminating the rolling stock exemption, in effect since 1955, would produce an estimated \$92 million to \$120 million in annual revenue for the state.

The exemption applies to sales of passenger buses, trucks, truck-tractors, trailers, aircraft and railroad equipment used in interstate transportation. Under Illinois law, to qualify for the exemption, the equipment must make a minimum of 15 interstate movements in a one-year period.

The exemption also extends to parts that become a component of the vehicle, including such items as brakes and anti-freeze, but not motor oil or fuel. All of the states surrounding Illinois have similar exemptions.

The exemption can mean a significant piece of change for a coach operator. For example, say an operator spent \$1.2 million last year acquiring three new coaches, adding a wheelchair lift to another coach and purchasing various parts used on the company fleet. The rolling stock exemption saves the operator \$75,000.

Spokesmen for the trucking industry are predicting that elimination of the rolling stock exemption will force trucking

companies to move their operations to other states, eliminating thousands of jobs and other tax revenue. Additionally, the companies that relocate also will move their licensing to other states, producing a double negative for Illinois.

Such scenarios seem less likely in the coach industry. However, an Illinois-based coach company that also has an operation in St. Louis or East Chicago, Ind., could domicile its operation in one of

those cities and enjoy the rolling stock exemptions in Missouri or Indiana.

Elimination of the rolling stock exemption represents a significant chunk of the \$288 million in corporate tax loopholes Blagojevich, a

Democrat, wants to close. But while he is attacking the transportation industry he is leaving untouched a number of tax breaks favoring manufacturers and big exporters.

More recently it was learned Blagojevich wants to extend new tax credits for making motion pictures in Chicago. As one lobbyist told *Bus & Motorcoach News*: "He wants to take it away from the (transportation) industry and give it to Hollywood."

The trucking industry is organizing to fight the governor's move but thus far there has been little discernable action from the coach industry. The lone exception appears to be Motor Coach Industries, headquartered in suburban Chicago, which is investigating the issue.

One lobbyist worries that unless the coach industry gets involved in the fight it could end up on the short end of the stick if truckers are successful in opposing it for their industry.

'The exemption can mean a significant piece of change for a motorcoach operator.'

South Dakota continues strict weight policy

South Dakota, which has one of the most aggressive axle-weight enforcement programs in the nation, has sent notices to motorcoach companies warning of its tough-as-nails policies.

The secretary of tourism and state development, John S. Calvin, penned a "Greetings from South Dakota" memorandum to operators reminding them that South Dakota requires all coaches to stop at its Ports of Entry to be weighed and to determine whether they comply with federal highway weight guidelines. Calvin's memo has a friendly tone but its message is clear — be warned.

South Dakota has a well-deserved reputation of being the worst-of-the-worst when it comes to enforcing axle-weight restrictions. The state's strict policy of stopping buses and trucks—and oft-times turning them back—apparently stems from the fact that South Dakota gets relatively little federal money with which to maintain its highways. Consequently, it works aggressively to keep overweight vehicles off its roads.

In his memo, Calvin says South Dakota Gov. M. Michael Rounds has authorized a number of provisions designed "to make your trip through South Dakota run smoothly." These include:

- A 5 percent tolerance on maximum weight. This tolerance for coaches applies to both axle and gross vehicle weight allowances.
- Motorcoaches will be moved to the front of a weigh-station line whenever practical.

Speeding tickets up in California

The number of speeding citations issued by the California Highway Patrol nearly tripled between 1992 and 2002, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

The CHP said the reason for the increase from 5,290 in 1992 to 15,436 last year was that vehicles are faster and there are more of them on the road.

California speeding tickets vary in cost; a speeder going 10 miles over the speed limit should count on paying at least \$150

"Motorcoaches that are in compliance with weight regulations will see no significant delays in their itineraries," according to Calvin.

- A provision that deals with situations where the coach operator has a potential weight distribution

problem. The state sells a permit that allows a motorcoach to weigh and redistribute its load to become compliant without enforcement penalties. This program is called "Permit to Move to Scale." These permits must be purchased in

advance of entry into South Dakota. Call (800) 698-3925.

It appears from Calvin's memo that South Dakota intends to ignore the action taken by Congress earlier this year, granting motorcoaches an axle-weight

exemption on interstate highways. Operators that are ticketed by—or refused entry to—South Dakota should notify their state or national motorcoach associations regarding such incidents.



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THE DOCKET

Senate panel gives nod to security bill

A bill that would authorize \$99 million for over-the-road bus security in fiscal 2004 has cleared its first hurdle in the U.S. Senate.

Similar legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives was unanimously passed out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in March.

The Senate bill (S. 929) was adopted by a vote of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee after being introduced by Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and ranking member Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.).

"We are encouraged by yet another step forward in Congress' commitment to enhance bus security for the 774 million people who ride motorcoaches each year," said American Bus Association President & CEO Peter Pantuso.

The Senate bill has been named the Max Cleland Over-the-Road Bus Security and Safety Act in honor of former Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.).

Both bills would set up a program that would make grants to operators for security improvements, including protecting drivers; training employees; hiring and training security officers; installing surveillance equipment, and implementing passenger screening programs.

The grants also could be used to reimburse private operators for "extraordinary" security-related improvements made since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The two versions of the bill have one significant difference: The House bill (H.R. 875) directs the proposed security program to the U.S. Department of Transportation, while the Senate bill directs it to the Department of Homeland Security.

Both bills now await action on the floors of the two houses.

Safety search *FMCSA forums probe key coach issues*

A series of research forums conducted by a key unit of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has focused new attention on many of the motorcoach industry's thorniest safety-related issues.

Participants at the forums, organized by the FMCSA Office of Research & Technology, came up with no-holds-barred recommendations on such hot-button issues as shipper liability and the need to improve the system for establishing driver medical qualifications.

The forums had a dual purpose: Get input from the commercial motor carrier industry on the FMCSA research agenda, and educate attendees about the high priority projects, as well as the research and technology programs, underway at the FMCSA.

Originally, forums were planned in Austin, Texas; San Diego, and Washington, D.C. An extra forum became necessary in Washington because of heavy registration for the session scheduled there. Finally, a special forum was added at the end of the series to focus discussions exclusively on coach industry issues.

Attending the forums were representatives from motorcoach and trucking companies, associations, safety advocacy groups, state enforcement agencies, vehicle manufacturers, academia, the medical community, and vendors of systems and services designed to improve commercial vehicle safety.

The forums generated more than 150 suggestions for the FMCSA research program. Among the more significant recommendations related to the motorcoach industry were the calls for:

- Evaluating the safety impact of the FMCSA "extended day" rule interpretation on coach safety.
- Reviewing existing vehicle

standards to ensure they are still applicable to modern commercial vehicles, including the appropriateness of push-open windows on modern motorcoaches.

- Studying the adequacy of motorcoach evacuation plans for disabled and/or wheelchair-dependent riders.

There were two recommendations related to shipper liability, an important issue to the coach industry that the FMCSA has ignored.

'Of particular interest were the discussions related to driver medical qualifications.'

The first shipper liability-related recommendation was to document shippers' influence on motorcoach operations and motor carriers. And the second was to conduct a feasibility analysis for creating a hotline for motorcoach operators and motor carriers to report shippers making unreasonable scheduling demands or requests.

At all five forums, driver-related factors dominated the discussions. In the end, there was a consensus among participants that driver issues should be the FMCSA's top research priority.

Medical issues of particular interest to the coach industry participants were the discussions related to driver medical qualifications. Coach industry participants, as well as those from trucking and the medical community, identified several

FMCSA guidelines that are inconsistent with current medical research and need to be updated.

For example, the participants noted that the USDOT standard for "mild hypertension" is a blood pressure reading of 161-180 systolic and 104 diastolic, which is considerably higher than the current medical standard for this condition (140 systolic and 90 diastolic). It was recommended that research be undertaken to align DOT standards with those of the medical community.

There also were strong recommendations calling for improvement of the process by which commercial drivers are medically examined and cleared for work. Currently, medical professionals performing driver physicals are not required to demonstrate knowledge of the regulations governing driver medical qualifications or demonstrate aptitude in completing the USDOT medical forms.

Representatives from both the motorcoach and trucking industries offered numerous anecdotal examples of drivers being cleared for duty despite the presence of a disqualifying condition. It was recommended that research be undertaken to determine a means by which medical personnel performing driver physicals could be trained and/or certified.

Other medical-related recommendations included:

- Identifying the safety benefits of properly conducting a CDL medical exam.
- Developing a standard curriculum to train medical personnel on how to conduct a proper CDL Medical exam.
- Studying the legal liability of a medical professional disqualifying a commercial driver from work for health reasons.

Home stretch for Illinois licensing bill

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. — Both houses of the Illinois General Assembly are winding up work on legislation aimed at revising a state law that requires motorcoach drivers to have an Illinois school bus drivers license before transporting students.

The Illinois House has tabled its version of the bill in favor of an amended Senate version, and a third (and final) reading of the bill likely will have occurred by the time you read this article.

In the Senate, the third reading of the bill was expected late this week.

"It all looks promising," said Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association. UMA and the American Bus Association are splitting the cost of using a lobbyist to push the bills through the Illinois assembly.

"Our goal is to get a bill on the governor's desk," said Parra. "We're very optimistic about how this will play out."

The legislation would eliminate provisions of a five-month-old law that requires coach drivers to have a school bus drivers license before transporting school children in a chartered bus. The bills ease the requirements. As long as coach drivers have current, valid commercial drivers licenses they can transport school children.

The bills require schools that contract for charter bus service with Illinois-based operators to insert a clause in their contracts that indicate the drivers have been fingerprinted and have had a criminal background check.

An amendment to the legislation from the state police specifies how it wants driver fingerprints submitted and how they are to be paid for and processed.

Mineta says 'no' to hike in fuel taxes for road programs

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta says the Bush administration will send a six-year, \$274 billion highway funding plan to Congress with no proposals to increase fuel taxes to help pay for

road improvements.

Mineta told a House appropriations subcommittee the administration is committed to a user-based funding strategy that will not raise taxes or stress other federal

resources.

The tax paid by coach operators, truckers and motorists is the main resource of the Highway Trust Fund, which finances federal road construction programs.

Motor Coach Industries hosts Bus Bash at Louisville facility

Motor Coach Industries and its MCI Service Parts facility in Louisville are hosting the 44th annual Bus Bash this month.

The three-day event will feature several tours, a bus display, and a parade of buses. New, pre-owned and vintage coaches will be on display.

The activities begin Friday, May 30, with a welcoming reception at the host hotel, the Holiday Inn Lakeview in Clarksville, Ind.

The following day will feature tours of MCI Service Parts, the largest coach parts distribution center in the industry; a

tour of the bus garage operated by the Free Enterprise System, a motorcoach operator based in Jeffersonville, Ind.; a tour of facilities operated by the Transit Authority of River City, the public transit agency in Louisville, or a guided tour of historic Louisville. That evening, there will be a dinner.

The activities conclude Sunday, June 1, with a flea market, bus display, bus parade and awards ceremony.

To participate or get additional information, go to www.mcicoach.com or www.busmag.com, or call (847) 285-2116.

Alabama association schedules annual meeting

The newly organized Alabama Motorcoach Association will have its first Annual Meeting and Marketplace in August.

The association was formed

earlier this year.

The meeting will be Aug. 10-12 at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham. Information can be obtained by calling (336) 495-4970.

Texas coach operators organizing association

Upwards of 25 to 30 private coach operators from across Texas were expected to attend a meeting this week to discuss forming a state motorcoach association.

The driving force behind the organizing effort is a former motorcoach operator turned coach sales executive, Tim Vaught of ABC Companies. Vaught operated Vaught Charters of Fort Worth for a dozen years before selling to Coach USA in the mid-1990s. He's now a vice president for ABC at its regional sales and service center in Grand Prairie.

"I was in the charter business for many years," Vaught said in a telephone interview. "I always felt there was a need for a strong state association, but we never had that."

After kicking the idea around for several years, Vaught decided to take the bull by the horns and help lead a drive to organize an association of Texas operators. He

said the effort has been blessed by the Texas Bus Association, which has traditionally represented line-haul operators.

"There are issues in Texas that need to be addressed," said Vaught. "It's a lot better to get

'Representatives were expected from UMA, ABA and Morris Meeting Management.'

everybody together to get some things fixed that need to be fixed."

Additionally, says Vaught, there are a number of operators who would benefit from the kind of services an association can provide in terms of business planning, regulatory compliance, accounting and bookkeeping expertise, and driver screening and qualifying. "An association can help take these companies to another level,"

Vaught said.

"We can show the benefits of an association. Our goal is to improve the industry," Vaught added.

A luncheon meeting to discuss setting up a Texas association was scheduled for May 14 at a restaurant near Six Flags over Texas in Arlington. Representatives were expected from the United Motorcoach Association, the American Bus Association and Morris Meeting Management, which manages state coach associations in five southern states and is helping organize a sixth. The event was being hosted by ABC Companies.

Among those who said he planned to attend the meeting this week was Dan Dipert Jr. of Dan Dipert Coaches in Arlington. "We compete like hell but we also save each other on a daily basis," said Dipert. "It behooves you to stay friends with these guys."



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OPINION

Click & Clack offer deadly advice

Two well-known automobile columnists have offered one of their readers an incredibly stupid and dangerous piece of advice about taking a group of friends on an 800-mile trip. The pair partially redeem themselves, however, by also suggesting the reader consider chartering a motorcoach.

The dangerously bad advice was offered up by auto gurus Tom and Ray Magliozzi, who write the Click and Clack auto column that's printed in hundreds of daily newspapers.

A reader from Seattle wrote the Magliozzis and asked if it was a good idea to purchase or rent a school bus to take 20 friends to a festival in Nevada this summer. The advice the Magliozzis gave the reader sounded as if it came from Dumb and Dumber, not two auto mechanics who graduated from MIT and became nationally syndicated newspaper columnists and fixtures on National Public Radio.

In their column, the brothers Magliozzi told the reader it was a bad idea to get a school bus, and then they proceeded to offer two alternatives, one of which is the absolutely worst possible advice they could have given. Were the Seattle reader and his friends to follow the Magliozzis' suggestion they easily could end up in a ditch with a tragic outcome.

In dismissing the idea of using a school bus, the Magliozzis also made a series of statements that are not only wrong but likely scared the bejesus out of parents

who send their children off on bright yellow school buses each morning.

School buses, said the Magliozzis in their column, "are among the least-safe vehicles on the road," adding that school buses "steer terribly, brake terribly, corner terribly, and most of them don't have seat belts."

Anyone in the bus industry could have told the Magliozzis that school buses are by far the safest form of motorized travel in the United States today. School buses are required to meet the most rigorous safety standards of any vehicles built. Every year, upwards of 395,000 public school buses travel nearly 4.3 billion miles, transporting 23.5 million children. During the past 20 years, an average of 11 passengers have died annually in school bus crashes. As tragic as 11 deaths are, that compares to the more than 8,000 children killed every year in other types of motor vehicles.

Fifty years ago, when the oldest of the Magliozzis was in grade school, perhaps school buses were difficult to steer and had less-than-

optimum braking. That's certainly not the case today. Just take a look at who drives school buses, and their safety record.

While the Magliozzis' pronouncements regarding school buses are totally inane, worse by 10 fold is their No. 1 alternative to renting a school bus. They suggested the reader rent two 15-passenger vans.

As virtually everyone in the public transportation business could have told the Magliozzis, 15-passenger vans in the hands of inexperienced drivers are far and away the most dangerous vehicles on the road.

The National Transportation Safety Board, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

and the United Motorcoach Association all have issued safety warnings about 15-passenger vans. Their record is so bad some insurance companies refuse to insure them.

Yet, the Magliozzis recommended their reader load 20 people and their luggage in two vans, put inexperienced drivers behind the steering wheels, and drive 800 or

900 miles across three or four states. That is lunacy.

As the NHTSA and NTSB have made clear in their studies, the fundamental safety problem with 15-passenger vans is a propensity to roll over when carrying near-capacity loads. The more passengers and baggage, the greater the chances of rolling over, even in single-vehicle crashes.

The most innocent pavement run-off at highway speed may be difficult to correct safely because of the rear- and top-heavy weight distribution characteristics of 15-passenger vans, warns the United Motorcoach Association. And, adds the National Traffic Safety Administration, it is important that these vans always be operated by experienced drivers.

That's the kind of advice the Magliozzis should have given and warnings they should have provided their reader. What they wrote was irresponsible and dangerous.

The second alternative to renting a school bus suggested by the Magliozzis is the only smart thing they say in their column: Charter a bus.

A modern motorcoach is extremely safe (with a safety record only a notch below school buses), the drivers are professional and experienced, and they are a good value. Plus, the adult-size, airplane-type reclining seats, first-rate sound systems, air conditioning, and TV monitors and VCRs mean they're a lot more comfortable than any school bus or van.

'The most innocent pavement run-off at highway speed may be difficult to correct safely because of the rear- and top-heavy weight distribution characteristics of 15-passenger vans.'

Sen. Snowe seeks to extend SBA funding

Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), who earlier this year was instrumental in winning increased lending authority for the U.S. Small Business Administration, is pushing for continued strong funding of the SBA.

Snowe led a roundtable earlier this month to work on legislation reauthorizing appropriations for the SBA, focusing on its 7(a) and 504 loan programs.

The SBA small business loan programs are particularly popular with motorcoach operators.

"In the last five years, we have seen private lending institutions restrict the lending they offer to small businesses, as well as a great decrease in venture capital available to small firms," said Snowe. "As a result, with this year's reauthorization we must ensure the SBA is positioned to help more small business, even more efficiently over the next half century."

By law, Congress must renew or reauthorize the portfolio of SBA business development and assistance programs during the first session of the 108th Congress.

Bush Administration has indicated its wants to increase SBA funding modestly (roughly 2.5 percent) in fiscal 2004.

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Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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COMMERCIAL COACH

INDUSTRY NEWS



Peter Pan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

president of Springfield, Mass.-based Peter Pan, expressed pleasure with the Surface Transportation Board decision but said he could not say when Peter Pan would complete the take over of the five companies.

“As soon as the board sends its findings in writing, we’ll have a better idea,” said Schwarz.

Peter Pan, already the largest motorcoach operator in New England, will nearly double its size

with the addition of the five Coach USA companies. The purchase expands both the line-run and charter businesses of Peter Pan.

Bonanza’s Boston-Providence-New York service and its run from Cape Cod to New York will be added to Peter Pan’s intercity operation, while Arrow Lines’ charter service, including its contract with Foxwoods Casino, extends Peter Pan’s charter business.

Peter Pan, which is marking its 70th anniversary this year, provides service extending from Massa-

chusetts to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. It operates maintenance centers in Massachusetts, Maryland and New Jersey.

The sale of the five subsidiaries by Coach USA is part of its strategy to trim back its nationwide tour and charter business. The sale to Peter Pan was announced one day after Coach USA revealed its strategic intent.

Surface Transportation Board decisions are available on its Web Site at www.stb.dot.gov.

You have to dig a little once you’re there.

FTA charter rules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

they’ve lost because some transit system knowingly or unknowingly violated the law.

About the only action the FTA takes when it finds a transit agency in violation of the rules is to issue a cease and desist order. Meanwhile, the coach operator that has been victimized by the transit agency may be out tens of thousands of dollars in lost business.

For more than a year, Miller has been sparring with the FTA and SunLine Transit Agency, the public transit system serving the desert resort city of Palm Springs, Calif., and several other communities in Riverside County, including Indio, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Coachella. Miller lodged a complaint against SunLine, alleging violation of the charter services rules.

On April 28, the FTA issued a cease and desist order against SunLine, prohibiting it from performing any type of group service, except for service designed to meet

the special needs of elderly or handicapped patrons otherwise permitted under the charter service regulations.

It was the third time in six years the FTA had found SunLine in violation of federal charter service rules. In earlier decisions—one in February 1997 and another last year—the FTA determined that group trips performed by SunLine constituted charter service. The FTA also found that SunLine failed to comply with charter service regulations by providing the group service. The earlier rulings followed complaints filed by the California Bus Association.

Miller took up the issue last year, complaining that SunLine performed 106 group trips that violated charter rules. In his complaint, Miller asked the FTA “to remedy” the violations by withholding further federal funding from SunLine and requiring SunLine to pay his company damages equal to what would have been received had his company provided the service.

The FTA didn’t buy his sugges-

In a letter to Miller and Richard Cromwell III, the general manager and CEO of SunLine Transit, FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers said that during the 15 years the charter service regulations have been in effect, the “FTA has neither withheld future financial assistance, nor awarded penalties in response to a violation, so there is no such precedent to apply in this case.”

However, the FTA did box Cromwell’s ears by telling him that SunLine must deduct all of the miles, time and depreciation it accumulated providing the group trips from the records it uses to calculate what is called “in-service useful life” of FTA-funded vehicles in SunLine’s fleet. That means SunLine can’t use the mileage and time accumulated during the illegal charter trips to accelerate the replacement of its buses with federal tax money.

Further, the FTA told Cromwell that SunLine could no longer publish any references to group trips in its Rider’s Guides, and that it must “take all necessary steps to conform its service in all

HOV lane tickets

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

one of the major convention and visitors bureaus serving metro Atlanta worries that the region is getting a public relations black eye.

The heaviest ticketing appears to be occurring in Henry County, which is about 15 miles southeast of metro Atlanta along I-75, which is a major route to and from Florida for motorcoaches coming out of the Midwest.

One driver who got caught is Mike Hansen of Tri-State Tours in Galena, Ill. Like others, Hansen found that the Georgia signage is vague and does not specifically exclude buses from using the HOV lanes. The only reference on the signs is to the number of axles.

So, if you’re cruising along and you’ve driven through a half-dozen metro areas in other states that permit buses in HOV lanes, and you come to Georgia and its signs say vehicles with more than three axles can’t use the HOV lanes, you easily assume the message is for trucks. Well, it is. But in Georgia, buses with tag axles are considered trucks.

Hansen picked up a \$250 moving violation for improper lane usage when he was stopped.

Brenda Tidwell, president of the Georgia Motorcoach Opera-

respects to the requirements of FTA regulations and guidelines for mass transit.”

Dennis Gilman, director of administrative services at SunLine, said he does not know yet whether the agency will appeal the FTA ruling.

Miller, however, is not satisfied with the ruling and intends to appeal. He says the FTA order incorrectly states when a key meeting took place between SunLine officials and private charter companies operating in the Palm Springs area. The FTA order says the meeting occurred before SunLine provided the questioned charter services so the operators knew all about its plans. Miller, on the other hand, says the meeting took place after SunLine had performed the group trips.

He also wants the FTA to award damages to all charter service providers that attended the meeting, not just to his company.

Separately, Miller is pursuing another complaint against SunLine for services it advertises on its Web site for elderly and disabled individuals.

tors Association, reports that sheriff deputies in Henry County are handing out tickets for a variety of violations tied to coaches using the HOV lanes. In addition to improper lane usage, tickets also are being written for improper lane change, following too close and speeding. Most carry a \$250-\$275 fine.

Even worse from a driver standpoint is the fact that the tickets are being classified as moving violations, meaning they go on the driver’s record.

John Klappmeyer of BOWA Trails, a coach operation in Cornelia, Ga., and a vice president of the Georgia Motorcoach Operators Association, said tickets are being issued on other interstates around Atlanta as well. He says there is no defense once a ticket is issued.

The ticketing, plus the serious nature of the violations and the heavy fines, prompted the Georgia Motorcoach Operators Association to issue its blanket warning for drivers to be on the lookout. Drivers should stay out of the HOV lanes, pay particular attention to their spacing and lane change maneuvers, and be cognizant of the heavy truck traffic which makes the non-HOV lanes particularly nerve-racking for passengers.

Georgia motorcoach operators tried unsuccessfully to get the law changed in the legislature this year but it was impossible to get anything through because of the focus on budget issues.

Jeff Mills, vice president of sales of the DeKalb County Convention & Visitors Bureau, said his organization will work with motorcoach operators next year to get the law changed. He said CVBs are working hard to bring coach charters to Atlanta and he worries about the potential backlash from the ticketing.

He, like Tidwell and Klappmeyer, urges operators to contact Georgia legislators to make them aware of the problem and to request their support to change the law.

Milestone

Avatar Financial Services of Arlington Heights, Ill., has celebrated its second anniversary. Avatar offers financing and leasing options to transportation industry operating companies, equipment manufacturers and dealers. Lee Steinberg is the company principal. Information at www.avatarfinance.com.



As schools shun D.C., unusual groups targeted

During the past 18 months, few travel destinations have seen a bigger drop in visitors coming by motorcoach than Washington, D.C.

Hundreds of public schools and school districts are not allowing their students to travel by coach to the nation's capital because of security and terrorism concerns and the closing of many popular attractions. Senior-citizen groups and travel clubs also have cut back coach tours and charters to Washington.

Yet, despite the waning terrorism threat, the end of combat operations in Iraq and the reopening of attractions, tourism officials in Washington appear to be in no hurry to try to reinvigorate the motorcoach market. Instead, they are focusing much of their efforts on attracting sports fans, gays and lesbians, and young people who attend private schools.

It is an interesting strategy, one seemingly born of necessity, the realities of the predicament the city finds itself in, and changing social mores.

The root cause of the drop in motorcoach travel to Washington, says George Cooley, domestic tourism sales manager for the Washington, D.C. Convention and Tourism Corporation, is per-

ception. Or, rather, misperception.

"There is a state of confusion, a multiplicity of messages" about the situation in Washington, he says. The general media have conveyed the impression that Washington is an armed camp, with missile batteries, machine-gun wielding soldiers and concrete barriers everywhere, and that tourists are staying away in droves. That is not the case, says Cooley.

"We are far from a ghost town," he asserts. "We're only off a couple of percentage points (in visitors). The city is open for business."

Cooley says the D.C. Convention and Tourism Corporation has aligned itself with several groups, including bus trade associations and student travel organizations, to encourage motorcoach travel to Washington. It's an uphill battle, however.

While Cooley and others at the corporation can tout the fact Washington is safe and its popular attractions are reopening to tour groups, the fact remains that scores of school districts in the Washington, D.C., area continue to prohibit their students from visiting the city on bus tours.

"Once area school districts decided not to come it became a problem for us," says Cooley. It is difficult, he explains, to convince

schools and their boards to back away from no-travel-to-D.C. policies. Until the close-in school districts modify their bans on travel to Washington, schools further-away in surrounding states will be reluctant to allow their children to visit the capital, says Cooley.

One segment of the school population that seems more inclined to continue coming to Washington is private schools. "Their travel patterns are different," says Cooley. "There is more parental involvement. They are not subject to a blanket decision like the public schools."

Since 9/11, the D.C. Convention and Tourism Corporation has focused the bulk of its attention and marketing money on groups that continue to travel despite terrorism threats, the war, and lousy D.C. publicity. These include sports enthusiasts, devotees of the annual International Cherry Blossom Festival, and "the lucrative gay, lesbian and transgender market."

"We've been looking at markets that are not going to be dissuaded from traveling," says Cooley.

Significant corporation resources have been pumped into an integrated campaign to go after gay, lesbian and transgender travelers. A "lure" brochure was creat-

ed, advertising in niche media purchased, a unique Web site (www.prideindc.org) established, familiarization trips for members of the gay media conducted, and sales programs mounted.

The corporation also is reaching out to the more traditional group tour market, says Cooley, by bringing travel decision makers to Washington to see for themselves that normalcy prevails. He says these efforts have been successful, though there have not been enough of them.

Cooley also says he personally has spoken with hundreds of travel professionals about bringing groups to Washington and to set the record straight about the capital. He encourages coach and travel operators to call the D.C. Convention and Tourism Corporation where he says they will get clear and concise information about traveling to Washington.

He also advises any coach operator bringing a group to D.C. to call and get the latest information about street closures, protests, and attraction closures and openings. The corporation also maintains a Web site with D.C. travel information: www.washington.org.

For information about tours of the reopened U.S. Capital, call (202) 225-6827.

Tour bus parking fines in D.C. are subject of TV news coverage

The outrageous parking fines instituted two months ago in Washington, D.C., continue to capture the attention of not only the motorcoach industry but news reporters in the nation's capital.

Last week, the Fox station in Washington, WTTG, Channel 5, carried a story indicating the hefty parking fines for tour buses were creating a disincentive for coach operators to bring groups to the District of Columbia.

Several motorcoach drivers were interviewed for the news story, with many telling the reporter that the city had made it very difficult for them to bring coaches to the district.

Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association, who also was interviewed for the story, told the reporter that it was probably fortunate that a survey of the parking problems in Washington was canceled last month.

The survey, an important aspect of an extensive study being made of tour bus parking and management in Washington, was supposed to report on coach movements and parking patterns throughout the district.

"Since the number of buses coming to D.C. is down, using the current bus volume would probably lead to wrong conclusions about the amount of parking that would be needed under normal circumstances to accommodate buses coming into D.C.," said Parra.

On March 1, new parking fines went into effect in the District of Columbia, including raising the fine for parking a bus or motorcoach in front of a residence or other restricted space from \$20 to \$500. In addition, fines for six other parking violations also were raised.

Coaches are vulnerable for the big fines if they stop in front of a house or other prohibited spot, including a crosswalk, no-parking or loading zones, or near a firehouse or hydrant.

SUPPLIER NEWS

Wheel service unit launched by ARI-hetra

FAIRFAX, Va. — Automotive Resources Inc., which distributes ARI-hetra mobile lifting and exhaust systems throughout the motorcoach industry, has announced a new line of wheel service products.

The new equipment includes heavy-duty tire changers, a wheel balancer and floor jacks.

“Our new state-of-the-art machines are precision engineered and manufactured to the highest standards our customers have come to expect from us,” said company President Robert S. Penenburgh.

The new wheel service products represent a diversification from Automotive Resources’ line-up of mobile lifting equipment and exhaust duct and extraction systems. The wheel products include a universal heavy-duty tire changer; a universal semi-automatic, heavy-duty tire changer; a universal automatic, heavy-duty tire



changer; a digital wheel balancer, and more than a dozen models of air-hydraulic floor jacks, ranging in capacity from 33,000 to 168,000 pounds.

The three models of tire changers can demount and mount tire sizes ranging from 14- to 56-inch.

The digital wheel balancer also will handle a variety of sizes,

including bus rims with diameters from 12 to 28 inches and weighing up to 440 pounds.

The two-, three- and four-step floor jacks come with the latest safety features and design characteristics that make them easy to position and use.

More details at www.ari-hetra.com.

Smith System is acquired by investment group

ARLINGTON, Texas — Smith System, the commercial vehicle driver training organization, has been acquired by David M. Boucher and McFadden Brothers, a New York City-based investment firm.

Boucher is chairman of McFadden Brothers’ other operating companies, Easton Coach Company of Easton, Pa., and Cryogenic Transportation, a Houston-based trucking company. Boucher also will be chairman of Smith System.

Smith System was purchased from CNA Financial Corp.; purchase price was not disclosed.

The company will continue to be headquartered in Arlington, Texas, where Smith’s management team will be led by Tony Douglas, president and CEO.

“As the recognized leader in driver improvement training, Smith System has sustained a rich history of success, thanks to the contributions of its employees and customers,” said Douglas.

“My first exposure to Smith

System was as a courier trainee with Federal Express in 1981. Since then, I have put the Smith System to work in many companies with outstanding results. I believe in the Smith System philosophy and the positive impact our products have on corporations and individuals.”

Smith System was founded in 1952 as a fleet driver safety training organization with on-road, hands-on safety education techniques for experienced drivers.

Smith System delivers behind-the-wheel instruction to more than 15,000 fleet drivers annually.

“We are very pleased that Smith System has become one of our portfolio companies,” said Boucher.

“We are committed to supporting the continuous improvement of products and services, employing the latest technology in driver improvement, and providing the value-added training and support materials that customers have come to expect from Smith System.”

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Operator offers service to home of L.L. Bean

VIP Tour & Charter Bus of Portland, Maine, has established roundtrip bus service from the Amtrak Station in Portland to Freeport, Maine, home of L.L. Bean, the world-famous outdoor outfitters.

The weekend service is designed to transport passengers on Amtrak's Downeaster to Freeport for sightseeing and shopping at L.L. Bean's 119,000-square-foot Flagship Retail Store and its Factory Outlet Store. The service also will operate on Memorial Day, July 4 and Labor Day.

The VIP Freeport Explorer buses connect with the train and have convenient return times for the 20 minute trip.

VIP also offers group travel to Freeport from anywhere in Maine, and provides daily service from Portland and other southern points to Foxwoods Casino.

VIP Tour & Charter is an 18-year-old company that operates a fleet of more than 20 motorcoaches and midsize buses. Ray Penfold is general manager.



Reading Regional Airport awards shuttle contract to Easton Coach

EASTON, Pa. — Easton Coach Co. has won the contract to provide shuttle service between the Reading Regional Airport and Philadelphia International Airport in Pennsylvania, company President and CEO David M. Boucher announced.

The new shuttle is called READING Connection.

Dave Batchelor, senior vice president and general manager of Easton Coach, said the company has broad experience transporting all types of passengers. "This is a natural for us as we have successfully operated the Continental Airlines Shuttle between Lehigh Valley International Airport and Newark

International for the past eight years.

Easton Coach, formerly VecTour of PA and Palmeri Motorcoach, has been in business for 18 years. It offers motorcoach tours, charters, airline transportation, convention shuttles and corporate employee shuttles. It also operates paratransit services in Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon counties of Pennsylvania.

The company is affiliated with Cryogenic Transportation Inc., a leader in the transportation of industrial gases with headquarters in Houston. Both firms are owned by McFadden Brothers, a New York City-based firm.

Start-up operator in Michigan wins top small business award

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Coastal Charters and Tours Inc., a three-year-old operator serving southern Michigan, has been named a top regional winner of a 2002 Best Small Business Award by the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center.

Coastal Charters and 11 other companies from across Michigan were chosen to receive the regional awards from among 6,200 companies vying for the honors. All of the companies, like Coastal Charter, received confidential business counseling and training last year from one of Michigan's 12 regional Small Business & Technology Development Centers.

Coastal Charters of Alpena, Mich., was a business start-up in 2000, founded by owners Paul and Eileen Wegmeyer and Mick and Kay Zinsli. The Wegmeyers and Zinslis came to the Alpena Community College Small Business Development Center requesting help with the development of the business plan for their company.

They formed the company around two new 56-passenger MCI

E-model coaches. In their second year of business they added a third coach, and last year they started a travel agency, called Passageways Travel of Alpena, and purchased a fourth coach.

In announcing the award, the Michigan Small Business Development Center said that Coastal Charters' growth is due in large measure to its "passenger friendly employees; a reputation for safety, clean motorcoaches and on-time response, and a solid business plan."

A major piece of Coastal Charters' business is scheduled tours which it promotes on its Web site. The current schedule of tours includes 19 different destinations between now and mid-December, with the offerings ranging from a three-day NASCAR trip in August, to an Oak Ridge Boys concert next month. The tour descriptions include dates, deadlines and prices.

Coastal and the other small business winners were honored at an awards banquet on May 12 in Lansing.

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Call: Nick at

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Excellent condition,
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Detroit Diesel

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Bus & Motorcoach NEWS is published on the 1st and 15th of the month.
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Please print or type your advertising copy.

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Mail to: 16845 North 29th Avenue # 759, Phoenix, AZ 85053

Make checks payable to: **Bus & Motorcoach NEWS**

Questions? Call Johnny: (602) 980-0840

Email: redboots44@aol.com

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First-rate MC-8
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Coach is in service.
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accepted.

Deadlines

Seven days prior to publication
dates of 1st and 15th of the
month.

Hours

Call Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.
4:30 p.m. MST.

Sales Representative
Johnny Steger
Phone: (602) 980-0840
Fax Toll-Free: (877) 510-5598
E-mail: Redboots44@aol.com
Bus & Motorcoach News
16845 North 29th Ave. #759
Phoenix, AZ 85053

CALENDAR OF EVENTS**MAY 2003**

27-29 TransITech, American Public Transportation Assn., Pittsburgh. Info: Go to www.apta.com or call (202) 496-4800.

30-June 1 MCI Bus Bash 2003, Louisville, Ky. Headquarters hotel: Holiday Inn Clarksville (Ind.). Info: www.bus-mag.com, click on Bus Bash link. (815) 946-2341.

31-June 4 Canadian Urban Transit Assn. Annual Conference, Calgary, Alberta. Info: Go to www.cutaactu.ca or call(416) 365-9800.

JUNE 2003

14-18 Pennsylvania Bus Assn.: Annual Meeting, Wisp Mountain Hotel, Deep Creek Lake, Md. Info: (717) 236-9042 or go to www.pabus.com.

19 California Bus Assn.: General Membership Meeting, Ontario, Calif. Info: (800) 664-2877 or go to www.cbabus.com.

21-24 National Motorcoach Network: 20th anniversary Network Marketing Seminar & Invitational 100, Radisson Hotel, Branson, Mo. Info: (888) 733-5287.

JULY 2003

18-20 Family Motor Coach Assn. Convention, Buffalo, N.Y. Info: (800) 543-3622 or go to www.fmca.com.

20-22 Georgia Motorcoach Operators Assn.: Annual Meeting & Marketplace, Marriott at Perimeter, Atlanta. Info: (404) 589-8783.

29-31 Florida Motorcoach Association Annual Meeting & Show, Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples, Fla. Info: (407) 647-2491 or go to www.floridamotorcoach.org.

AUGUST 2003

9-12 Pennsylvania Public Transportation Assn.: Summer Meeting and Rodeo, Erie, Pa. Info: (717) 234-7176 or go to www.ppta.net.

10-12 Alabama Motorcoach Assn.: Annual Meeting & Marketplace, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, Ala. Info: (336) 495-4970.

17-20 South Carolina Motorcoach Assn.: Annual Meeting & Marketplace, Westin Resort, Savannah, Ga. Info: (336) 495-4970.

22-24 Greyhound Birthplace Bus Bash 2003, Hibbing, Minn. Info will be available at www.bus-mag.com, click on Bus Bash link., or call (815) 946-2341.

SEPTEMBER 2003

5-9 Virginia Motorcoach Assn.: Annual

Convention, Dover Sheraton, Dover, Del. Info: (434) 376-1150, or go to www.vamotorcoach.com.

10 California Bus Assn: General Membership Meeting. Info: (800) 664-2877 or go to www.cbabus.com.

OCTOBER 2003

12-16 APTA: Annual Meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah. Info: (202) 496-4800.

17-22 Busworld, Kortrijk, Belgium. Info: Go to www.busworld.org or e-mail: info@busworld.org.

26-28 BusCon 2003, Las Vegas. Info: (310) 533-2556 or e-mail: info@bobit-expos.com.

NOVEMBER 2003

1-5 California Bus Assn.: Convention & Trade Show, location TBA. Info: (800)

664-2877 or go to www.cbabus.com

2-5 Ontario Motor Coach Assn.: Annual Conference & Marketplace, Toronto, Calif. Info: (416) 229-6622. E-mail: info@omca.com, or go to www.omca.com.

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