

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

THE NEWS RESOURCE FOR THE BUS AND MOTORCOACH INDUSTRY

A conversation with Mike Waters

California Bus Association fights for charter rules

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO — In the ongoing battle to keep public transit agencies from expanding their ability to provide charter bus service, no organization has worked harder or more effectively to fend off the transit juggernaut than the California Bus Association.

And while public agencies won a major round when the Senate passed a six-year highway reauthorization bill in February giving transits greater authority to provide local charter service, the CBA isn't about to give up on efforts to stop them, says Mike Waters, the association's outspoken president.

Waters asserts that the CBA will not relent in its drive to convince Congress to eliminate

The first in a series of reports on state bus associations

provisions in the Senate highway bill that would allow transit agencies to supply charter service to government agencies and social service organizations that have "limited resources," and to act as brokers between private operators and groups seeking charter service.

The House version of the highway bill, passed in March, does not have the same unrestricted charter-service language.

Differences between the bills eventually will be worked out in conference committee — if legislative leaders can get beyond a stand-off between the two houses of Congress, the Republicans and



the Democrats, and the White House over the issues of money and procedures.

"I think our chances of getting it out of the Senate bill look pretty good," Waters said in an interview with *Bus & Motorcoach News*. The conversation covered a wide range of issues important to

motorcoach operators in California and elsewhere.

Waters complained that the Senate bill got an unexpected boost from an unlikely source — the American Bus Association, which he says mistakenly supported the measure and its offensive charter-service language because it was too busy looking at other key provisions of the legislation.

When Waters got his first look at the Senate bill, his reaction was "this can't possibly be saying what it is saying. ... I had to wonder who was smoking what and who was doing what" to allow the egregious language in the bill, he said.

"The real feeling is that the ABA board and its members were not given the real read on the legislation," adds Waters, stressing

that he believes the association was concentrating more on issues involving grants for intermodal facilities, security and wheelchair lifts, and didn't think the charter issue was that big a deal.

Another reason the ABA missed the importance of the charter provision, says Waters, is because it generally is more focused on line-haul carriers and large operators than smaller carriers that handle most of the charter business in the industry.

He also suggests the ABA did not appreciate the subtleties of the issue. The CBA pioneered the fight against public transit agencies over violations of federal charter service rules, and has learned that if you give transits an inch they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 ▶

Price of diesel nudges records

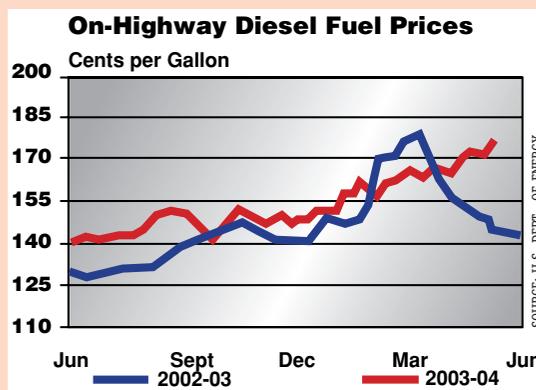
This is a story about diesel fuel prices, and it will be short and not very sweet. That's because there's nothing good to be said about them.

The price of diesel rose to near-record levels all across the U.S., hitting a national average of \$1.74 a gallon during the second week of this month. It is only pennies away from the record of \$1.77 a gallon set in March of last year at the start of the Iraq War

In two regions of the U.S., the West Coast and the Rocky Mountains, the price already far exceeds the record for those areas. The average selling price along the West Coast, from Southern California to the Canadian border, was \$2.25 a gallon during the second week of May.

In the Rocky Mountain region, the average price was almost \$1.93 a gallon, versus \$1.78 during the early days of the Iraq War.

California has the highest-price diesel at \$2.35 a gallon.



Diesel Fuel Prices

Cents per Gallon	Price	Change from	
		Week Ago	Year Ago
U.S.	174.5	▲ 2.8	▲ 30.1
East Coast	167.8	▲ 2.5	▲ 18.1
New England	176.8	▲ 1.4	▲ 15.6
Central Atlantic	176.5	▲ 2.3	▲ 15.8
Lower Atlantic	163.3	▲ 2.8	▲ 19.3
Midwest	166.7	▲ 1.0	▲ 24.3
Gulf Coast	164.5	▲ 1.8	▲ 27.9
Rocky Mountain	192.8	▲ 3.6	▲ 44.0
West Coast	225.5	▲ 10.9	▲ 76.4
California	235.6	▲ 8.2	▲ 82.2

Operators restrict use of cell phones

WASHINGTON — The District of Columbia has become the latest political jurisdiction to ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving.

Although hundreds of motorcoaches travel to Washington daily, it's not likely many coach drivers will get caught violating the ordinance when it goes into effect in July.

That's because most motorcoach operators don't want their drivers using cell phones when they're on the move — even though they like their drivers having a mobile phone with them.

"Talking while driving is a distraction because your focus is on the conversation and not on your

driving," says Chris Crean, safety director of Peter Pan Bus Lines in Springfield, Mass.

Peter Pan is equipping its entire fleet with hands-free phones that drivers can use only after they pull their buses safely off the road and stop.

Greyhound Lines also provides its drivers with cell phones but insists they be used only for emergencies and only after the bus has been stopped in a safe location off the road.

"It's a matter of safety," notes company spokeswoman Kim Plaskett. "The driver's primary focus is safely operating the bus and keeping the passengers safety

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ▶

The Next Best Thing to New:

MCI Certified Pre-Owned

- Select models, year 2000 and newer
- Extended Warranties



Call 1 866 MCI Coach or visit www.mcicoach.com to search our pre-owned inventory

Pre-Owned

Van Hool Conversions!

On select models 6 month
lease terms as low as

\$4,495* per
month

*With approved credit; additional
terms and conditions may apply.

The only TRUE European Conversion Coach In The Market!!

VIP



1999 T945
VIN 29759

Shower, 2 Refrigerators,
Restroom, Alum. Wheels,
B500R Trans.



1997 T945
VIN 28580

Seats 11, Jacuzzi Tub w/shower,
Full Size Refrigerator,
2 Burner Cook Top

Motorhome



1996 T845
VIN 28537

B500 Trans., Corian Counter Tops,
Dual Refrigerator
In-Motion Satellite

Entertainer



1999 T945
VIN 29742

Seats 26, Corian Counter Tops,
In-Motion Satellite, Deluxe A/V,
Trash Compactor



1998 T945
VIN 29707

12 Bunks, Michelin Tires,
Converted by Caldwell
Coach, B500 Trans.



2000 T945
VIN 29741

12 Bunks, w/shower,
Tow Hook, Goodyear Tires,
B500R Trans.



2000 T945
VIN 29731

Seats 22, Corian Counter Tops,
In-Motion Satellite, Full Size
Refrigerator

1999 T945
VIN 29710

12 Bunks, 2 TV's with Video
Cassette, Refrigerator,
Microwave, 2 Stereos



1996 T845
VIN 28492

12 Bunks, w/shower,
Microwave, Corian
Counter Tops,
B500 Trans.



Call Your Account Executive Today For Selection And Delivery!

WESTERN

800-322-2877

SOUTHEAST

800-222-2871

MIDWEST

800-222-2875

NORTHEAST

800-222-2873

SOUTHWEST

800-222-2877

www.abc-companies.com



Exclusive U.S.  Distributor

Bus travel to Washington picks up; events, attractions draw thousands

WASHINGTON — The love-hate relationship between this city and tour and charter bus operators is blooming this spring as a result of a pick up in travel to Washington by young people, protestors and the Greatest Generation.

A huge piece of business for the coach industry occurred late last month when hundreds of thousands of people came to Washington by coach, filling the National Mall and marching along Pennsylvania Avenue to demonstrate for abortion rights.

A much smaller but nonetheless significant rally early this month brought thousands of Christians to Washington to demonstrate in front of the Capitol against terrorist violence aimed at Israel.

Even more such rallies are anticipated this spring and summer, owing to the fact 2004 is a presidential election year.

Memorial Day weekend will be marked by a huge influx of people for four days of ceremonies marking the opening of the World War II Memorial. The American Battle Monuments Commission estimates that 106,000 ticketed guests will attend the event, with an estimated 60 percent of the individuals at least 80 years old or older. Thousands from Tom Brokaw's Greatest Generation will be in wheelchairs.

For the memorial's dedication May 29, 480 transit buses, motorcoaches and minibuses will be used. The move is being managed by Transportation Management Services of Alexandria, Va., which expects 60 of the buses used for the event to be supplied by private operators that have lift-equipped coaches and minibuses.

While bringing people to Washington to participate in rallies and special events represents significant business opportunities for the coach industry, the big bonanza this year is the increase in school-age children traveling to the nation's capital.

In the aftermath of 9/11, travel to Washington by school groups was marked by a major decline. That has turned around to a major extent this year, with more school districts easing restrictions and parents more confident, allowing their children to be transported to Washington. Senior groups in greater numbers also are visiting the capital.

The American Bus Association reports that more than 1,000 tour buses are coming to Washington each day during this spring's peak tourist period.

However, finding coach parking in and around Washington remains a major challenge for operators and their drivers. Both the United Motorcoach Association and the ABA continue to urge city officials to develop solutions for the parking issue but, as ABA President and CEO Peter Pantuso observes, the feet of D.C. Department of Transportation officials "appear to be in quicksand."

A new bus parking lot has opened at 60 L Street N.E. Operated by MarcParc, the lot can accommodate 50 coaches. It charges \$75 for 24 hours with in and out privileges. For information, call John Kristoff at MarcParc (202) 789-4000, or e-mail jkristoff@marcparc.com.

For general information about tour bus loading, unloading and parking in Washington, go to the D.C. Department of Transportation Web site, www.ddot.dc.gov.

To check whether Transportation Management Services needs additional buses for the World War II Memorial dedication events, call David Callaway at TMS (703) 821-8001. For information about the memorial itself, go to www.wwiimemorial.com.

A major rally that could bring tens of thousands of people to Washington will be Sept. 4. The national Community Action Partnership, which is the coordinating organization for 1,000 Community Action Agencies in

communities nationwide, is organizing a "No Room for Poverty" rally Labor Day weekend.

Operators may want to contact their local Community Action Agency to see if it will be sending people to the rally. For information about the Community Action Partnership, go to www.communityactionpartnership.com, or call (202) 265-7546.

Any coaches traveling to Washington should be aware of a traffic camera speed-trap on the Anacostia Freeway (I-295) inside



the District of Columbia. The camera automatically takes a picture of speeding vehicles, capturing the license plate number, and the district police mail a speeding ticket to the owner of the vehicle. A

number of coach operators have gotten such tickets.

The speed limit along the freeway is 50 mph, but the traffic frequently moves faster. Warn your drivers.

3 Decades of Accessibility Solutions

Our unique powered sliding door minimizes disruption to seated customers, shortens load and unload times, provides a safety barrier and simplifies lift operation with one button ease.

Our innovative "Door in a Door" opening for lift deployment keeps your customers baggage secure and safe from the weather.

Interior appointments are done professionally and are designed to match the OEM look of the coach.

Let the professionals at Complete Coach Works help you meet your ADA accessibility requirements. Complete Coach Works brings you unmatched expertise:

- Successful installations in virtually every type of coach
- Quick turn around to keep your vehicle in revenue service
- Innovative design and skilled craftsmanship
- One-year limited warranty on parts and labor

Repairs available on all makes and models

1863 Service Court • Riverside • CA • 92507
 (800) 300-3751 PH • (909) 684-2088 FAX
www.completecoach.com

Complete Coach Works

Firestone posts 5 percent price hike

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tire manufacturer Bridgestone/Firestone is instituting an across-the-board price increase of up to 5 percent on tire products sold in the

U.S. and Canada.

"We continue to be faced with a continuing escalation of raw material costs," said Bridgestone/Firestone President Yuri Tomiyasu.

THE DOCKET

Sen. Thomas is honored for axle-weight change

ROCK SPRINGS, Wyo. — The United Motorcoach Association has honored U.S. Sen. Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.) for his efforts to exempt over-the-road buses from axle-weight limits on federal highways.

UMA President & CEO Victor Parra presented Thomas with the Pete Zanetti Excellence in Government Award for having led the congressional battle to win an axle-weight exemption for the coach industry.

Thomas was able to get axle-weight exemption language inserted in the fiscal 2003 U.S. Transportation Department appropriations bill.

In a ceremony here last month, Parra noted that it's frequently hard to get Congress' attention for issues related to small business. "We're not Exxon or General Motors or Microsoft," he said. "Our members operate motorcoaches, the kind your kids take on

that school trip to a state capitol, or you and the Rock Springs Historical Society might take to Mt. Rushmore.

"While we have a few companies with more than 100 buses in their fleet, the vast majority of the industry — 90 percent — operate fewer than 10 buses. These are small family-owned and operated businesses that don't look for handouts, just a fair shake from our legislative process. So, it's not often we get someone of Senator Thomas' stature willing to say 'Yes, I care, and I'll help you' which is exactly what he's done.

"Senator Thomas has been steadfast with his efforts to get an exemption for over-the-road motorcoaches from axle-weight limits on federal highways," Parra continued. "This is a serious matter for the small, private bus operator who may get hit with a \$5,000 fine. Even though the federally-funded transit agencies which



Sen. Craig Thomas (left) accepts the excellence in government award from Donna Zanetti and Victor Para (right).

often operate on the same roads, using the same equipment, are exempt from such limits.

"The Senator recognized this inequity in our laws and was able to insert language in an omnibus spending bill so these small privately owned motorcoach companies could enjoy the same benefit as the transit agencies.

"And while the fight continues to mandate this exemption in all 50 states, it took Senator Thomas' leadership to start the ball rolling by taking this issue on and to fight

for the little guy."

Joining Parra to present the award was Donna Zanetti, a long-time friend of Thomas and the widow of Pete Zanetti. The award presentation lead off the program at the annual Spring Dinner of the Sweetwater County Republican Party.

Pete Zanetti was a founding director of UMA and, with his wife, operated Zanetti Bus & Fast Express in Rock Springs. At one time, he and Thomas were members of the Wyoming legislature.

Truckers seek key change to drivers rule

WASHINGTON — The American Trucking Associations has asked the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to reconsider a key provision of its new Safety Performance History of Drivers rule that was announced at the end of March.

The nation's largest trucking association wants the FMCA to reduce the time that previous employers have to provide prospective employers with driver safety history information from 30 days to 5 business days.

The ATA says its members are concerned the 30-day response period will adversely affect the potential safety benefits of the new rule for both large and small motor carriers.

Additionally, the ATA's "petition for reconsideration" said the association believes the liability protection provision in the new rule may be insufficient to protect employers from the full range of litigation that could arise out of "diligent and responsible employment practices.

"This potential consequence of the rule's inception may also need future reconsideration based on the case record that could ensue," the ATA said.

The sweeping new driver history rules, which over-the-road bus companies and truckers must comply with starting Oct. 29, are designed to improve the ability of operators to make smarter and better informed hiring decisions.

Among other things, the rules oblige employers to respond to requests for information about a former employee within 30 days, and to hold onto employee-related records three-times longer.

The ATA wants the 30 days reduced to 5 business days, with a 5-day hardship extension available to assuage concerns that 5 days is not enough time.

The ATA contends the longer response time works a hardship on small companies. It says small operators will be hurt more because it will delay their ability to place safe and qualified drivers quickly.

Illinois operators face re-imposition of old tax

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The Illinois Commerce Commission has written new rules that would re-impose a gross receipts tax on Illinois bus and motorcoach operators. The tax would be equal to .1% of annual gross Illinois receipts from intrastate passengers.

This is the same tax that Illinois operators paid for years but which the state eliminated on July 1, 1994.

A spokeswoman for the trans-

portation division of the Illinois Commerce Commission said the tax was inadvertently dropped 10 years ago through an administrative mistake. She said the rules covering collection of the tax and its amount were accidentally dumped, meaning the tax could not be collected.

"It fell through the cracks — no one followed up," she said.

After the foul-up, the state continued to collect the tax for a

couple years. Operators eventually were able to collect refunds for taxes that were collected after 1994.

The mix-up was discovered when the agency was conducting a periodic audit of statutes the commission is supposed to enforce.

The commission spokeswoman said the ICC hopes the industry will seek to have the law covering the tax repealed — especially in view of the fact it

has not been collected for years.

The Illinois Motorcoach Association, which was hit out of the blue by the issue, plans to oppose re-imposition of the tax and have it repealed.

Comments on the proposed rules, which were published in the Illinois Register on April 23, may be submitted until June 7, to Steven L. Matrisch, ICC, 527 E. Capitol Ave., Springfield, IL 62701.

Bill may help NJ operators cut liability insurance rates

TRENTON, N.J. — A bill has been introduced in the New Jersey senate that would allow motorcoach operators to "opt out" of a state-mandated program that requires no-fault medical expense benefits coverage for passengers injured in a crash.

New Jersey law has placed coach operators in a unique situation among passenger carriers in that state. Under current law, coach companies are required to

provide medical expense benefits to every passenger who is hurt in a crash regardless of who was at fault.

In exchange for this requirement, private bus operators are exempt from tort liability for non-economic damages.

New Jersey Transit, school bus operators, hotels that have their own buses, paratransit operators, and taxicab and limousine companies are exempt

from providing such benefits.

With coach operators in New Jersey, as elsewhere, experiencing huge increases in insurance costs, the state requirement adds to the burden.

The bill introduced by state Sen. Richard J. Codey of Essex, would revise the current law, allowing coach operators to opt out of providing such medical expense benefits. Of course, operators will lose the tort exemption

from non-economic damages.

Codey's proposal (Senate Bill No. 1002) will allow coach operators to test the market to find the best overall insurance coverage and rates, and mean they are treated the same as New Jersey Transit, school bus operators and other passenger carriers.

The bill also reduces the medical expense benefits coverage to bring it more in line with coverage required in neighboring states.

Proposal would give breaks to reduce idling

WASHINGTON — A Texas congresswoman has introduced legislation offering financial incentives to encourage over-the-road bus and truck operators to reduce engine idling.

“The (commercial vehicle) industry has been looking seriously at alternatives, and it makes good sense to encourage the use of affordable and proven new technology to reduce pollution generated by trucks and buses,” said Rep. Kay Granger, a Republican from Fort Worth.

The “Idling Reduction Tax Credit Act of 2004” would provide a federal income tax credit of up to \$3,500 for each bus or truck outfitted with idling reduction devices.

“A federal tax credit that allows bus and truck owners up to 50 percent of the cost of an alternative idling power source will have an immediate impact on our clean air goals,” said Granger.

“Our bill focuses on long-duration idling; therefore, a brief trip up

the road by a church bus would not meet this criterion,” Rachel Carter, press assistant to Congresswoman Granger, told *Bus & Motorcoach News*.

The proposed tax credit would pay for approximately one-half of the cost of installing electronic auxiliary heating and cooling units. Granger’s bill provides for

the EPA and the Secretary of Energy to certify which of the alternative idle-power devices meet appropriate standards to qualify for the tax credit.



Rep. Kay Granger

ABA testifies against higher N.Y. idling fine

NEW YORK CITY — A bill that would boost fines for violating New York City’s anti-idling restrictions has been criticized by the American Bus Association.

Late last month, ABA Vice President of Government Affairs Clyde Hart testified against the bill before the New York City Council.

The bill the council is considering — and likely will pass — proposes increasing fines for the city’s anti-idling law to between \$330 and \$1,500 for a first violation and between \$440 and \$2,000 for a second violation.

Hart testified that the current idling law is unworkable and leads to increased congestion and pollution, and boosting the penalties will do nothing to eliminate either problem.

Earlier this year, the ABA delivered the same message to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and other top city officials at a meeting held in conjunction with ABA Marketplace.

According to the ABA, the City Council is considering including language in its bill that would exempt coaches using wheelchair lifts to load and unload disabled passengers.

Passenger Friendly Electronics

Along for a Safe, Comfortable, Enjoyable Ride.

Audio & Video Entertainment Systems

Motorcoach Safety & Security Systems

KVH Mobile Satellite Television

TRACVISION

ISO 9001:2000
CERTIFIED

REI

Radio Engineering Industries, Inc.

XM Mobile Satellite Radio

SATELLITE RADIO

1 - 8 0 0 - 2 2 8 - 9 2 7 5 | w w w . r a d i o e n g . c o m

THE DOCKET

Roadcheck 2004 inspections set

WASHINGTON — North America's largest annual roadside inspection program will be conducted June 8-10 at hundreds of locations in the U.S. and Canada.

The 17th annual International Roadcheck will operate for 72 hours, with upwards of 10,000 certified bus and truck inspectors on the job at inspection sites along major highways. Roving patrols will inspect commercial vehicles traveling other highways.

During last year's Roadcheck, 55,784 inspections were performed on commercial vehicles by 9,471 state and provincial personnel at 1,097 locations. Another 4,816 inspections were performed by 378 federal personnel at 140 U.S. locations. Five hundred fifteen of the inspections involved buses.

The program operates under the aegis of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance.

Maryland considers plan for express toll lanes

GREENBELT, Md. — Maryland is developing plans to install toll lanes on interstates that are popular routes for motorcoaches, as well as trucks and cars.

State Transportation Secretary Robert L. Flanagan wants to build a network of "express toll lanes" on I-495, I-270, I-695 and I-95. The goal is to ease congestion on the state's busiest roads.

"Express toll lanes would offer motorists the option of paying a toll to travel on lanes that are relatively congestion free,"

Flanagan said. "The tolls, collected electronically at highway speeds, would vary depending on time of day to manage capacity and insure relatively congestion free travel."

tion free travel."

The toll pricing on the proposed lanes would vary by time of day and demand.

"This administration is serious about fighting traffic congestion," said Governor Robert Ehrlich. "I recognize that to achieve significant near-term improvement, we must develop new approaches and look at new ways of funding the extremely costly projects that can reduce traffic congestion."

Under the plan, express toll lanes would only be installed where lanes can be added to existing roadways to increase overall capacity. The Maryland State Highway Administration and the

Maryland Transportation Authority will immediately begin to consider the use of toll lanes for the Capital Beltway (I-495) and I-270 in the Washington area, and the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) and the Kennedy Highway (I-95 north of Baltimore) in the Baltimore region.

"Express toll lanes would help both those motorists who choose to use them and those who remain in the general use lanes," said Flanagan. "The toll lanes would draw vehicles off the general use lanes, producing some congestion relief for those who remain in the free lanes. Equally important is the fact the express toll lanes would

allow us to be able to afford the cost of adding lanes decades before it would be possible using traditional funding."

Maryland's urban roadways are among the most congested in the U.S. The state's highways have experienced a 20 percent increase in vehicle miles of travel since 1995, while capacity has grown 4 percent.

Meanwhile, Virginia is moving forward with proposals to build high-occupancy toll lanes on its side of the Capital Beltway and on I-95 and I-395. Maryland and Virginia reportedly are coordinating their plans in an attempt to form a network of special high-speed lanes.

More N.Y. highways to get higher speed limits

ALBANY, N.Y. — More major expressways in New York are getting higher speed limits.

Gov. George Pataki announced late last month that speed limits on 134 additional miles of superhighways will be raised to 65 mph from 55.

A new state law took effect in March allowing the New York Department of Transportation and the state Thruway Authority to administratively raise speed limits on limited-access superhighways that meet specific design and safety standards.

Previously, the speed limit could be increased to 65 mph only by a vote of the legislature and approval of the governor. Since 1995, a total of 1,369 miles of state highways have had their speed limits increased to 65 mph by the legislature.

The roads covered by the new law must be divided highways with grade-separated interchanges and be closed to bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Highway crews will soon be posting the higher speed limits on the roadways affected by the law.

Is It Time To Call KMA TRANSPORTATION?



Fast and Easy
Application!

Specializing in Bus and Limo Insurance

Professional/Personal Service

- Available Nationwide
- Low Down Payment with Extended Terms
- Tailored Deductible, Coverage & Pricing Options

For Phone Quotes Call:

800-570-8323

FAX (952) 944-2713

A Division of KMA, INC.

States are striving to reduce animal-related vehicle crashes

States across the U.S. are employing a variety of tools and technologies to prevent crashes between vehicles and increasing wildlife populations, the *Washington Post* reports.

In western Washington state, elk have been fitted with radio collars that set off flashing warning lights on Highway 101. Across the country in the mountains of western Maine, moose set off similar warnings by tripping infrared beams set along Route 4, the newspaper reported.

California, Florida and other states are installing bridges and underpasses for animals to reduce the rising tide of roadkill.

The newspaper quoted highway and environmental officials as saying that increasing traffic and sprawl, as well as mushrooming animal populations prone to getting hit by cars, buses and trucks, accounts for the rise in animal road deaths. Particularly vulnerable and dangerous are deer, elk and moose.

The idea of outfitting federal and state highways with critter-crossing technology, both high and low, has expanded significantly during the past decade, including gaining the attention of Congress.

For the first time, the Senate version of the pending highway and public transportation bill would require state transportation departments to consult with fish and game agencies from the beginning of planning for roads built with federal money.

The Senate bill also considers wildlife crossings to be a safety issue and would allocate federal money for fences, overpasses and other ways of reducing roadkill.

Moose collisions have become so common in Maine that the state Department of Transportation is urging drivers to aim for the tail of the animal if a crash is unavoidable. That reduces the chance of a 1,500-pound antlered animal crashing through a windshield.

Two transits seek private 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 their services, or to bid on contract opportunities. UMA urges appropriate operators to take the time to respond to these notices:

Farmville, Va. Deadline: May 21,

2004. Write to: Transportation Manager, Farmville Area Bus, 502 Doswell St., Farmville, VA 23901. Phone: (434) 392-7433.

Owensboro, Ky. Deadline: May 31, 2004. Write to: Louis Lindsay, Transit Manager, City of Owensboro, P.O. Box 10003, Owensboro, KY 43002-9003. Phone: (270) 687-8570.

*Off the line, down the line,
MCI is with you all the way.*



It's no surprise that MCI sells more coaches than all other manufacturers combined. It begins with the models themselves. From our industry-leading J4500 and D4500 to our premier E4500 model, MCI works to bring you the operational features you need and the amenities that keep passengers coming back for more.

We're just as responsive once you take delivery. With a growing network of service centers and more coach parts than anyone, MCI Fleet Support anticipates your needs, right down to online warranty tracking, factory-trained technical support and Emergency Roadside Assistance. Call us today. See how MCI goes the extra mile for you.

Fleet Support Managers to count on.

Experienced Technical Product Specialists.

CoachEXPRESS™ Maintenance Programs.

Over 8 million parts available.

MCI Fleet Support

Parts • Service • Technical Support • Warranty • Product Assurance • Technician Training • Roadside Assistance

MCI Sales and Service Locations

West Los Alamitos, CA 800 777-4101	Southwest Dallas, TX 800 248-4942	Midwest Des Plaines, IL 800 743-3624	Southeast Orlando, FL 800 390-0287	East Blackwood, NJ 800 262-1287	Canada Montreal, PQ 800 663-3328
---	--	---	---	--	---

or visit www.mcicoach.com for a complete listing of authorized MCI Service Centers.



MOTOR COACH
INDUSTRIES

We are America's coach.

OPINION

Making a point

Certainly, the folks who run the Illinois Chamber of Commerce must know you can't fight City Hall.

Nevertheless, the chamber has taken an audacious action that ought to warm the hearts of those who believe state and local governments were put on this earth for the purpose of sucking the life blood out of small businesses with their insatiable appetite for new fees and higher taxes.

Late last month, the chamber filed suit against Illinois government, claiming the state is unconstitutional-

ally collecting excessive fees from businesses to make up for revenue shortfalls.

The suit, born of a lot of frustration, alleges the state has essentially created hundreds of excessive business fees as a substitute for general tax increases.

The suit also contends these fees bear little or no relationship to the systems and services the state is supposed to be administering through them. In so doing, says the chamber, the state is using the business community to gather hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for general purposes.

The chamber believes if its suit is successful it will help define the boundaries for fees and taxes, and establish new guidelines governing the manner by which Illinois uses them to fund state government.

According to the chamber,

'Illinois raised taxes on businesses \$555 million last year and fees by \$340 million.'

Illinois raised taxes on businesses by \$555 million last year. At the same time, the state raised the level of more than 300 different licenses, permits and fees required of employers in an effort to generate another \$340 million.

One of last year's business tax increases hit Illinois motorcoach operators particularly hard. The state eliminated its rolling stock exemption.

In fiscal 2005, Illinois plans to hit businesses with another \$400 million in new taxes and \$57 million in new fees.

One prime example of the excessive fees cited by the chamber in its lawsuit is a surcharge collected by the Illinois Industrial Commission. The surcharge rakes in \$31 million annually but the commission's total yearly spending is \$14 million.

The suit alleges that the fees and taxes violate the uniformity clause in the Illinois Constitution and the due process clauses of the U.S. and Illinois constitutions.

As might be expected, a spokeswoman for Gov. Rod Blagojevich attempted to throw cold water on the chamber suit. She said Illinois' fees for businesses are not out of line and, in fact, are lower than most other states. She also said the business fee issue has been litigated before without success.

She's probably right on both counts. But the chamber certainly has made its point.

TSA, Amtrak begin test of passenger screening

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. — Passengers boarding Amtrak and commuter trains at this community's rail stop, just outside of Washington, D.C., are having their bags checked in a pilot program initiated by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration early this month.

Before boarding their trains, passengers walk through a machine that sniffs for explosives, and put their bags through an X-ray that looks for bombs.

The inspections will continue for the rest of this month, to be followed by a test of the ability to screen bags checked at Union Station in Washington, and screening on trains.

Asa Hutchinson, undersecretary for border and transportation security in the Department of Homeland Security, said the TSA has no plans to make any of

the measures permanent. He said the agency just wants to learn what it could do "so that in the event there is a specific threat or a specific need, we have the knowledge, the capability to put inspections in place in a particular threat environment."

Bus industry observers believe the system being field tested in New Carrollton could be the forerunner of a screening process for bus stations as well.

Hutchinson said the agency had been planning the screening tests even before the train bombings in Madrid on March 11. Those attacks were not preceded by any warning.

A key aspect of the test is to see how much delay the scanning will create, and how much hassle commuters will tolerate. "If ridership goes down, that's bad," Hutchinson said.

Individuals interviewed at the station during the early days of the test generally indicated that a brief wait was not a problem. About 1,000 passengers board trains at New Carrollton each weekday.

The checkpoint, set up in a tunnel that passengers use to get to the platforms, was equipped with a monitor like the metal detectors at airports but bigger. The monitor puffs air at the passenger and sweeps the air into a chamber that assesses whether molecules in the air could be components of explosives.

Hutchinson demonstrated how the device works by walking into the portal and stopping until the light overhead changed from red to green, indicating the scan was complete. It took 14 seconds. GE executives said the "false positive" rate was under 1 percent.

Report: States lag in license security

WASHINGTON — A non-profit, "good-government" organization says 11 states have not done enough to prevent use of state driver's licenses and identity cards by terrorists.

The Coalition for a Secure Driver's License said the states with lax licensing requirements are Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, North

Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin.

Some 9/11 hijackers were in the United States illegally, but legally got Florida licenses, which they used to board the jets they commandeered, the group noted.

Some of the states with lax policies reportedly are working to tighten security. Oregon has

redesigned its driver's licenses to incorporate digital technology to make them harder to counterfeit.

The coalition noted the states at the lowest risk of license fraud are Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

How to contact us:

To submit or report news,
Letters to the Editor, articles:
E-mail: BusNews2003@aol.com
Fax: (877) 510-5598
or (877) 510-5602
Mail: 717 West Pierson #160
Phoenix, AZ 85013
Call: (602) 242-7361

To advertise or to mail
advertising-related materials:
Call: Johnny Steger
(602) 980-0840
E-mail: Redboots44@aol.com
Mail: Post Office Box 12903
Tempe, AZ 85284

To complain:
Call: (602) 242-7361

To e-mail advertisements
or photographs:
reidhelms@yahoo.com

To subscribe or inquire
about your subscription:
Call: (602) 242-7361

To send subscription orders
or changes of address:
E-mail: ebalm@qwest.net
Fax: (877) 510-5602
or (877) 510-5598
Mail: 717 West Pierson #160
Phoenix, AZ 85013

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

ISSUE NO. 30
A PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

Staff

Editor & Publisher
Victor Parra

Sales Director
Johnny Steger

Senior Editor
Bruce Sankey

Government Editor
Norman Littler

Art Director
G. Reid Helms

Associate Editor
Ellen Balm

Editorial Assistant
Tara Sheehan

Editorial Assistant
Amy Stalknecht

Accountant
John Giddens

Advisory Board

Alex Allen
Amador Stage Lines
Sacramento, Calif.

Todd Holland
Ramblin' Express
Colorado Springs

Bob Brisman
West Point Trailways
Vails Gate, N.Y.

Robert Hume
Travel Mates Trailways
Harrisonburg, Va.

David Brown
Holiday Tours
Randlemann, N.C.

Daryl G. Johnson
J & J Charters
Crosby, Texas

Bob Foley
ABC Companies
Faribault, Minn.

Godfrey LeBron
Paradise Trailways
West Hempstead, N.Y.

Steve Haddad
Carl R. Bieber Tourways
Kutztown, Pa.

Joan Libby
Cavalier Coach
Boston, Mass.

Rick Hillard
Tri-State Tours
Galena, Ill.

Warren Miller
Pacific Coach Bus Service
San Francisco, Calif.

Jeff Polzien
Red Carpet Tours
Oklahoma City

Robert L. Quick
Quick-Livick Inc.
Stauton, Va.

Tom Ready
Ready Bus Lines
LaCrescent, Minn.

Bill Rohrbaugh
Bill Rohrbaugh's Charter Services
Manchester, Md.

Brian Scott
Escot Bus Lines
Largo, Fla.

John Silvanie
Suburban Charter Services
White Plains, N.Y.

Alan Spachman
National Interstate Insurance Co
Richfield, Ohio

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

High court reverses engine mandate for California fleets

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court has struck down Southern California anti-smog regulations aimed at forcing many public and private fleets to buy vehicles with low-emission engines.

The court ruled in favor of a coalition of diesel engine and commercial vehicle manufacturers seeking to overturn environmental

rules adopted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

The rules would have required vehicles like buses, airport shuttles, and garbage and other utility trucks to use the cleanest-burning engines available.

The 8-1 ruling said the air quality management district overstepped its authority when it imposed rules that banned the pur-

chase of certain new vehicles in fleets — both private and public.

The court said the U.S. Clean Air Act pre-empted state clean-air regulations, and that the state was attempting to coerce engine makers by regulating purchase.

In its decision, the Supreme Court held that "... any purchase/sale distinction ... makes no sense, since a manufacturer's right to sell federally approved vehicles is meaningless absent a purchaser's right to buy them."

In effect, the rules prohibited covered fleet operators from purchasing anything other than natural gas-fueled vehicles when buying or leasing new equipment. Under the rules, a broad array of

vehicles certified by the California Air Resources Board, including all diesel-fueled vehicles, were barred from purchase.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District, which regulates air quality in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange counties, adopted six rules in 1999 requiring owners of fleets (defined as 15 vehicles or more) to gradually retrofit vehicles with clean-fuel technologies or replace them with low-emission vehicles.

The restrictions applied mostly to vehicles such as buses, airport shuttles, taxi cabs, garbage trucks and street sweepers. In the four years since the rules took effect, more than 5,500 clean-fuel, heavy-

duty vehicles and more than 3,400 low-emission passenger vehicles have replaced old vehicles.

The air quality management district did eek out an opening in the court ruling. The majority opinion of the court expressly stated the decision does not reach internal state procurement guidelines or "voluntary incentive programs."

That means a U.S. District Court in Los Angeles will rule on the public fleets issue. The air quality district hopes the lower court will allow the agency to regulate state-owned or contracted vehicles, along with vehicles such as airport shuttles and taxis that are licensed by public agencies.

Detroit Diesel lists California dealers for emissions cleanup

DETROIT — Detroit Diesel Corp. has released a list of 30 dealers and distributors that can reprogram its engines used in California-registered motorcoaches to reduce NOx emissions.

Detroit Diesel and other manufacturers of diesel engines have entered into a voluntary agreement with the California Air Resources Board to upgrade engine emissions' software in over-the-road California buses and trucks.

The program, which is free for coach operators and truckers, applies to 1994-98 diesel engines that have not been reprogrammed.

Detroit Diesel is strongly encouraging its dealers and distributors to promote the program to bus and truck operators so CARB does not establish mandatory reprogramming requirements, forcing California operators to bring in their vehicles when it may not be convenient. (See May 1 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Operators should expect that when they take their coach to a Detroit Diesel dealer for service or repairs they will be asked to have their engine reprogrammed with the low-NOx software.

The California Bus Association is urging its members to go along with the program by taking their coaches to be reprogrammed.

A regional Detroit Diesel representative said it takes about 15 minutes to reprogram a coach engine. A label will be affixed to the valve cover indicating the new software has been installed.

The program is available at no charge only to vehicles registered in California. Detroit Diesel is not reimbursing its dealers for reprogramming engines for non-California buses.

Questions about the program should be directed to G.W. Lysinger, vice president of customer assurance at Detroit Diesel, (313) 592-7568, or to Detroit Diesel Technical Service at (313) 592-5977.

Here are the California locations where operators can get their engines reprogrammed:

Bakersfield Truck Center, Bakersfield

Brown's Engineering, Newport Beach

Central Valley Truck Center, Fresno
Commercial Engine Service, Hesperia

Delaney & Ahlf Diesel Service, Bakersfield

Delta Truck Center, Stockton
E.M. Tharp, Porterville

Fresno Truck Center, Fresno
Gem Equipment Co., Ventura
Harbor Diesel & Equipment, Long Beach

Los Angeles Freightliner, Fontana
Los Angeles Freightliner, Rancho Dominguez

Los Angeles Freightliner, Whittier
Los Angeles Freightliner, Anaheim
North Valley Diesel Service, Yuba City

Peck Road Ford Truck Sales, Whittier

R & L Diesel Services, Stockton
Rush Truck Center, Sylmar

Rush Truck Center, Pico Rivera
Rush Truck Center, Fontana

Stewart & Stevenson, San Leandro
Stewart & Stevenson, West Sacramento

Trinity Diesel, Eureka
Valley DDA, Bakersfield
Valley DDA, City of Industry
Valley DDA, Costa Mesa
Valley DDA, Fresno
Valley DDA, Irvine
Valley DDA, Mira Loma
Valley DDA, San Diego

PAINT AND REPAIR

Bring your coach to the pros who know

MCI FLEET SUPPORT PAINT AND COLLISION REPAIR

From paint restoration to complete collision repair, we know how to make your MCI coach look and run like new. That's because our factory-trained technicians know MCI coaches better than anyone, right down to OEM paint and parts.

Why would you bring your MCI anywhere else?

- Free estimates
- State-of-the-art paint booths
- Collision repair by factory-trained technicians
- Damage restoration to OEM specs
- Paint refinishing and graphics



EVERYDAY LOW PAINT PRICES:*

MCI 102 Series/D4500: \$4,500

MCI 102E/E4500/J4500: \$6,000

*Price in U.S. dollars. Includes sanding and single color painting using quality DuPont base and clear coat finish. Color change, multi-color designs, graphics, and decal removal additional. Prices do not include applicable taxes.

New, modern paint facilities located at:

DES PLAINES, IL 1-800-743-3624	LOUDONVILLE, OH 1-877-754-4404	MONTREAL 1-800-663-3328
--	--	-----------------------------------



MCI FLEET SUPPORT
Nobody knows your coach better.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Cell phones

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in mind.”

Pressure to prohibit drivers — automobile, bus and truck — from using cell phones while tooling down the road is coming from all corners.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 42 states last year considered measures limiting cell phone use in motor vehicles. Only six states ended up passing some form of restrictions. That brought the number of states with limits on cell phones, including prohibiting drivers with learner permits from using them, to 17.

Eleven of the 42 states considered legislation that would have totally banned the use of cell phones by drivers but none of those efforts was successful, and currently no states have a full ban on all types of cell phones. New York comes the closest, prohibiting drivers from using hand-held phones while operating a motor vehicle. Hands-free phones are exempt.

Some federal lawmakers have jumped on the cell-phone-ban

bandwagon, too, seeking legislation that would require states to adopt hand-held phone restrictions or face loss of federal transportation funding. So far, their efforts have not been successful, however.

Many other political subdivisions, including city councils, have attempted to pass measures to prohibit hand-held cell phone use. The new Washington, D.C., measure subjects violators to a \$100 fine, although first-time offenders can avoid the fine if they purchase a hands-free device and submit a receipt before the fine is due.

Insurance companies and even some cell phone companies have joined in, too, and are using national television and newspaper advertising campaigns to urge customers and others to stay off the phone while driving.

Most of those pushing for restrictions point to studies that show drivers are not as attentive when they're carrying on a cell phone conversation. "Even though your eyes are looking right at something when you are on a cell phone, you are less likely to see it," noted University of Utah researcher David Strayer, who

helped direct a study that supported earlier findings that cell phone usage by a driver can quadruple the risk of an accident.

While lawmakers and others continue to work toward the development of cell phone restrictions, most motorcoach operators have moved a step ahead of the bunch with strict prohibitions against cell phone usage by their drivers and serious consequences for those who violate the rules.

"We haven't had any accidents because of cell phones but still we are very stern about our drivers using them and if they get caught or if a passenger calls in and says their driver was using one, they can be disciplined," said Crean. "If they need to use them, they are to pull the vehicle over to the side of the road."

He said the cell phones being installed in Peter Pan coaches are part of a broader communications package that includes a global positioning system, which is expected to help keep drivers off the phone when they're driving. "With the GPS, the dispatcher will be able to tell if they are moving and if they are, then they won't call them until they are stopped,"



he said.

Greyhound operators who use cell phones while driving can face disciplinary action as well, including suspension or dismissal. "If there are incidents, we fully investigate and then, based on what we find, determine what type of disciplinary action should be taken, if any," said Plaskett.

Tann Teeple, safety director at Frontier Tours in Sparks, Nev., said the men and women who drive for his company are required to pull off the road if they have to carry on a conversation over a cell phone. "If

they get a call, they are allowed to acknowledge the call and tell the caller they will have to call them back later," he said.

There is an exception though. Frontier has a contract with Amtrak that requires that the passenger railroad be able to contact the bus drivers at all times. "We use phones that operate with a push button and our drivers are told they must keep the conversations to a minimum," Teeple said. "If it's going to be a long conversation, then they have to pull off the road."

NEWS FLASH

Fiberglass Breaks!

IBP's Polyurethane
Van Hool Bumpers BOUNCE



Van Hool Polyurethane Bumpers

No modification - Bolts directly to factory mount points
Available for 800/900 Series and 2100 Series in black and white

Get rid of those problem rear
bumpers and expensive repairs



International Bus & Parts, Inc.
www.1800intlbus.com

Give us a call!
Toll Free 800-468-5287
sales@1800intlbus.com

Inca Gold

PRODUCTS LLC

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

CONCENTRATED CONVENIENT COST EFFECTIVE

INCA GOLD Powder



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

INCA LIQUID GOLD II



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

Phone : (800) 789-9969 or (310) 808-9359 Fax : (310) 808-9369

VISIT www.incagoldonline.com TODAY!!



YOU GREATLY IMPROVE YOUR ODDS

www.prevostcar.com

when you back the right horse.

Investing in a Prevost Coach is your assurance of outstanding curb appeal, impeccable road handling, delighted passengers and repeat business. Not to mention optimum resale value, minimum life-cycle cost and the best after-sales parts and service infrastructure to keep your fleet in tip-top shape.

It all adds up to the most dependable, attractive coach money can buy, backed by a company – **and assets** – you can count on years down the road. Because nothing safeguards your fleet investment over the long haul like **The Time Travelers®**.

www.prevostcar.com



PREVOST®

THE TIME TRAVELERS

Sales inquiries 877-873-8678

Service network across North America and Company-owned facilities in
Canada | California | Florida | Illinois | New Jersey | Tennessee | Texas

What is it? Readers identify Six Flags coach



The May 1 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News* had barely hit the mail when responses to a throw-away question at the end of a small story on Page 13 started rolling in.

We asked if anyone could identify the colorful, retro-style bus featured in the new television com-

mercials being run by the Six Flags' amusement-park chain.

Bob Beard, Michael Sanfilippo and William Wheeler were the first to identify the coach. "I believe the bus is a 1952 GM PD4103," said an e-mail from Sanfilippo, who is sales manager for Martz Trailways in Wilkes-

Barre, Pa. Sanfilippo's e-mail also contained a surprise: He's a veteran of four months in the industry, but an admirer of things antique and knows how to research.

Beard, who spent more than 30 years piloting Trailways and Greyhound coaches, also responded by e-mail, readily identifying

the bus as a PD4103. Today, Beard is curator of the museum at Trailways' headquarters in Fairfax, Va.; chairs the Trailways Retirees Association, and actively supports The Museum of Bus Transportation in Pennsylvania.

The other quick-draw answer came from William Wheeler of Farmers Branch, Texas, who had a 30-year career at the Truck and Coach Division of General Motors, which built the Parlor Diesel 4103. Wheeler later worked for TMC in Roswell, N.M., and today is a transportation technology consultant for D.A. Hohler & Associates, the specialty bus parts company.

The eagle-eyed Wheeler even pointed out that the destination sign on the Six Flags' bus was an after-market add-on.

ABC launches new Web site

FARIBAULT, Minn. — ABC Companies has retooled its corporate Web site, www.abc-companies.com, giving users much more information about new and used coaches, and other products and services in a spiffed-up design.

The leading bus sales and leasing company says the Web changes are an effort to increase the visibility of key areas of the site — like its pre-owned equipment inventory, while bringing a new look and feel to the portal.

The revamped format includes interactive features and button features that make site navigation easier and faster.

A significant new area is ABC's Pre-Owned Equipment Inventory section. Users can access ABC's database of available buses and coaches, enabling them to:

- Search for specific makes and models
- View and download exterior and interior photos
- View and download specifications
- Access sales contacts

For example, searching on MCI, turns up a list of about 400 used MCI coaches in the ABC inventory. Refining the search and you find 81 MCI 102A3s.

The site also features downloadable specs and photos of new Van Hool and ABC M-1000 models. Users also can click on the "Online Auction" to view and bid on featured, pre-owned coaches each month.

Even though our home keeps getting bigger...

You're always welcome here, no matter how large or small your company is.

There's a reason—actually many reasons—why UMA membership has grown by 160 motorcoach operators in just the past 8 months. Here are a few of them...

- Free Subscription to *Bus and Motorcoach NEWS*
- Free Process Agent Service
- Protection of your interests in Washington
- Motorcoach Expo discounts
- Membership Benefit Programs, including:
 - Low Cost Health Insurance
 - Paymentech: low cost debit and credit card acceptance programs, offering the best rates for Visa, Mastercard and American Express transactions.



- Wright Express Fuel Service: Low Cost fuel administration program for your drivers to use on the road.
- Low Cost Wireless Program: Featuring discount Verizon, Nextel, Cingular, and AT&T National Service, affordable enough to outfit your entire fleet.
- Discounted LabelMaster Products
- Annual Government Relations Report
- Your company listing on www.uma.org, averaging over 1,000 hits a day from travellers around the world.

And so much more...

You've always known deep down that this is where you belong. Even though you may not have joined yet, it's not too late.

Join Today and Save!!!

\$200 for a Full Year Membership

Check American Express Visa Mastercard

Company Name _____

Contact Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Website _____

US DOT Number _____

Signature _____

Name on Card _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

*I hereby certify that the information supplied is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and time this application was made, and I agree to provide UMA with current information at any time requested by UMA. I understand that I will receive the terms and conditions of UMA membership and that I will read them promptly. If I do not agree, I will contact UMA immediately and my membership will be cancelled.

Mail Application and Payment to: UMA, 113 S. West Street, 4th floor, Alexandria, VA 22314 or Fax us at 703.838.2950

Questions about UMA Membership?

Call us at 1.800.424.8262 or e-mail us at info@uma.org



United
Motorcoach
Association

...The Choice of Today's Motorcoach Operator!

www.uma.org

Mike Waters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

will take a mile. "We have a lot of experience with how transits think," he says.

However, since passage of the Senate bill, Waters says the ABA has come around and now is working with the CBA and other groups toward getting the charter provisions removed.

Waters argues effectively that private carriers cannot compete for charter business with transit agencies that cover most of their capital costs and much of their operating expenses with taxpayer subsidies, allowing them to charge rates far below those of the motorcoach operators.

"They don't care about costs," he says. "If they do it for nothing this year, that means they're going to increase their budget demand next year to cover the loss and it just snowballs."

Critical state issues

While national issues are high on the California Bus Association agenda, state politics are getting plenty of its attention as well. Today, much of the attention is focused on two critical issues that impact the financial health of most motorcoach operators — worker compensation insurance rates and fuel costs.

Waters said California operators were pleased when state lawmakers passed workers compensation reforms proposed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, but now worry about how long it will take for them to be put into place and how much they will impact insurance premiums. If regulators don't have the new rules in place by July 1, they won't be able to make them effective until Jan. 1.

"Everyone is waiting with baited breath to find out how much insurance companies will back off on premiums and when it is going to happen," he said.

The reforms reduce the current system's five-year limit on disability payments to two years, make workers accustomed to picking their own doctors choose instead from a pool of physicians authorized by the employer and its insurance company, and require workers to prove their injuries.

Under the changes, medical problems that are difficult to diagnose such as back pain will become harder to qualify for benefits and workers no longer will be able to "doctor shop" in search of a physician who might give them a more favorable diagnosis.

House hearing to consider charter rules

WASHINGTON — The motorcoach industry is getting a rare opportunity to spell out for Congress all of the problems with the federal charter service rules and their enforcement, plus other issues related to private participation in public transportation.

The opportunity comes in the form of hearings to be conducted by the House Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs.

The committee is chaired by Rep. Doug Ose, R-Calif., an advocate of an expanded role for private bus operators in public transportation and a frequent critic of the Federal Transit Administration's enforcement of

federal charter rules. Federal charter rules are designed to restrict the role of public transit agencies in providing charter bus service.

The hearing conducted by Ose will be at 10 a.m., May 18, in room 2247 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

Among those invited to provide testimony at the hearing are the top executives of three motorcoach companies:

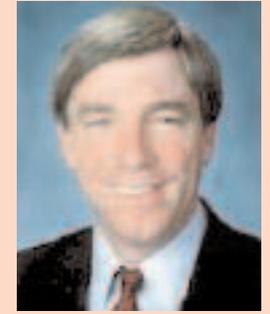
- William R. Allen, president of Amador Stage Lines in Sacramento.
- Terrence Thomas, president of Community Bus Services in Youngstown, Ohio.
- Katsumi Tanaka, chairman and CEO of E Noa Corp. in

Honolulu.

All three executives have up-close-and-personal experience with federal charter rules enforcement at the hands of the Federal Transit Administration.

Others invited to testify include the top policy official at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Emil H. Frankel, assistant secretary for transportation policy and intermodalism; Dr. Adrian Moore, executive director of the Reason Public Policy Institute in Los Angeles, and Dr. Ronald Utt, senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation in Washington.

The three have been asked to provide their perspective on the



Rep. Doug Ose

issue of private-sector participation in transportation, exclusive of air transportation.

It's expected that one clear message from the hearing will be the immediate need for a federal rulemaking related to the federal charter rules and private participation in public transportation.

Motorcoach carriers in California are being crushed by the high cost of workers compensation premiums, which have more than doubled in the past few years.

Waters said his own company — Pacific Coach Bus Service in South San Francisco — now pays 34 percent of its payroll for workers comp insurance, up from 10 percent just three years ago and substantially higher than the 3 to 5 percent that companies in nearby states pay. The annual premium at his company increased by about \$100,000.

Fighting diesel prices

Diesel fuel costs, too, have jumped out of sight and the association is pushing for ways to lower the price.

Among the measures being pursued is lifting the requirement — even if only temporarily — that California use low-sulfur diesel fuel, which is cleaner than traditional diesel. Refineries in the state now produce both the special fuel for in-state use and regular diesel fuel for shipment to Arizona, Nevada and other western states, a

move that limits production amounts and increases costs.

"We are trying to get the emission restrictions lifted so they can produce more fuel, even to just get us over the hump," said Waters.

At the same time, the association is urging its members to take part in a new plan designed to speed the cleanup of diesel

'Everyone is waiting with baited breath to find out how much insurance companies will back off on premiums.'

engines. The plan is part of a settlement engine manufacturers reached with the federal government in connection with legal claims that the companies installed devices on engines built between 1994 and 1998 to improve performance at the expense of higher emissions of nitrogen oxides.

The settlement requires the manufacturers to upgrade the emissions software on all of the engines they had sold. However, the

upgrades did not need to be performed until the engines required major overhauls, which regulators thought would occur quickly. But the engines proved to be extremely durable and only about 10 percent have been reprogrammed so far.

"We are going to urge our members to get the engines reprogrammed now," Waters said.

Security uniformity

The association also is campaigning for uniform security rules that would allow motorcoach operators to get a single bus inspection and for drivers to get a single security clearance that would be accepted by airports, state and national parks and other secure areas visited by buses. Currently, airports and the parks all have their own individual rules that require multiple inspections and background checks and the keeping of separate records.

While he's mostly concerned with statewide security rules, Waters said perhaps they should actually be national so motorcoaches can go from state-to-state

without worrying about separate regulations. "It has to be something that will work in every state," he stressed.

Meanwhile, the motorcoach business in California has been mixed since the devastating fallout from the 9/11 terrorists attacks. Operators in Northern California are enjoying an upswing but operators in Southern California continue to face difficulty.

The once lucrative Asian business has pretty much disappeared in Northern California, but convention work, cruise ship movements and regular tourism activities have shown substantial improvements.

"The guys who stuck with the local charter markets and regular customers have done fairly well," said Waters, adding that his company had its best tax return year in 2003, that it has had in 17 years.

Still, he notes that the number of operators in the region has declined since the mid-1990s, with a number of them going out of business and a dozen or so consolidating with other companies.

At the same time, motorcoach operators in Southern California face a different set of problems — too many operators and too low of rates, says Waters. "The thing down there is that there are so many companies and the competition is so stiff that their rates are still not where they need to be."

He suggested that operators everywhere need to review their rates so they can improve their revenue. "I think our industry as a whole has to take a real close look at what we are worth," he says. "We still are getting hit with people shopping for price."

\$10 million in security grants expected

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Transportation Security Administration is expected to award \$10 million in over-the-road bus security grants this summer.

A top official of the TSA has notified industry associations that availability of the grant money will be announced this month.

Last August, the TSA awarded its first-ever federal grants for coach industry security. A total of \$18.4 million was awarded to 57

private operators, plus New Jersey Transit. Another 1.6 million was split between the United Motorcoach Association and the American Bus Association.

The \$10 million believed to be available this year means the industry will be getting one-half of what was awarded in 2003.

The security grants given last year ranged in size from \$9,900, to more than \$5 million. Greyhound Lines captured not only the largest

award, but ended up getting nearly half of all the money doled out by the TSA. Three grants won by Greyhound totaled more than \$9.07 million.

Generally, operators used the grants to improve driver protection, tracking and communications with buses; passenger and baggage screening; security assessments and training for personnel to recognize and respond to criminal attacks and terrorist threats.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

INDUSTRY NEWS

**2000 Prevost
H3-45**

Series 60, Allison
4-Monitor Video
8-disk CD Player
Enclosed Parcel Racks
Window Shades
Portable Mic
Aluminum Wheels
260,000 Miles
One Driver
Call Bob at
Axcel Tours
(229) 271-2437

**FOR SALE
1992
MCI C-3**

**47-passenger coach,
Excellent condition.
Serious inquires
should contact
Phillip Clark Jr.
at (724) 658-2000**

**Immediate Opening for
Regional Parts Sales Manager**

Muncie Transit Supply, the leader in aftermarket parts distribution and sales to the transit and coach industries is seeking candidates to join its sales team. The candidate must be highly motivated, be willing to travel, have a professional attitude and excellent communication skills. College degree and industry sales experience are desirable. Email/Fax your letter of interest and resume with salary history to: jrgib753@aol.com or (765) 288-8957, Reference Job: RPSM.

For Sale: Small Pennsylvania Charter Company

Well established, Good Customer list, growth potential unlimited. E-mail serious inquiries to pclark@balphnicolls.com or mail to P. Clark, Suite 300 Sky Bank Building, 14 North Mercer Street, New Castle, PA 16101

**Classified Advertising
ORDER FORM**

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS is published on the 1st and 15th of the month. Ad deadlines are one week prior to publication.

Please print or type your advertising copy. If you prefer, print or type your ad on a separate sheet and attach to this form. All Classified Advertising must be accompanied by payment before insertion. VISA, MasterCard and American Express cards are accepted.

Type of ad you prefer: ___Display___Line

Number of issues you would like this ad to appear in: 1 2 3 4 5 6 More?___

Name _____
Person Authorizing Advertisement - Please Print

Company _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Signature _____

Credit Card Information

Card No. _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____

Fax or Mail this form to **Bus & Motorcoach NEWS**

Toll-free fax: (877) 510-5598

Mail to: 717 West Pierson #160, Phoenix, AZ 85013

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

Questions? Call Johnny: (602) 980-0840

Email: redboots44@aol.com

Motor Coach Canada publishes 2004 directory

TORONTO – Motor Coach Canada has published its annual directory of member motorcoach operators and tour companies.

The directory both facilitates travel to and within Canada, and promotes member coach and tour operators. It is distributed at

Rendez-vous Canada and mailed to all Canadian Tourism Commission offices throughout the world. There is additional distribution in London, Berlin and elsewhere.

“The directory is worth Autocar Excellence’s entire annual

membership fees for Motor Coach Canada for the promotional value it gives our company,” said Real Boissonneault of Autocar Excellence in Levis, Quebec.

For more information, send an e-mail inquiry to info@motorcoach-canada.com.

Now Available

THE Big Fat Bus Book
AND THE
Big Fat Bus Book on CD

**Order today!
Only \$79**
for *The Big Fat Bus Book on CD**

Only \$99
for *The Big Fat Bus Book* (print version)*

Ordering is quick and easy when you use your VISA, MasterCard or American Express

* In Canada and elsewhere outside the U.S., price is \$89 (U.S. funds) for The Big Fat Bus Book on CD and \$119 for the printed Big Fat Bus Book. All prices include shipping and handling.

For fastest service, fax the form below toll-free to:
(877) 510-5598 or (877) 510-5602

The Big Fat Bus Book
is produced by
the Bus Publications Group
717 W. Pierson, #160
Phoenix, AZ 85013
(602) 242-7361

Here's what the Big Fat Bus Book delivers...

- Profiles of more than 6,000
 - Private bus companies
 - Transit agencies and systems
 - Manufacturers and suppliers
 - Bus industry associations
 - Consultants
- An A-Z telephone directory with the names, locations and telephone numbers of thousands of people, businesses, organizations and associations that compose the North American bus industry
- Yellow Pages guide to bus industry products and services
- Sections organized to reflect the different segments of the bus industry
- Accurately alphabetized for easy use
- U.S. and Canada — all states, provinces and territories

Forget about what's gone before:

The Bus Pages.
The Bus Industry Directory.

Those were just an appetizer.
The Big Fat Bus Book is the whole enchilada.

The Big Fat Bus Book on CD

- Gives you access to a wealth of information and data on your PC or laptop
- Contains all the same information that's in the printed Big Fat Bus Book
- Allows you to quickly locate just the information you need
- Is as easy to use as the printed Big Fat Bus Book

MOTORCOACH DIRECTORY

The Guide to the North American Bus Industry

- Yes.** I want to subscribe to the 2004 Motorcoach Directory on CD for only **\$79** (includes S&H).*
- Yes.** I want to subscribe to the 2004 Motorcoach Directory printed version for only **\$99** (includes S&H).**
- Yes.** I want both, a printed book and a book on CD for the **special combo** price of **\$150** (includes S&H).***
- Charge my credit card****
- My check is enclosed****

* Rate outside U.S. is \$89 (U.S.)
** Rate outside U.S. is \$119 (U.S.)
*** Send card in business-size envelope.
**** Rate outside U.S. \$175 (U.S.)
Make check payable to Bus Publications Group.

Name _____
Title _____
Company _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
E-mail _____
Credit Card No. _____
 Visa MasterCard AmericanExpress
Expiration Date _____

Send this card to:
The Big Fat Bus Book
%The Bus Publications Group
717 W. Pierson, #160
Phoenix, AZ 85013

For faster service
Fax Order to (877) 510-5598
or (877) 510-5602

Calendar of Events

MAY 2004

Sometime in May Operation Airbrake 2004. "Unannounced" roadside inspections in U.S. and Canada by CVSA-certified inspectors. Info: (202) 775-1623 or e-mail stevek@cvsa.org.

18-19 Operation Secure Transport Train-the-Trainer Workshop, Holiday Inn Select DFW Airport North, Irving, Texas. Info: (717) 975-9190 or e-mail security@safetyteam.com.

20-21 Operation Secure Transport Train-the-Trainer Workshop, Double Tree Hotel Tampa West Shore, Tampa, Fla. Info: (717) 975-9190 or e-mail security@safetyteam.com.

JUNE 2004

7-11 Carrier Transcold Advanced Bus Air Conditioning Service Training Course, Chicago. Info: Call Carrier Transcold Customer Training (315) 432-3015.

8-10 Roadcheck 2004. Massive, 72-hour commercial vehicle safety inspection program at 1,000 sites in U.S., Canada and Mexico. Organized by CVSA. Info: (202) 775-1623 or e-mail stevek@cvsa.org.

13-18 Community Transportation Association of America Expo 2004, Seattle. Info: (202) 628-1480 or go to www.ctaa.org.

19-23 Pennsylvania Bus Association Annual Meeting, The Queensbury Hotel, Glen Falls, N.Y. Info: (717) 236-9042 or go to www.pabus.org.

21-22 Bus Industry Safety Council summer meeting, Dallas. Info: (800) 283-2877 or go to www.buses.org.

22-25 National Motorcoach Network 2004 Network Invitational 100, Radisson Hotel, Annapolis, Md. Info: (888) 733-5287 or go to www.motorcoach.com.

AUGUST 2004

31-Sept. 2 Florida Motorcoach Association 9th Annual Appointment Show, Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, Destin, Fla. Info: (407) 647-2491 or go to www.floridamotorcoach.org.

SEPTEMBER 2004

1 Operation Airbrake 2004. "Announced" roadside inspections in U.S. and Canada by CVSA-certified inspectors. Info: (202) 775-1623 or e-mail stevek@cvsa.org.

10-12 The Travel Institute 2004 National Forum, Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa, Phoenix. Info: (800) 542-4282 or go to www.thetravelinstitute.com.

OCTOBER 2004

2-4 Virginia Motorcoach Association Annual Convention, Valley Forge, Va. Info: (434) 376-1150 or e-mail info@vamotorcoach.com.

24-27 National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation, Roanoke, Va. Info: Go to <http://trb.org/calendar/events.asp?id=124>.

29-Nov. 2 California Bus Association 31st Annual Convention & Trade Show, John Ascuagas' Nugget, Sparks, Nev. Info: (831) 633-1755 or go to www.cbabus.com.

Utah Trailways Salt Lake City

Utah Trailways has taken delivery of a new Van Hool C2045 coach that was spec'd from the factory with Trailways' graphics and custom red paint scheme.

The enhanced 2004-model includes such Van Hool upgrades as seamless side glass, rear LED lights and maintenance-free king pins. It also is equipped with a Detroit Diesel Series 60 engine, Allison B500 transmission with Jake Brake, Alcoa aluminum

Louisiana Coaches Marrero, La.

Louisiana Coaches Trailways has taken delivery of a new MCI E4500, bringing its all-MCI fleet to 19 coaches.

"Motor Coach Industries' coaches account for 100 percent of our fleet due to their reliability, safety, and comfortable qualities," said Don Sanders, president of the 14-year-old company.

Louisiana Coaches operates tour and charter service — both



(From left) Tim Wayland of ABC Companies, Dick Maben of Utah Trailways, Ron Cornell and Roman Cornell of ABC Companies.

wheel, Amaya seats, Carrier A/C, and REI four-monitor A/V system.

Utah Trailways, which was founded more than 20 years ago, has grown to a fleet of 14 Van Hool coaches.

Company President Dick Maben attributes the company growth to a number of factors, including an expansion of services in the mid-1990s and a name change from Casino Caravans.



regionally and nationally. The family owned company also has a travel agency. "We are the one-stop-shop to plan your next group trip," said Sanders. The company has been a Trailways member for the past two years.

The new coach has a Detroit Diesel Series 60 engine, Allison B500 transmission with Jake Brake, Amaya seats, Isringhausen driver's seat, full RCA flooring, and REI A/V and Carrier A/C systems.

C. E. Niehoff & Co.

Brushless Alternators

Reliable, High-Output Power Designed for Coach & Transit

C. E. Niehoff & Co. is a custom alternator manufacturer dedicated to meeting the specific needs of our OEM & Aftermarket customers.

C802
28V/450A

OEM Warranty
2 yr / Unlimited Mileage

- * Air Cooled – no more oil leaks
- * High Efficiency
- * Long Life Bearings
- * Inherently Balanced Rotors
- * Stationary Field and Stator Windings

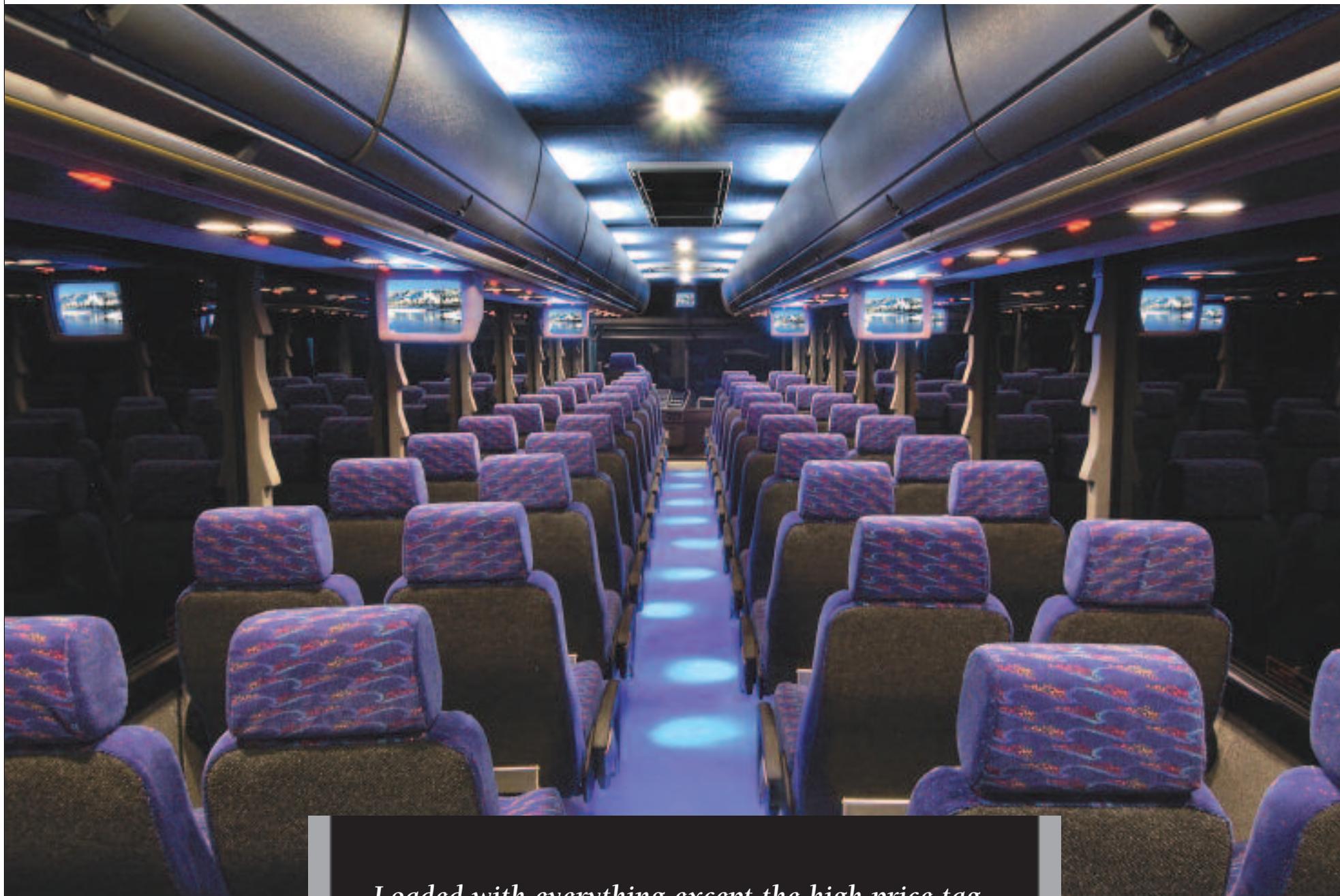
C701
28V/300A

Aftermarket Warranty
1yr / Unlimited Mileage

For more information:
(847) 866-1500
 Fax: (847) 492-1242
 E-Mail: sales@ceniehoff.com
 2021 Lee Street • Evanston, IL 60202 USA

Both models equipped for existing saddle mount brackets.

EXPRESS



Loaded with everything except the high price tag.

With a significantly lower price point than competitive coaches, the all new Express multipurpose coach has been engineered from the ground up to deliver exceptional performance and value in the commuter coach and shuttle markets. The Express doesn't compromise on quality either. Available in two lengths—40 and 45 feet—this American made coach is loaded with the very latest performance and safety features demanded by North American operators.

With seating for up to 55 passengers, the Express is 12-year Altoona designed and possesses the versatility to handle



virtually any application and environment. An all stainless steel construction guarantees structural integrity. The independent front suspension system delivers improved maneuverability. The ergonomic driver area is designed for convenience. And the panoramic insulated windows and wide passenger seats ensure rider comfort.

When you consider the cost savings, durability, comfort, driveability and overall value of the Express, you'll realize this is one coach you can't afford to pass up.

*To learn more about the Express contact
Blue Bird Coachworks at 1-800-486-7122.*

www.blue-bird.com

Blue Bird Corporation, Coachworks Division, One Wanderlodge Way, Fort Valley, GA 31030

BLUE BIRD
Coachworks®