



This crash last month raises the question whether reliance on GPS devices causes drivers to be less attentive.

## Crash blamed on GPS distraction

SEATTLE — Some are saying it was bound to happen, thanks to the growing popularity of GPS devices.

A charter coach ran into a pedestrian bridge apparently because the driver was paying attention to his GPS navigation device that routed his bus under a nine-foot bridge, and not to the warning signs along the road.

The crash sent 21 passengers, a high school girls' softball team, to the hospital.

Steve Abegg, president of Journey Lines in Lynnwood, Wash., told a Seattle newspaper the off-the-

shelf GRS navigation unit being used by the driver had settings for car, motorcycle, bus or truck.

Although the unit was set for a bus, it chose a route through Washington Park Arboretum that did not provide enough clearance for the 12-foot coach. The driver told police he did not see the flashing lights or yellow sign posting the bridge height.

"We just thought it would be a safe route, because why else would they have a selection for a bus?" Abegg said of the GPS unit.

Many GPS devices that offer routings for buses and trucks base

their directions on general information — such as routes that are closed to trucks or buses — rather than actually collecting important data such as bridge heights, GPS experts say.

The Journey Lines' incident sheared off much of the coach roof. All those treated at a hospital after the crash were released. Sixteen players stayed home from school the following day, however.

The nearly century-old concrete and brick footbridge suffered only minor damage.

The driver was cited for "hitting a structure with impaired clearance" and given a \$154 ticket.

A spokesman for Garmin Ltd., the manufacturer of the GPS unit used by Journey Lines, said an independent company that also supplies information to online mapping sites provides its underlying data.

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## UBOA/UMA founders die last month

Warren Miller and Joseph Lewis, who helped found the United Bus Owners of America, now the United Motorcoach Association, died within one day of each other last month.

Lewis, from Utah, and Miller, from California, joined a handful of other coach operators to found UBOA/UMA in 1971.

Their obituaries can be found on Page 10.

## Transits seek exemptions to new FTA charter rules; summit session scheduled

AUSTIN, Texas — A rush by public transit agencies to seek exemptions from the new federal charter service rules, so they can provide special-event transportation, has triggered a swift response from the motorcoach industry.

The United Motorcoach Association and several of its strategic partners have quickly organized a summit with the Federal Transit Administration that will give motorcoach operators an opportunity to learn what they need to do so they don't lose charter work.

"This is a very pivotal meeting for motorcoach operators on what is going to happen in the future," said UMA Vice President Ken Presley of the summit that will be May 6 in Austin.

He said if private operators are

not up to speed on the new rules that took effect April 30, then they are almost certain to miss opportunities for charters, including numerous potentially lucrative special events.

The meeting will be from 1 to 5 p.m. at the downtown Hilton Austin and is expected to draw more than 50 operators, most of them from states in the South and Southwest where it's possible to fly in and fly out the same day.

Industry executives will conduct the first half of the meeting and the FTA will present during the second half.

Austin was selected as the meeting site because FTA officials will be attending an American Public Transportation Association meeting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►



PROMOTING HEART HEALTH. Daisy Tours of San Antonio is using one of its coaches to spread the word — among women — about the importance of heart checkups. See story Page 3.

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## Coach America completes acquisition of Lakefront

DALLAS — Coach America, North America's largest motorcoach operator, has completed its acquisition of Lakefront Lines/Lakefront Trailways and its sister company Hopkins Airport Limousine of Cleveland. (See March 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Lakefront is the largest coach operator in Ohio, and one of the oldest passenger transport companies in the state, with operations in Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Cincinnati and Detroit.

It provides charter, tour, contract and scheduled services from its base in the Cleveland suburb of Brookpark.

Lakefront and Hopkins have been owned by the Goebel family for 40 years. Thomas Goebel will continue as general manager and Chris Goebel is assuming the title of assistant general manager.

"This purchase comes at just the right time for me and my family," said Thomas Goebel. "We had hoped for a sale to a large national company that would respect our heritage and help us take advantage of additional opportunities in the surrounding markets. Coach America fit that image perfectly."

Mike Haley, executive chairman of Coach America, said his

company was "highly impressed with the reputation of Lakefront in Ohio and the model by which it operates its business. There aren't many coach companies in the U.S. that have a fleet this size with each of the coaches less than five years old, and a strong emphasis on providing safe, dependable and high quality service to its customers and a great workplace for its employees."

According to *Metro* magazine, Lakefront is the 20th largest motorcoach operator in North America, with a fleet of nearly 120 coaches plus assorted other vehicles.

The purchase of Lakefront represents an expansion into new geographic territory for Coach America. The company maintains a No. 1 position in most of the 30 major markets where it operates in the western, southeastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S.

Haley said Lakefront "adds to that stature in the Midwest and provides an excellent platform for growth within the region."

However, said Haley, "we see this transaction in terms of Lakefront's excellence rather than an indicator of our plans for the future. Lakefront is an outstanding company, a leader in its markets."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

## Texas operator promotes program for heart health

SAN ANTONIO — In typical Texas fashion, Daisy Tours of San Antonio is partnering in a BIG way with the American Heart Association's national "Go Red for Women" program to increase awareness of heart disease in women.

The most-visible manifestation of the campaign in San Antonio is one of Daisy's 45-foot Van Hool coaches wrapped in a graphic that emphasizes the importance of heart disease prevention among women.

June Bratcher, owner of Daisy Tours and Conventions, has long believed that a good-looking coach draws attention, so why not use one of hers to spread the message?

So Bratcher, who has been buying coaches for 20 years from ABC Companies, approached ABC Regional Vice President Tim Vaught and Senior Account Executive Greg Gates and asked if ABC would help with the effort. She would provide the bus, if ABC would provide the graphics.

ABC's Florida-based graphics department designed and produced the wrap, and the Grand Prairie,

Texas, branch installed it. The coach is now a rolling advocate for women's heart-care awareness.

The American Heart Association campaign for women goes back to the 1990s when the organization discovered that heart disease was perceived as a "men only" thing.

That perception was wrong and resulted in far less attention being paid to women's heart health. Eleven years ago, the association began a "Take Wellness to Heart" campaign that, in 2004, evolved into the nationwide "Go Red For Women" effort.

Cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack and stroke, are the leading cause of death among women in the U.S. There are a number of things, however, that can be done to prevent cardiovascular problems. In addition, when diagnosed early and treated properly, they can almost always be controlled, often with simple changes in lifestyle.

The "Go Red for Women"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

## Defibrillator bill halted in Tenn.

### State association jumps into action

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Motor Coach Association has helped kill a bill that would have required motorcoaches based in the state to have an automated electronic defibrillator on board the bus at all times.

The proposed legislation, contained in state Senate and House bills, was being considered by committees of both chambers when the association learned of the measure and mobilized its members to swing into action.

"Due to the quick action of many of our members who wrote letters, and faxed and phoned their elected officials, the bill was deferred to July 4, 2009, which kills the bill since the legislature is

not in session during that time," said Tennessee Motor Coach Association Executive Director Deborah Neese.

"Will this bill be reintroduced in the future? We do not know. But the Tennessee Motor Coach Association plans to be on watch and well prepared to fight again," said Neese.

The association's opposition to the bill was based on the strong belief that having heart defibrillators on motorcoaches was impractical and inadvisable for a wide range of reasons.

"Defibrillators work well in the hands of professional medical personnel who have been trained to handle situations, but what about drivers or the general public?" asked Neese. "Would the use of a defibrillator onboard a motorcoach be feasible or even practi-

cal? Plus, the use of the device would certainly be difficult."

According to the American Heart Association, an individual has 4-6 minutes to use a defibrillator before death or brain death starts to occur after someone experiences cardiac arrest. A victim's chances of survival are reduced by 7 to 10 percent with every minute that passes without CPR or defibrillation. Few attempts at resuscitation succeed after 10 minutes.

"Knowing that, now think about being on board a motorcoach," says Neese. "If the driver was alerted at the moment the person's heart stopped, he or she would have to get his coach safely to a stop, which could take several minutes depending on where the coach was traveling at the time, get out of his or her seatbelt

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

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# THE DOCKET

## Ill. toughens CDL transfers

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The state of Illinois is now requiring out-of-state commercial driver's license holders to take both the written and road exams before receiving an Illinois CDL.

The policy change was made after Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's office worked closely with the U.S. Marshal's and Attorney's offices and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to uncover CDL testing irregularities in other states.

It was found that in certain states drivers who spoke little or no English and had questionable driv-

ing skills nevertheless obtained a CDL. Once they got their CDL, these drivers could then move to another state and exchange the CDL from their former state for a CDL in their new state without having to take both the written and road tests.

The new policy is designed to assure all Illinois drivers holding a CDL have demonstrated their driving skills and knowledge.

For more information, call Illinois CDL Administrator Terry Montalbano at (217) 785-1350, or go to the Illinois CDL website, [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).

## Houston ponders congestion pricing

HOUSTON — Despite the failure of New York City to get a congestion pricing plan approved by state lawmakers, Houston is considering one of its own.

The Harris County Commissioners Court is debating whether or not to impose congestion pricing when four toll lanes open on the rebuilt Katy Freeway in October.

The freeway runs 40 miles

west from Houston's central business district to the Brazos River. The freeway has been undergoing a reconstruction for the past five years.

According to a published report, the intergovernmental agreement covering operation of the freeway's toll lanes does not require peak hour pricing. That decision, yet unannounced, is up to the county commissioners.

## Bill in Senate would reduce diesel fuel tax

WASHINGTON — Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, has introduced legislation to lower the federal tax on diesel fuel, putting it on par with the gasoline tax.

The Diesel Tax Parity Act would lower the diesel tax to 18.3 cents a gallon, from 24.3 cents, making it the same as the federal tax on gasoline.

"Our trucking industry and small businesses are in a crisis and drastic steps need to be undertaken by Congress," said Snowe.

Diesel prices in Snowe's home state of Maine are as high as \$4.56 a gallon.

Snowe, who sits on the Senate Finance Committee, said high diesel prices have forced truckers and lobstermen to go out of business in her state, and that they are in need of help from Congress.

"The situation for Maine's trucking industry is simply untenable and we need immediate action to lower the price of fuel for small businesses that are impacted by these historic costs," she said.

## Congress is asked to pass safety technology tax bill

WASHINGTON — A coalition of law enforcement and equipment manufacturers is pressing Congress to act on a bill that would give truck and bus operators a tax incentive for purchasing safety technology.

"By providing a tax credit to motor carriers to make it easier for them to purchase safety technology...we can encourage more widespread use of these lifesaving technologies and in a shorter period of time," said Steve Campbell, executive director of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance.

Representatives of CVSA, along with the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, have met with congressional staff members to push for passage of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Advanced Safety Technology Tax Act of 2007.

That bill, introduced in October by Reps. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., and Ron Lewis, R-Ky., members of the House Ways and Means Committee, has yet to be

considered. (See Nov. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

If enacted, it would provide fleets a 50 percent tax credit — capped at \$1,500 per system, \$3,500 per vehicle or \$350,000 per fleet annually — for four specific types of safety technology: brake stroke monitoring, lane-departure warning, collision warning and vehicle stability control.

Campbell says these technologies are "proven" and "tested."

Tim Kraus, president of the Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association, a division of the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, said the legislation faces an uncertain future.

"It's an election year; who can tell what's going to happen?"

Catherine Boland, director of government relations for the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, said she believed there was a chance Congress would take action on the bill this session because "members of Congress are going to want to take something home to their districts."

However, if the bill does not pass this year, the group intends to push for it again next year.

"Obviously, if this doesn't pass this calendar year, it would go to the next Congress. The highway reauthorization would be an ideal vehicle," Boland said.

Both Campbell and Kraus said the incentives would be more effective than a mandate in getting fleets to adopt the technology. Incentives are "proven" to get it done faster, said Kraus.

Campbell said a rulemaking can take 10 years to complete, and the outcome is uncertain.

Incentives have other advantages, said Bill Patroliia, director of North American sales for lane-departure warning systems manufacturer Iteris Inc. A mandate, he said, "would turn our friends and customers into enemies."

Scott Adams, manager of vehicle solutions for Eaton Corp., said a 2001 study of the company's VORAD collision warning system "showed that fleets outfitted 100 percent...reduced fatalities by over 50% [and] on top of that, the vehicle collision warning system reduced total accidents and crashes by about a third."

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# FMCSA is considering broader onboard recorder rule

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration may expand its proposed requirement for electronic onboard recorders to include all truck and bus operators, rather than just those who persistently violate hours of service rules.

“I am asking [FMCSA] staff to look at ways we can expand that rule and still be within the scope of what we published,” FMCSA Administrator John Hill said last month in remarks to the National Industrial Transportation League.

Under the proposed rule, the agency would require mandatory

recorders for carriers that violate the hours rules 10 percent or more of the time, as determined in two compliance reviews within a two-year period.

That approach was the middle of three options the agency considered for its proposal. The lesser option was to keep recorders

optional. The greater was to require them industrywide.

Hill did not say definitely the agency will switch to the universal option — he is precluded by law from discussing the proposal in detail — but this marks at least the second time he has indicated his agency is looking at a stricter

approach.

Last December, Hill told Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J.: “Even though in our proposed rule we have limited the number [of carriers covered], I am looking to expand the population of carriers that would be covered by that significantly.”

## Colorado Senate studies I-70 tolls

DENVER — A bill that would give the Colorado Department of Transportation the option of setting up toll booths on I-70 near the Eisenhower Tunnel — but does not set a toll amount and does not actually require tolling — has passed the state Senate appropriations committee and been sent to the full Senate for debate.

An alternative plan that favored weekend-only tolling and creation of HOV lanes was not passed along.

The Interstate 70 Mountain Corridor, the main artery from Denver to the popular ski resorts and mountain communities west of the city, has become overburdened, particularly on the weekends.

The Senate measure (SB-213) originally called for a \$5 per vehicle toll that would be charged both ways at the Eisenhower and Johnson tunnels. The revenue would be used to widen I-70 from Floyd Hill on the western outskirts of metro Denver to the tunnels, 60 miles west of the city, and eventually to fund the excavation of a third tunnel through the mountains.

The bill faces opposition, especially from communities along the corridor.

## No speed cameras for Maryland roads

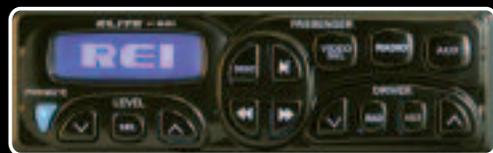
ANNAPOLIS, Md. — An effort to allow the use of automatic speed cameras on Maryland highways died aborning when the General Assembly adjourned without approving a final bill.

Both the House and Senate passed bills that would have allowed speed cameras in highway work zones and on other roadways when requested by local authorities.

However, the legislature let the clock run out before approving identical versions of the bill, which prevented it from moving to the governor for signature.

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## Pennsylvania Bus Association announces '08 award winners

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Bus Association has awarded its annual Travel Supplier, Associate, and Bus Operator of the Year Awards to association members.

The Bus Operator of the Year Award was presented to Nelson Floyd of Perkiomen Tours in Pennsburg, Pa. Floyd was nominated by PBA's associate and travel supplier members for his service on the PBA Board, serving as co-chair of PBA Marketplace, and commitment to national events such as the American Bus Association and United Motorcoach Association annual trade shows.

The Associate of the Year Award was presented to David Schmidt, national sales director for Prevost Car. Schmidt was nominated by bus operator members of the association for his commitment to the association as a board member, his relationships with bus operators throughout Pennsylvania, and participation in national

industry events.

The annual Travel Supplier of the Year Award was presented to Chris Harrower, group sales director for the Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre in Lancaster, Pa.

Harrower was nominated by bus operator members of the association for his commitment to the association, the work he has done with individual bus companies, and his contribution to the hospitality industry as a whole.

All nominees for the awards are required to be an employee of a current PBA member, have exhibited an outstanding commitment to PBA for a minimum of five years, have a minimum of five years in the motorcoach industry, and have shown a special interest and dedication to a PBA member.

Reputation and respect in the motorcoach industry by colleagues and peers also plays a significant role in final review of nominees.

The Pennsylvania Bus Association has represented the business

## Coach America

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"When it became available, we seized the opportunity to bring Lakefront into Coach America. It has a new fleet, excellent maintenance and safety performance, and a large group of loyal customers which testifies to the high quality of its customer service," said Haley.

In January, Lakefront was the recipient of the United Motorcoach

Association Vision Award for large operators at UMA Motorcoach Expo.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the acquisition, Moody's Investors Service said it has affirmed all credit ratings, including the 'B3' corporate family and probability of default ratings, of Coach America Holdings Inc.

Moody's said the rating affirmation reflects Coach America's high debt load, under performance

following its leveraged buyout a year ago, and the turnaround plan that has been underway since the fourth quarter of last year.

The ratings outlook for Coach America remains negative reflecting significant challenges the company faces in executing its turnaround plan, the ratings firm added.

Dallas-based Coach America operates a fleet of more than 2,800 vehicles.

## Heart health

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

campaign is designed to increase women's awareness of the danger, and to provide resources to identify and control personal risk. This is done through a Website, [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org), as well as a national "Wear Red" day.

The Website includes a free heart checkup tool that helps evaluate risk factors, and provides valuable information to women as they communicate with their

healthcare provider.

The campaign also includes heart healthy cookbooks, recipes, posters and Web alerts to help women.

Bratcher is convinced that national programs are good, but she also thinks a solid local campaign is key to really getting the message out. To that end, she chaired the 2008 "Go Red for Women Luncheon" early this month in San Antonio.

More than 400 guests were expected to attend the luncheon,

raising upwards of \$200,000 to "directly impact the life-saving mission of the American Heart Association."

Bratcher is bringing the same energy and talent to the "Go Red for Women" effort that she has used to build Daisy Tours into a premier coach company. Twenty years ago she came to the conclusion her convention business needed to control the quality of coaches she used.

She accomplished this by assembling her own fleet of 20 Van Hools, none older than 2002.

and governmental interests of private bus companies operating in

Pennsylvania for 85 years. It also promotes travel by motorcoach, in

cooperation with and support for its travel industry supplier members.



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# Is discouragement running rampant in your company?

By Robert New

Every company is unique and has its own challenges finding and employing quality people.

But I would like to address bus companies.

Have you ever asked yourself: "Why is it so difficult to attract and keep quality drivers?"

Many companies quietly accept less quality to get a body behind the wheel.

How do we judge quality in an interview or background check? You may form an opinion but the applicant is always at their best during an interview and eager to serve.

I believe everyone has good and bad qualities. We all start out showing our good qualities but then something happens and the bad qualities emerge. The commitment isn't there.

I believe drivers don't commit to a company because of discouragement. By that I mean the employees' needs are not being met. They are discouraged, running around in circles, throwing their arms in the air and saying "whatever" until the next best opportunity arises.

## Understanding employees

Knowing this, we must ask ourselves what are the employee's needs? Most people work to make a living wage but it would be unwise to assume everyone does. They may just want something to do or even fellowship with other people. The needs have to be evaluated and applied according to the company's ability.

Sometimes, needs can be met simply by saying "have a great day."

I also believe discouragement arises because of a lack of policies

and procedures that give the employees awareness of the company's values. Such policies give employees insight into what is right, wrong and fair. A perfect example is a seniority list. With such a list, the employee knows exactly where he or she stands.

Finally, discouragement comes from a lack of appreciation. No one wants to work in a thankless job. Humans need to feel appreciated, valued and accepted — that they have worth.

In this case, the concern is bus drivers. The drivers are in the front line in this industry. They are the core; they make or break the business.

Do they know this, or are they treated as disposable pens? "When the ink is all used up just get another one."

## The 'office' bias

Some people may think it's the office personnel who make or break a business. That may very well be true but some companies may find it easier to get new office help. Why? Because more people are willing to take on an office position.

Office jobs are challenging and hectic but more often are viewed as valued positions. These

jobs are perceived differently. Office personal also get discouraged especially trying to make discouraged bus drivers happy.

I'm not sure if office personnel are aware of their role as leaders, or that they have a certain role in the company. The company is led by office personnel that apply the rules, regulations, policies and procedures set by the company.

Are the leaders leading, or being led by discouragement? Do they set the example of a team player and/or team environment? If you lead your team, you are responsible for making sure the revolving door (through which current employees enter) swings in such a way that better players are joining the team then leaving.

One of the ways you can facilitate that is to place high value on good people you already have on the team.

## Sizing up teams

Every team has three groups of players. There are the starters who add value to the organization or who directly influence its course. And the bench players, who add value to the organization indirectly or who support the starters who do.

The third group is a core group within the starters that I call the

inner circle members. These are people without whom the team would fall apart.

The company must make sure each group is continually developed so bench players are able to step up to become starters and starters are able to step up to become inner-circle members. If your treatment of key people does not match their value, you run the risk of losing them.

There is a famous quote about soldiers from George Washington:

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

This quote could be modified as follows: "The willingness with which bus drivers are likely to serve a company in a time of need, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the current and veteran drivers of earlier employment were treated and appreciated by their employer."

While the text has been changed, the wisdom behind this pronouncement lives on.

## Achieving success

Teams that don't bond can't

build. Why? Because they never become a cohesive unit. Why do wounded soldiers strive to rejoin their friends on the battlefield? Because after you work and live with people you soon realize that your survival depends on one another.

For a team to be successful, the teammates have to know they will look out for one another. When a team member cares about no one but himself the whole team suffers.

I believe that one of the best ways to get members to care about one another is to get them together outside of a work context to build relationships.

Plan outings to bring people together at social events, during these times make sure they spend part of their time with staff members they really don't know very well. Not only are they building relationships but they are being prevented from developing cliques.

The simple answer to the question I posed at the beginning — about attracting and retaining quality drivers — is that everyone must strive to have a heart of service. Everyone in the company needs to serve each other as they would like to be served.

A team of players leaning on each other for a common goal, with the goal being to develop and maintain a company of integrity built on the integrity of its employees.

If respect is rendered, gratitude will follow. Even the least of us is grateful for someone in our life. That someone can be you. Gratitude builds up, discouragement tears down.

*Robert New is a dispatcher for Express Transportation in Orlando, Fla.*

## Webb Wheel adopts aggressive pricing strategy

CULLMAN, Ala. — Webb Wheel Products, a major wheel-end products supplier to the motorcoach and bus industry, is adopting a monthly pricing schedule in an effort to cope with what it says are "skyrocketing global metals prices."

Webb said it was taking the immediate pricing action for all of its product lines to mitigate the

risks associated with the price increases imposed on it by metal suppliers.

"Castings are a significant part of our total product costs, said Webb Wheel Products' President Pedro Ferro.

"In the first quarter of 2008, scrap prices have increased 88 percent, and we have experienced fur-

ther alarming increases since the first of April. It's unfortunate but we have no reason to believe the extreme scrap market volatility will subside any time soon, thus making the immediate pricing changes necessary," Ferro added.

Webb supplies brake drums, hubs, rotors and spoke wheels to the bus and truck industries.

## How to contact us

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

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Mail: 3108 NW 54th Street  
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## Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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# Bus and Motorcoach Academy fulfills industry need

By Dave Millhouser  
ABC Companies

“Don’t think ... just work.”  
We were rebuilding a weary 8V71 engine, and I’d asked my buddy if it mattered where I bolted 2 similar parts.

I also asked if we should check the manual. “Nah, he replied, “books make me nervous.” The engine ran like a scalded dog — for about 5 miles, at which point it (literally) suffered a seizure and died.

That was the beginning of my education in engine repair...and it was expensive. Education is one of those “pay now, or pay later” propositions.

Part of the charm of our industry is its uniquely gritty, earthy nature. We learn from experience, and each other, mostly through anecdotes. We all gripe, but most stay in it for the long haul.

There’s no reason we can’t love what we’re doing but still do it wisely.

Experience is great but some formal education can streamline the process, saving anguish and money along the way. The world, and the business environment, has grown increasingly complex. Many storied old methods no longer work, and can even get us in trouble. (Remember how we used to dump the lavatories?)

The United Motorcoach Association came to the realization that, for the industry to thrive in the 21st century, operators needed quality educational opportunities.

They considered several ways to satisfy

that need, before deciding to work with the College of Southern Maryland to create the Bus and Motorcoach Academy.

ABC Companies made the decision to help out financially, feeling it was an investment — a way to thank the industry that made it successful, and insure its future.

The accredited, Internet-based Bus & Motorcoach Academy has been operating for less than a year but has already won Maryland’s “Distance Learning Award” based on its quality, scope and innovation.

There are two distinct offerings, the Motorcoach Driver School, and the Clarence Cornell School of Business, named after the founder of ABC Companies.

Combined, there have been hundreds of participants in both programs, and the academy is beginning to have a positive impact on the industry.

Tom Hoffman of Warco Transportation, a Wisconsin-based school bus and coach operator, says he’s learned a lot about how to keep up with change.

“Warco’s participation in the academy has enhanced our credibility with our insurance company, our lenders and our customers, key partners in our continued success. It’s informative but user friendly,” Hoffman adds.

Coach Tours of Danbury Conn., pays for its drivers to participate, and raises their pay when they’re done.

Partner Mike Neustadt says “Operators who’ve completed this course are more valuable to us and our customers. It’s good

business to recognize and reward them.”

Sales Executive Frankie Sistare feels the course work is challenging, but extremely rewarding. Through the program she’s become adept at using the Internet as both a resource and a marketing tool. She’s learned to write grant applications, a huge benefit to her company.

“I learned how important it is for us at Lancaster Trailways (of South Carolina) to offer our customers a unique experience, and I picked up a lot of information on how to do that.”

Alan Fong of Sacramento Calif., is one of the academy’s most unique participants. Fong works for both the local transit authority, and for All-West Coach Lines. Working as both an administrator and a driver gives him a unique perspective.

“The academic work is demanding, but provides insight into all the skills you need to run a bus line,” said Fong. “Many are behind the scenes but critical. Some employees think operating coaches is easy, but there is so much to know. Sometimes management decisions are misunderstood because employees don’t understand the business basis for them. It’s important to be able to get everyone onboard by communicating well.”

Old guys (like me) tend to value experience a lot. Frankly, it’s fun because we’ve got it and you young whippersnappers don’t. It’s a good thing.

The problem is, in a world where change is accelerating, you just can’t acquire experi-

ence fast enough. Education will speed the process, fill in the gaps, and allow you to learn from other folks mistakes (without actually making them).

In addition, there’s a whole realm of brand new problems that experience can’t solve — because they are new.

The Bus and Motorcoach Academy can help, not just by providing current information, but more significantly, teaching you, and your employees, where to find timely insight into evolving business practices, technical knowledge and government regulation.

A friend once asked me to teach him to scuba dive.

I asked why he thought I could teach him. He said: “You dive. You’re old. And you’re still alive.”

That might have worked in ye olden days but in this complicated world, there’s no substitute for real education.

The book “may make you nervous” but it’s way cheaper than building the engine twice.

Go to [www.busandmotorcoachacademy.com](http://www.busandmotorcoachacademy.com). It’s worth a peek.

Dave Millhouser is a marketing consultant for ABC Companies. Contact him at: [dave\\_millhouser@hotmail.com](mailto:dave_millhouser@hotmail.com).



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Bill Harnett, smiling right, was a familiar face at UMA Motorcoach Expos. He's shown demonstrating software to Mark Alexander of Heartland Trailways of St. Joseph, Mo., at 2005 UMA Motorcoach Expo.

## RBS' Bill Harnett dies, T&C software is legacy

CHERRY VALLEY, N.Y. — William J. "Bill" Harnett, founder and president of RBS Inc., a pioneering motorcoach industry software company, died last month of cancer at his home here. He was 57.

Mr. Harnett founded RBS just over 20 years ago, developing software applications for local businesses.

Before starting RBS he had worked in the Canadian travel industry where, among other things, he developed tour operations management software for a regional carrier, and systems for the Canadian and British Association of Travel Agencies.

In 1989, Mr. Harnett contracted with Oneonta Bus Lines of Oneonta, N.Y., a charter bus operator, to develop a PC-based network system for tour and charter management. Three years later, RBS began offering GoChart and GoTour applications nationwide.

His goal in developing software was to provide superior products with outstanding support, at an affordable price.

Today, GoChart2000 is installed at more than 400 charter bus companies, and RBS is now a lead-

ing developer of charter motorcoach and tour industry software. The company also offers GoTour Online and RBS Backup and Recovery.

Mr. Harnett was a native of New Jersey and attended Rutgers, the state university of New Jersey.

He was active in local civic and community organizations, volunteering time to the Cherry Valley Community Facilities Corp. and the Community Health Center. He served on the board and as treasurer of community facilities corporation for 15 years.

He is survived by his wife, Donna, and two sons, Thai and Jonathan.

Memorials have been established in Mr. Harnett's name with the Cherry Valley Community Facilities Corporation, P.O. Box 66, Cherry Valley, NY 13320; the Community Health Center, P.O. Box 206, Cherry Valley, NY 13320; Cherry Valley Fire Department, P.O. Box 502, Cherry Valley, NY 13320; Cherry Valley Emergency Squad, P.O. Box 504, Cherry Valley, NY 13320, and Catskill Area Hospice and Palliative Care, 1 Birchwood Dr., Oneonta, N.Y. 13820.

## Calif. legend Warren Miller dies

PLEASANTON, Calif. — Warren Miller, a pioneering California bus operator and founding member of the United Bus Owners of America, now UMA, and the Northern California Bus Association, now the California Bus Association, died last month. He was 87.

Mr. Miller had served on the board of UBOA/UMA as an active or honorary member for all of the organization's 37 years, seldom missing a meeting, whether it was in upstate New York or in nearby Nevada during a Motorcoach Expo in Las Vegas.

During World War II, Mr. Miller served in the Army in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, guarding rail tunnels for supply and troop movements. He continued his service after the war, retiring from the reserves after 40 years.

Following the war, Mr. Miller and partners Bill Billings, Arthur Loyd and Brian Thompson founded Sequoia Stages Lines, which later became Eastshore Lines, providing transportation for returning GI's from dormitory housing in Richmond, Calif., to the University of California, Berkeley.

This early company developed into one of the dominant charter companies in the San Francisco Bay Area until the mid-1980s.

Over the years, Mr. Miller acquired and operated several companies, including Falcon Charter Service, Amtravel, Amtravel-International, and Green Belt Stage Lines.

While Mr. Miller was a bus guy through and through, he also enjoyed a love affair with trains. He rode many of the unique railroad lines of the world.

His last affiliation in the coach business was with Pacific Coast Bus Service of San Francisco, a company owned by his long-time friend Mike Waters, the vice president/general manager of Francis-



Warren Miller is pictured with UMA Board Member Joan Libby.

can Lines, a Coach America company.

"The industry has lost one of its early fathers," said Waters.

"Warren was a very special guy," noted Victor Parra, president and CEO of UMA. "He never let us forget why UMA was created. He was an anchor to the basic foundation of this association. I know he'll be watching over every board meeting, making sure we remain true to our roots."

Wayne J. Smith, the founding executive director of UBOA/UMA, said Mr. Miller "always was interested in governmental affairs as it affected the small bus operator. ... You just can't say enough about the service Warren Miller provided to the bus industry over the years."

Norm Littler, vice president for regulatory and industry affairs at the American Bus Association, said Mr. Miller "was a wonderful person and personified what the heart and soul of the industry should be."

Tom Ready of Ready Bus Line in LaCrescent, Minn., and vice chairman of UMA, said Mr. Miller had been "a great mentor" to him.

"I was the youngest person ever appointed on the UMA board. I first met him at the board meeting in Dallas in 1990. He was very

generous with his information about his experiences in the early days of the bus industry. It was helpful to me.... He had a great love for UMA and our industry. He was clearly a leader... and will be missed in our industry."

Few knew Mr. Miller longer than Alex Allen, the retired head of Amador Stages Lines in Sacramento, Calif. "Warren Miller and I go back nearly 50 years, to the early days of the California Bus Association," said Allen.

"Warren had a passion for and worked throughout his life for the improvement of the bus industry. The industry has lost another pioneer while Rachel and I have lost a friend," said Allen.

Mr. Miller was a founding director of Trans Pacific National Bank in San Francisco, and a long-time member of SKAL International San Francisco, a worldwide association of travel and tourism professionals, and the San Francisco Olympic Club.

A bachelor most of his life, Mr. Miller waited until he was 50 before marrying. His wife, Jan, died in the early 1990s. He was buried next to her, following a military service at the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, Calif.

## Utah operator Joseph Lewis dies; co-founded UBOA/UMA

SALT LAKE CITY — Joseph M. Lewis, who at the age of 22 began managing the bus company founded by his father 94 years ago and later successfully transitioned the business from a line-haul to an early charter operation, died last month.

Mr. Lewis, who was 84, died about two weeks after suffering a severe heart attack.

In 1971, Mr. Lewis joined with a small group of coach operators from across the U.S. to form the United Bus Owners of America, which became the United Motorcoach Association in 1996.

"Being from a family bus company, Joe saw the need for UBOA to represent the small and family-owned companies because at the time the American Bus Association, then known as NAMBO, was dominated by big companies — Greyhound and Trailways," said Wayne J. Smith. "So, he spent his time helping us form the organization," added Smith, who led the founding of UBOA/UMA and was its first executive director.

At the time of his death, Mr. Lewis was one of six living honorary directors of UMA.

Mr. Lewis' father, Orson Lewis,

founded Bingham Stage Lines in 1914 to transport miners to and from a copper mine. As the company grew, Orson Lewis enticed his brothers into the business, which was renamed Lewis Bros. Stages.

Joseph Lewis was born and reared in Salt Lake City and attended the University of Utah. His schooling was interrupted,



Joseph M. Lewis

however, by World War II. During the war, Mr. Lewis spent three years as an Army combat engineer in Europe, serving in Gen. George S. Patton's famed Third Army.

After the war, he took over operation of Lewis Bros. Stages. One of his first challenges was to replace declining scheduled-service revenue with a pioneering charter coach operation.

In 1946, he met Anne Marie Wilson, whom he married in early 1948. She died just over a year ago.

According to his family, Mr. Lewis lived life with an exclamation point. He was devoted and

dedicated to his wife and family, his business, and his friends. His keen sense of humor, hearty laugh and unshakable integrity were hallmarks of his character.

During the 35+ years he managed Lewis Bros. Stages, the company grew into an integral part of the Utah business community.

Mr. Lewis experienced his first heart attack in 1983, prompting his retirement from active company management.

He is survived by four children; son Steve, who heads Lewis Stages today; three daughters and two sisters.

# Survey finds public transportation work satisfying

TORRANCE, Calif. — More than 70 percent of the people who work in public transportation, including employees at transit systems, motorcoach companies, school bus operations, manufacturer/suppliers, contractors, consultants, state DOTs and the like, are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their jobs, according to a survey.

The study of nearly 2,500 people was conducted by TransitTalent.com to gauge the job satisfaction level of individuals working in public transportation.

Although the greatest number of responses came from top executives (nearly 20 percent), responses also were received from employees in such departments as accounting, communications, engineering, finance, human resources, planning, marketing, risk management and safety.

Among the key findings:

- Nearly three-quarters of the respondents (72.3 percent) said they are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their jobs. Two of five (41.8 percent) said they were “very satisfied.” Only 4.8 percent said they were “not satisfied.”

- Slightly more than 7 of 10 (70.6 percent) said they work in the industry due to “accidental” cir-

cumstance rather than long-term planning. Less than 12 percent said they planned to enter a career in public transportation while they were still in school.

- “Challenging work” was the most widely chosen factor in job satisfaction, followed by “work/life balance” and “public service.” “Pay” ranked relatively low. It was

chosen by only 4.9 percent as the key to job satisfaction.

- More than half (54.2 percent) believe they are fairly compensated relative to others in public transportation. About a quarter (27.6 percent) said they are not. The rest (18.3 percent) were unsure.

An e-mail invitation and survey link was sent to about 10,200 peo-

ple. Most of those targeted for the survey work for organizations or companies that are members of the American Public Transportation Association, the United Motorcoach Association and the American Bus Association. Responses were received from 2,449 people, for a 24 percent response rate.

“Overall, the survey suggested

to me that people who enjoy public service will be satisfied with a career in public transportation,” said Steve Hirano, the principal of TransitTalent.com and who conducted the survey.

For more information, contact Hirano at TransitTalent.com; phone (310) 375-6413 or e-mail [steve.hirano@TransitTalent.com](mailto:steve.hirano@TransitTalent.com).



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## Amador Trailways expands to Nevada

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — It took a few years to get all of the pieces in place, but Amador Trailways of Sacramento has expanded into the Reno-Lake Tahoe, Nev. area.

“We got authority to operate in the Reno-Tahoe area several years ago, but really didn’t pursue the market with determination until we decided to buy land and build a multi-million dollar garage and office facility in the area,” said William R. Allen, Amador’s president.

The core business for Amador Trailways’ Nevada territory is charter service for inbound visitors, including sports and school groups. It’s also providing scheduled runs between Reno/Tahoe International Airport and South Lake Tahoe.

Additionally, the company uses its fleet to service local meetings and conventions.

Allen is confident Amador’s long history of transportation service, which dates back more than 155 years, combined with the Trailways brand, will help assure continued business success.

“Trailways is a name people trust, so that gives us the marketing clout we need.”

Amador specializes in scheduled route and charter service from its base in Sacramento.

## Charter rules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

there at the same time, according to FTA spokesman Paul Griffo.

"We will be presenting at the APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference and we've added a private meeting because those operators need to understand the rules as well," he said. "We hope to avoid frivolous complaints by providing these sessions."

Presley said he and others are concerned about the number of requests for exemptions to the new

charter service rules filed by public transit agencies wanting to handle shuttles and other transportation work for special events.

The FTA said it received about two dozen exemption requests during the run-up to the rules becoming effective. Reasons for the requests ranged from private motorcoach companies not having enough time to prepare for an event to not having the right type of coaches to handle the job.

Without an exemption, a transit agency would have to offer the charter work to the private industry

before it could consider doing the work itself.

Presley acknowledged that it appears not enough motorcoach companies are getting involved in special event work, a situation that could influence the FTA to grant exemptions. "The FTA needs to see a robust response and many more operators need to step up to the plate," he emphasized.

Among the reasons cited for private operators not being as involved in major special events as they might be is that some of them don't yet fully understand what it

takes to get that type of work.

Presley said private companies do mostly charter work and some are not generally accustomed to getting involved early on in special events and attending the many planning meetings that take place long before the events are held. "It requires a great deal of planning, interacting with security, with communications and many others," he noted.

UMA, he said, is trying to educate operators in that area.

Presley said the FTA is providing operators an unprecedented

opportunity to meet face-to-face with industry regulators at the summit. "FTA desires to understand our business better," he stressed. "This is your opportunity to tell the FTA, 'Yes, I want this charter business and it belongs with the private bus and motorcoach operators,'" he added.

UMA's partners in the effort include Trailways, the American Bus Association and the International Motor Coach Group.

Operators with questions about the summit should direct e-mails to [kpresley@uma.org](mailto:kpresley@uma.org).

## GPS distraction

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Bus" routes typically steer drivers away from roads or turns where larger vehicles are not allowed but don't take specific bridge heights into account, said Garmin spokesman Ted Gartner.

"The bigger comment here is that drivers always need to obey all the rules of the road at all times," he said. "Stoplights aren't in our databases, either, but you're still expected to stop for stoplights."

A handful of companies offer GPS systems mainly used by truckers — that allow drivers to enter the height of their vehicles and then

route them around bridges that would be too low.

"It's such a painful process to collect the data," said Edward Friedman of TeleType GPS, which released its WorldNav truck system earlier this year. "You actually have to...drive around and look at the heights of the bridges and go to all the counties."

Mark Hornung, senior vice president of operations for the manufacturer of CoPilot Truck, another GPS system that takes clearance heights into account, said some who buy cheaper generic systems wind up in tough spots.

While GPS units have clearly established their value in helping

commercial drivers find their destinations and pick routes, the Seattle crash dramatically demonstrates their downside: First, they may encourage drivers to become lazy thinkers and just follow directions and, second, they can be distracting. Some believe they also sacrifice an individual's capacity to

remember routes.

Put another way, the driver may take his or her eyes off the road to watch the GPS, thereby reducing concentration on the travel route because he or she is listening (not to something in the background but) to "someone" telling them to do things.

## N.E. bus group to meet in June

MASHANTUCKET, Conn. — The 2008 New England Bus Association Annual Meeting will be June 26-29 at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods in Mashantucket.

The theme of this year's meeting is "Take A Grand Leap — Legislate, Educate, Associate, Play."

Two important panel discussions — "Bus Safety 2008" and "It Ain't Your Father's Motorcoach!" — plus others, are planned. Among those participating will be Lancer Insurance Co.

For additional information, go to [www.newenglandbus.org](http://www.newenglandbus.org).

Still, GPS advocates maintain that watching or listening to a GPS device is preferable to reading a map or printed directions while driving. And having a GPS is preferable to aimlessly driving, or not knowing exactly where you are going and how to get there.

It is thought that drivers trying to figure out where they are going become less cognizant of other vehicles around them or drive less carefully.

GPS allows drivers to focus on street or highway conditions instead of desperately searching for a street sign or the street name if using printed or handwritten directions.



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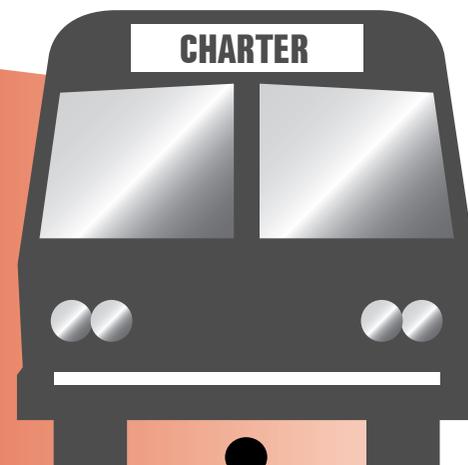
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## Defibrillator bill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and get to the defibrillator, which for liability sake should be in a locked area, call 911 and give them the coach location and situation, make his or her way down the aisle to the person, open their clothing and hook up the device and wait for the instructions on what to do from the automated electronic defibrillator unit.

"In the best of circumstances all of that would take quite a bit of time," said Neese.

"Would it be in the 4- to 6-minute window? Can CPR be done effectively onboard a motorcoach? Can CPR be done with the person in the upright position? The aisle on a coach is only 15 inches wide. Could you get an unresponsive person down in the aisle?"

"Even with training, would a driver be able to handle this situation and would he or she be willing to take on that responsibility, or would they just find another job? Have there been that many heart-related occurrences onboard motorcoaches in Tennessee? Would defibrillators make any difference?" she asked.

Those are just some of the questions the associations posed to legislators in opposing the legislation. There were others:

How about the liability of the driver and motorcoach company?

The Good Samaritan Act is supposed to cover this type of situation. But will it? What if another vehicle struck the motorcoach while the driver was attempting to use an automated electronic defibrillator device and others were hurt or killed? Would the driver and the company be held liable?

What about the expense? The devices cost around \$1,000 per unit, plus each company's employees would have to be training.

What about additional liability coverage on the company's insurance policies?

Gray Line of Nashville estimates the proposed law would cost it more than \$100,000. With the rising cost of insurance and fuel, could motorcoach operators in Tennessee afford another financial burden?

Neese noted that a recent article in the New England Journal of Medicine reported that American Heart Association figures show that 80 percent of all heart attacks occur in the home, but that home access to an automated electronic defibrillator had not significantly improved overall survival, when compared with reliance on conventional resuscitation methods (CPR).

# UMA, Trailways help members hire safer employees

Complying with federal rules that require interstate bus operators to perform background checks on drivers and potential drivers is seldom easy, especially for smaller operators or those with little experience.

Now, members of the United Motorcoach Association and the Trailways Transportation System have a new tool that provides a one-stop shop for criminal records searches as well as motor vehicle records checks.

The two associations announced separately they have established relationships with Amerisearch Background Alliance of Jefferson, Ohio, to provide their members with streamlined and more thorough employee and applicant screening processes.

Amerisearch's online system delivers secure, encrypted information to assist operators in accomplishing comprehensive background checks. The process gleans information from motor vehicle records as well as criminal data bases, federal and county district court data, and terrorist watch lists. Military service records, employment and education history, and credit reports are also among the company's many resources.

"In this era of global terrorism, we believe Amerisearch's services are needed more than ever," said Gale Ellsworth, Trailways president and CEO, "and we welcome their help in verifying that our employees and applicants are truthful about their backgrounds and professional experience."

"It continues to be our priority to give Trailways employees and customers safe environments in which to work and travel, and we believe this partnership will be a valuable assist in sustaining our commitment," she added.

Victor Parra, president and CEO of UMA, said that through its partnership with Amerisearch,

UMA member companies "can get all the important background investigation information they need. ... Amerisearch Background Alliance helps you make the right human resource decisions."

Michael K. Brown, Amerisearch president, said screening out suspected terrorists is a very important component of his company's

services, but there are a number of other issues that can impact a company and its stakeholders.

"The kind of information we provide employers will reveal whether someone is lying, is able to drive, or has a criminal background. It takes about \$2,000 to hire and train an employee, so the employer should know who they

are. Otherwise they could end up like the limo company that had employed a driver for some years before we screened him. He was revealed to be an arsonist."

Amerisearch also works with its clients, like UMA and Trailways companies, to protect the rights of employee applicants, Brown said, and the company vets the informa-

tion it receives for accuracy. "Releasing wrong information is just as dangerous as releasing no information," he said, "and we are compliant with all state hiring laws."

For more information, UMA members can call (800) 424-8262, Trailways members can call (703) 691-3052 and Brown can be reached at (440) 576-3095.

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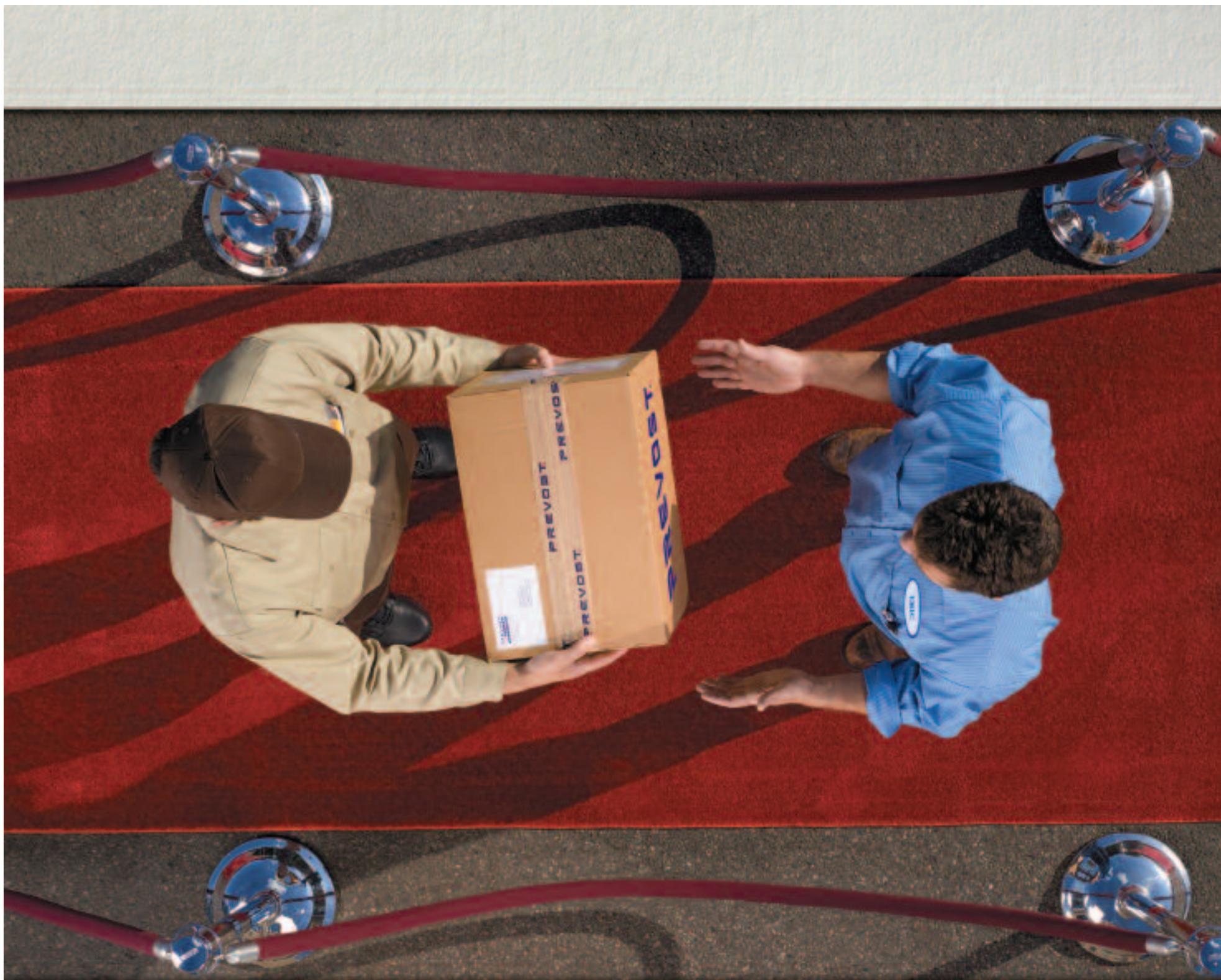
## Calendar

### JUNE 2008

**7** Museum of Bus Transportation Spring Fling, Hershey, Pa. Info: Go to [www.busmuseum.org](http://www.busmuseum.org).

**17-20** Pennsylvania Bus Association 2008 Annual Meeting, Sheraton Atlantic City. Info: Go to [www.pabus.org](http://www.pabus.org), or call (717) 236-9042.

**24-26** National Tour Association Grassroots Symposium, Washington, D.C. Info: Go to [www.NTA.travel](http://www.NTA.travel).



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