

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

THE NEWS RESOURCE FOR THE BUS AND MOTORCOACH INDUSTRY

## LimoLiner appears on verge of success

BOSTON — LimoLiner may just turn out to be the “little luxury coach that could.”

Approaching the end of its first year of operation, the luxury bus service that operates between the business centers of New York and Boston not only is still around but it's even grown.

Since it began making the 200-mile, four-hour run last October, LimoLiner has expanded to a seven-day-a-week operation by adding Sunday service, and it has purchased a third coach for its fleet.

“We're not breaking even yet, but we are growing steadily,” says founder and owner Fergus McCann. “Sure we would like to grow faster but we believe we are on track.”

Finding success in the fickle luxury bus business — the type of service that most motorcoach



operators say is among the toughest in the industry — has not come easy, though.

“This is a brand new concept and we have to get established,” says McCann, stressing that getting business travelers and corporations to change their riding

habits has proven to be a major challenge for the fledging company.

To draw riders from the trains and planes that also shuttle business people between New York and Boston, LimoLiner has been counting on a half-million-dollar

marketing program that zeros in on the business communities in the two cities with targeted advertisements in local newspapers and business magazines, some radio commercials, a few carefully selected direct mailings and promotion.

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## Operators face tight security

Delays, canceled trips and re-routings were the norm for many motorcoach operators and their passengers in New York and Washington early this month as a federal terrorist alert spawned new traffic restrictions and increased inspections.

Operators reported that many of the problems in the New York area were caused by the closing of the Holland Tunnel, Williamsburg Bridge and Brooklyn Battery Tunnel to commercial traffic.

The crackdowns during the first week of August were said to be even more intense than in the months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

One operator reported the running time from Elizabeth, N.J., to New York increased by an hour, to two hours and 15 minutes.

The congestion reportedly was not as bad as it could have been because many commuters apparently were either on vacation or avoided rush hour.

In Washington, nearly all vehicles approaching Capitol Hill experienced delays because of closed streets and security checkpoints instituted overnight.

Traffic was especially slow near the World Bank and IMF buildings, which reportedly had been targeted by terrorists. Some streets were closed and commercial vehicles near the area were being inspected.

Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge raised the terror threat level for financial institutions in New York, Washington, and Newark, N.J., to orange, or high alert, the second-highest level on the government's five-point system.

Ridge said terrorists using trucks loaded with explosives could be

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## Red Arrow: The great luxury success story

CALGARY, Alberta — Red Arrow Motorcoach has a secret, and it isn't telling.

It's not that the company won't share; rather, it's because it can't quite figure out exactly what the secret really is.

The Edmonton, Alberta-based company has been beating the odds for 25 years by operating a highly successful luxury coach service between the business centers of Edmonton and Calgary.

Over the years, a number of companies have tried their hand at similar services, but only a handful have found much success. Most cashed in within a year or so, saying not enough travelers were willing to pay the price for the nontraditional service of luxury and special attention.

Red Arrow President Michael



Colborne and General Manager Joel Trudell have some ideas as to why their company has been able to defy the trend, but neither can pinpoint with certainty their true

secret of success.

“A lot of companies have started similar operations and failed and some have even used us as their model and still didn't make

it. So, it's really hard to say why we've been so successful,” said Trudell.

He believes much of the

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## Wrap promotes popular games

### Operator donates coach for program

YORK, PA — Marketers across the U.S. are trying all sorts of new gimmicks to capture increasingly fragmented audiences.

Two of the latest advertising fads are ads placed on the wheel covers of taxicabs and T-shirts with 11-inch embedded video screens and mini-speakers that turn the

wearer in a high-tech walking commercial. Upwards of 10,000 cabs in major cities will soon be sporting wheel covers that promote Taco Bell, Jiffy Lube and others.

But while marketers experiment with the new mediums, the ubiquitous bus wrap continues to capture its share of the action. That's because bus wraps are high impact, mobile and cost effective.

In Pennsylvania, the York County Convention & Visitors

bureau is using a bus wrap to promote the massive 2005–2007 Keystone Games, the state's largest athletic festival.

A coach owned by Bailey Travel Services and Bailey Coach Inc. of York has been wrapped with a swimmer on one side and the passing of a runner's baton on the other. Company owner John Bailey donated the coach for the promotional program.

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## Rimrock Stages grabs runs in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. — On Aug. 18, Rimrock Stages Trailways of Billings, Mont., will begin serving all North Dakota towns along Interstate 94 that have stops being abandoned by Greyhound Lines.

Initially, however, there will be only one Rimrock Stages coach in each direction and its westbound trip out of Fargo, N.D., will be overnight.

North Dakota Transportation Director Dave Sprynczynatyk announced that Rimrock will start with one bus and assess ridership patterns. "If it's warranted, they will do more," he said. Picking up a new route through North Dakota is "quite an adjustment" for a regional line like Rimrock, he added.

"The critical thing is that they're making all nine stops" that Greyhound is dropping along I-94, noted Don Canton, spokesman for North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven.

"It's critical to North Dakota's economic well-being that we main-

tain I-94 bus service and connections with Minneapolis and Billings," said Gov. Hoeven.

Greyhound's big announcement in June that it was restructuring its northern and western region hit North Dakota about as hard as any state. It said it was dropping North Dakota service except for Fargo, which would become the end of the line for westbound Greyhound coaches across the northern U.S.

The new schedule looks like this: From Minneapolis, Greyhound will arrive in Fargo at 10:20 p.m. and Rimrock will depart west at 11 p.m. Previously, Greyhound had two westbound buses leaving Fargo, at 1:15 and 9:30 a.m.

Rimrock will keep stops in Valley City, Jamestown, Steele, Sterling, Bismarck, Richardton, Dickinson, Medora and Beach. Rimrock service will continue west to Billings, Spokane and Seattle.

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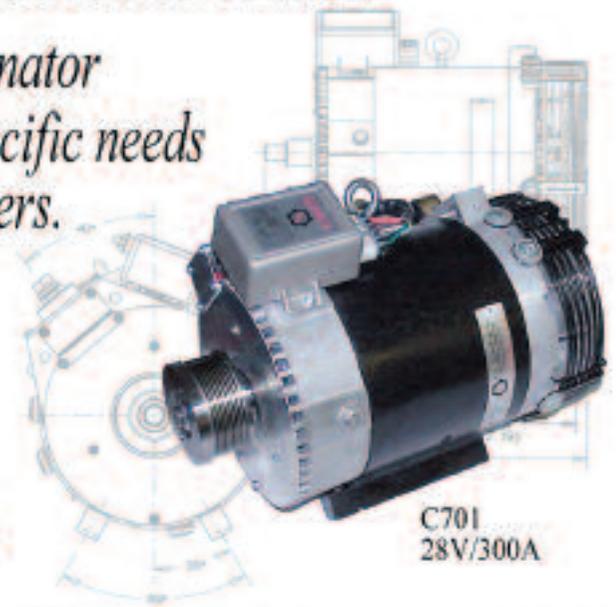
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# THE DOCKET

## Air brake roadchecks on Sept. 1

WASHINGTON — The Operation Air Brake Campaign is adding a new feature next month to its annual program designed to improve commercial vehicle brake safety.

This year's second Operation Air Brake inspection program will be Sept. 1, for 12 hours at roadside locations across the U.S. and Canada.

In addition to the brake inspections, several truck stop operators have volunteered to help sponsor Brake Safety Inspection/Awareness events, according to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, which organizes Operation Air Brake.

"These activities are intended to further educate drivers and mechanics on the importance of proper brake inspection, maintenance and operation," CVSA said in announcing the event. "This is especially important because braking systems on commercial vehicles are complicated and contain many parts that need frequent inspection and attention to ensure proper operation and safe performance."

The Truck Stop Brake Safety Inspection/Awareness demonstrations will be conducted by CVSA-certified commercial vehicle inspectors and will be educational rather than enforcement in nature. The demonstrations and the educational material will help drivers better understand proper brake operation, how to recognize potential brake problems and the need for properly maintained brakes, says CVSA.

The educational material also will be available to drivers whose vehicles will be inspected at the Operation Air Brake roadside inspections.

In May, "unannounced" Operation Air Brake inspections were conducted at locations throughout North America.

For more information about Operation Air Brake, contact Steve Keppler at CVSA, (202) 775-1623 Ext. 106.

## FMCSA to target outlaw buses, trucks

WASHINGTON — Rogue bus operators and truckers would be the target of a new initiative being planned by the federal government.

Safety enforcement officials would go after carriers that try to escape regulatory scrutiny and insurance responsibilities by operating without federal motor carrier authority.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is considering the "non-entrant" inspection program in an effort to ferret out renegade interstate operators, said Charles Horan, director of the FMCSA's office of enforcement and compliance.

The agency likely would work with state and local law enforcement authorities, as well as suppliers of equipment and services, such as new and used bus and truck dealers or truck stops.

Horan discussed the proposed program at a meeting earlier this month of the Highway Committee of the National Industrial Transportation League in Toledo, Ohio. The league is an organization that represents truckload shippers.

Horan said the program is the brainchild of FMCSA Deputy Administrator Warren Hoemann, who's concerned that virtually all of the FMCSA's efforts are aimed at carriers having U.S. Department

of Transportation numbers.

Hoemann believes there's a significant number of over-the-road carriers that aren't registered, and they probably are the carriers in greatest need of safety oversight, Horan says. "We want to level the playing field and get unsafe guys off the road."

Asked about the FMCSA's response to last month's federal court rejection of the current hours-of-service regulations, Horan said the agency is weighing its options and would have a plan of action by Aug. 30. That is the deadline for the 45-day automatic stay of the decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

"I can tell you that nearly every beating heart within FMCSA is working on this issue," he said.

Horan said he believes the rejected rules represented an excellent compromise among the demands of safety advocates, economic needs of the trucking industry and mandates from Congress. He noted that the regulation wouldn't necessarily have to be changed if FMCSA successfully appeals the court's decision or comes back with a regulation that offers further justification of the agency's choices.

"I'm hoping (the regulation) goes right through the way it sits," Horan said. "To change back would be a Herculean task."

## Blood alcohol limit is now .08 nationwide

DOVER, Del. — A blood alcohol limit of .08 percent for drivers is now the law of the land. Delaware has become the last state to change the legal limit to .08 percent for drivers in that state.

In signing the new Delaware law, Gov. Ruth Ann Minner said that lowering the threshold from .10 to .08 percent was "a major legislative victory." She had backed the measure since 2001.

The District of Columbia and

Puerto Rico also have adopted .08.

Six years ago, when Congress approved the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, it provided \$500 million in incentives to states adopting .08 blood-alcohol laws.

At the end of June, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced fiscal 2004 incentive grants totaling \$47.8 million to 47 states that had the .08 limit.

The 2004 incentive grant

recipients excluded Colorado, Delaware and Minnesota. Those states had 2 percent of their federal highway construction funds withheld as of Oct. 1, 2003. The three passed the .08 limit this year, but missed the fiscal 2004 deadline.

However, once a state's law becomes effective, all withheld funds are restored to the state.

Colorado and Minnesota adopted the .08 limit in May. The Colorado law became effective July

1, while the Minnesota law goes into effect Aug. 1, 2005.

According to preliminary estimates, 40 percent — 17,401 of 43,220 — of highway deaths in 2003 were alcohol-related.

A man who weighs 170 pounds and consumes four drinks on an empty stomach would reach a blood alcohol concentration of .08 percent, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## Tougher air standards opposed

WASHINGTON — A dozen trade associations are requesting a meeting with Environmental Protection Agency officials to try to head off possible tightening of air quality standards for fine particulate matter in the agency's planned review of a 1997 regulation.

It is believed that stricter soot regulations could mean over-the-road buses and trucks would have to be retrofitted with particulate matter filters.

## EPA funds biodiesel fuel study

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency is funding a pilot project at the University of Nevada in Reno intended to reduce production costs for biodiesel fuel, as well as the amount of nitrogen oxides emitted during biodiesel production.

The university received nearly \$70,000 that it is using for a mobile processing unit to produce enough

The issue revolves around EPA efforts to find a way to clean up the exhaust emissions of older buses and trucks. Adding PM filters could cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 per bus or truck.

In a letter to the EPA's assistant administrator for air and radiation, the group said EPA had not updated health studies it used to set the regulations and the associations were concerned EPA would implement stricter standards without considering new studies.

biodiesel to meet the school's diesel fuel needs, said EPA.

"Recognizing that biodiesel fuel provides numerous environmental advantages over petroleum diesel, this pilot will produce a more cost-effective biodiesel formulation that should reduce the amount of nitrogen oxides emitted during the biodiesel production process," the agency said.

## Five transit agencies seek private charter operators

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:

**Austin, Texas.** Deadline: Aug. 16, 2004. Write to: Fred Gilliam, President and CEO, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 2910 E. 5th St., Austin, TX 78702. Phone: (512) 474-1200.

**Waldo County (Belfast), Maine.** Deadline: Aug. 16, 2004. Write to: Waldo County Transportation, P.O. Box 130, Belfast, ME

04915. Phone: (207) 338-4769.

**Martinsburg, West Va.** Deadline: Aug. 31, 2004. Write to: Lynn Weiger, Director of Operations, Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority, 446 Novak Dr., Martinsburg, WV 25401. Phone: (304) 263-0876.

**Monroe County (Woodsfield), Ohio.** Deadline: Sept. 8, 2004. Write to: Denise Potts, Transit Coordinator, Monroe County, P.O. Box 507, Woodsfield, OH 43793. Phone: (740) 472-2531.

**Ottawa County (Port Clinton), Ohio.** Deadline: Sept. 17, 2004. Write to: Ottawa County Transportation Agency, 1702 W. Lakeshore Dr., Port Clinton, OH 43451. Phone: (419) 732-7433.

# Illinois to rollback fees; gets tough on large vans

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The business climate may soon get noticeably better for motorcoach operators in Illinois.

Late last month, the Illinois House approved a bill (HB714), which had been passed earlier by the state Senate, that restores some of the rolling stock exemptions and reduces the Commercial Distribution Fee that was imposed as a result of legislation passed last year.

The bill is now on the governor's desk awaiting his signature. The Illinois Motorcoach Association reports that indications are good the governor will approve the bill, but the association is urging its members to write to Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich, asking him to sign the bill.

The bill provides that the Commercial Distribution Fee, currently calculated as a 36 percent surcharge on a motorcoach registration, will be reduced to a 21.5 percent surcharge on July 1, 2005, and then to 14.35 percent on July 1, 2006.

For a 36,001–40,000-pound motorcoach registration, the Commercial Distribution Fee would be reduced from the current \$432.72 to \$258.43 in 2005, and \$172.49 in 2006. That means the total plate fee for a 40,000-pound coach, including the Commercial Distribution Fee, will drop from the current \$1,634.72, to \$1,460.43 and then to \$1,374.49.

Additionally, the sponsors of the bill have indicated they plan to revisit the schedule during the 2006 legislative session to repeal the fee.

Illinois legislators also made substantial changes to the rolling stock sales tax exemption. Retroactive to July 1, to qualify for the exemption, the vehicle must have a gross vehicle weight rating over 16,000 pounds and must be used for commercial purposes and be engaged in interstate commerce for 50 percent of its trips or miles. The bill restores the point-to-point provision that allows in-state vehicles whose trips originate or terminate outside the state (even if that trip occurs entirely within the state) to qualify for the rolling stock exemption.

Meanwhile, Gov. Blagojevich has signed into law a measure aimed directly at improving the safety performance of companies operating 9–15 passenger vans. Prior to the governor's action, the Illinois Department of Transportation had no authority to inspect

these vehicles for maintenance and safety, even though they are run as commercial vehicles.

"This was a loophole in the law, an oversight, that allowed these companies to operate these vans without regulations ensuring

their passengers' safety," said Blagojevich. "Studies have shown these vans are more likely to be involved in a rollover accident, placing their customers at a higher risk of injury or even death."

House Bill 4833 amends exist-

ing state law to classify large vans as commercial motor vehicles. The change only applies to vans being driven a distance greater than 75 miles and charging customers for their service. Under the new law, the vans will be inspected for

maintenance and safety requirements and drivers would be required to meet specific qualifications and hours of service. Currently, there are no minimum requirements for drivers.

The law is effective immediately.

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## THE DOCKET

## Price of diesel hits new record, averages \$1.81

Diesel fuel prices soared off the charts during the second week of August, climbing past \$1.80 a gallon for the first time since the federal government began tracking prices 10 years ago.

The national average retail price increased 6 cents a gallon during the most recent two-week period, climbing to \$1.814. The U.S. average for diesel fuel is 32.2 cents per gallon higher than the same week one year ago.

Prices soared on the East Coast, in the Midwest and in Gulf of Mexico states. West of the Rockies, prices actually dipped, falling a modest 0.2 cents in California to \$2.113. Prices fell by 0.6 cents for the entire West Coast.

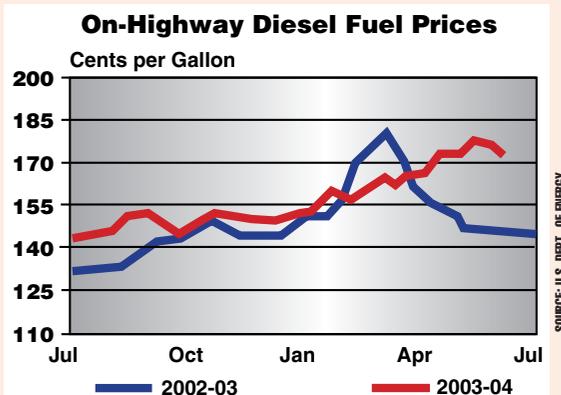
Still, California coach operators are paying 40 cents a gallon more than a year ago, and all West Coast drivers are paying at least 38 cents a gallon more than last year.

Motorcoach companies are paying the least in southern states, particularly along the Gulf Coast and in the Lower Atlantic region, where prices averaged around \$1.76 a gallon.

Record oil prices, terror threats and concerns over fuel supplies are being blamed for the push of diesel prices to record highs. After months of flirting with a new record, the average national retail price of diesel broke through during the first week of this month.

The previous record had been set in March 2003, during the build-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, when prices of crude oil, diesel and gasoline surged. By the end of April 2003, however, the diesel average was back around \$1.50 a gallon.

The current run-up in prices has been more sustained. The national average has been above \$1.70 for more than four months, with no sign of lower



**Diesel Fuel Prices**  
Cents per Gallon

	Price	Change from Week Ago	Year Ago
U.S.	181.4	▲ 3.4	▲ 32.2
East Coast	180.3	▲ 3.8	▲ 32.1
New England	188.9	▲ 3.2	▲ 31.8
Central Atlantic	189.1	▲ 3.5	▲ 31.8
Lower Atlantic	175.8	▲ 4.1	▲ 32.4
Midwest	178.1	▲ 4.3	▲ 30.7
Gulf Coast	175.6	▲ 3.4	▲ 30.9
Rocky Mountain	184.9	▲ 2.6	▲ 34.4
West Coast	203.0	▼ -0.6	▲ 38.2
California	211.3	▼ -0.2	▲ 39.8

prices on the horizon.

Higher prices may, in fact, be coming. Crude oil futures have been trading in the \$42-to-\$44 a barrel range, the highest level since oil futures began trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange in 1983. Legal issues with a Russian oil producer, ongoing concerns over terrorism and record demand have pushed crude prices to new levels.

On the plus side, Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil company, said it started production at two new fields in Saudi Arabia three months ahead of schedule and may delay the shutdown of older wells to help meet increased oil demand.

The Department of Energy said gasoline supplies gained 2.4 million barrels to 210.1 million, the highest since February 2003. That resulted in an easing of gasoline prices at the retail pump to a national average of \$1.88 a gallon.

## Test not required until driver hired

WASHINGTON — Federal regulations specify that before a motorcoach driver can transport passengers in interstate commerce, he or she must have passed a drug test.

But does that mean a driver must have taken and passed a drug test before he or she completes a road test as part of the hiring process?

Or, does an individual who is applying for a job as a driver have to successfully pass a drug test before they've actually been hired?

The answer to both of those questions is no, says the administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Annette M. Sandberg.

Drivers must have a negative drug test before they take the wheel with paying passengers sitting behind them. It's not mandatory they have one before then, according to Sandberg.

Sandberg offered her interpretation

of the rule in response to a request submitted by Consolidated Safety Services Inc. of Fairfax, Va., on behalf of the North Carolina Motorcoach Association; Carolina American Tours of Greensboro, N.C.; the United Motorcoach Association, and the American Bus Association.

The issue arose when school bus authorities in North Carolina hired an inspector to conduct pre-business audits of motorcoach operators that want to conduct charters on behalf of schools in North Carolina.

The overzealous inspector was failing coach operators for not conducting drug tests on drivers that haven't completed the hiring process or been road tested.

Bradford Watkins, assistant project manager for Consolidated Safety Services, in a letter of Sandberg posed the following question: "Must a pre-employment

(drug) test and results, as specifically required by (49 CFR Part 382.301, be completed and provided to a motor carrier prior to the road test, when one is conducted, required by 49 CFR Part 391.31?"

In her response, Sandberg said the rules specify that "an employer must obtain a verified negative controlled-substance test result prior to dispatching a driver on his or her first trip." "His or her first trip" is set apart from the road testing activity and is therefore treated differently in the matter of pre-employment testing, said Sandberg.

The road test required by federal regulations, she continued, is separate from an actual dispatch on a road trip. The drug test requirement set out in the federal rules is not required until a job offer is made and before the driver's performance of the first safety sensitive function, Sandberg added.

## NTSB recommends recorders for autos

WASHINGTON — The National Transportation Safety Board wants the federal government to require data recorders, or "black boxes," in all individual passenger vehicles so speed, seat belt use, braking and other factors will be recorded.

The recommendation appears to be at odds with a statement earlier this summer from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration which said it saw no need to require black boxes in vehicles because automakers are adding them voluntarily to more models.

The NTSB, which only has the power to investigate and recommend, did not mention commercial vehicles in its recommendation.

The NHTSA says that between 65 and 90 percent of 2004-model vehicles have some sort of recording ability, and about 15 percent have data recorders. Any requirement would have to be imposed by the NHTSA.

The highway safety agency has proposed that by September 2008, recorders be able to collect up to

42 data elements, including the time it takes for air bags to deploy.

The NTSB recommendation arose from an investigation into a crash last year in Santa Monica, Calif. Safety investigators were unable to interview the elderly driver who stepped on the gas pedal instead of the brake, plowing into an open-air market, killing 10 people and injuring more than 60.

The board concluded investigators could have gained a better scientific understanding of the driver's behavior had his vehicle been outfitted with an event data recorder.

Proponents of black boxes in passenger vehicles say they could provide investigators with an exhaustive database that could highlight flaws in auto and road designs.

Critics worry about who would get access to the information.

AAA, the nation's largest auto club, says it would support requiring black boxes only if protections were in place to assure the data are used just for safety research and can't be traced to specific drivers.

## Animals blamed for 26,000 vehicle crashes annually

ATLANTA — Critters, from deer to squirrels, are to blame for more than 26,000 injuries along the nation's roads each year, the federal government reports.

For the first time, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has examined how many people suffer nonfatal injuries in accidents involving animals. The CDC says 9 out of 10 car-animal accidents involve deer.

In half of the animal-related accidents surveyed in 2001-02, motorists were injured by hitting the animal, while the other half were hurt when they swerved to avoid hitting the animals, said Ann Dellinger of CDC's motor vehicle injury prevention team.

"We can't really say whether it's better to brake or better to swerve and avoid the animal," Dellinger said. "You have to drive responsibly."

An article in the May 15 issue

of *Bus & Motorcoach News*, quoted the Maine Department of Transportation as urging driver to aim for the tail of a deer or moose if a crash is unavoidable. That supposedly reduces the chances of an antlered animal crashing through the windshield.

Each year, about 200 people die in animal-related crashes out of the nearly 44,000 traffic fatalities nationwide. There were 247,000 crashes involving animals in 2000, according to the latest federal highway data available.

Although most accidents involve deer, the CDC study also found that cows, squirrels, bears, dogs and raccoons are frequently involved.

The CDC said putting tall fences at deer crossings and channeling deer to underpasses would help reduce incidents, but noted the cost might be prohibitive for many public road budgets.

## Delco Remy changes name

ANDERSON, Ind. — Vehicle parts maker Delco Remy International Inc. has changed its corporate name to Remy International Inc.

Delco said in a statement that August marks the 10th anniversary of it becoming a separate company from General Motors Corp.

It said it would continue to market starters and heavy-duty alternators for original equipment and aftermarket customers under the Delco Remy trademark, which is licensed to the company by GM.

The company headquarters and technical center will remain in Anderson.

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## OPINION

# Trading down to trade up

A new study by a management consulting group suggests consumer spending is polarizing across a number of industries. Consumers are trading up to more luxurious goods in areas that matter to them, while trading down and shopping for bargains in areas that matter less.

When trading up, consumers are willing to pay more for high-quality branded products and services. They fund their high-priced purchases by trading down and seeking the lowest-cost items — often switching brands or buying private-label products — in categories that matter less.

This trend has important implications for a number of industries. For example, traditional grocery chains are caught between discounters like Costco that offer much lower prices (but less variety) and stores like Whole Foods that have a higher quality offering.

The Boston Consulting Group, a management consultancy, released a report last month that examines this trend across several product categories — everything from transportation to beer. The report is an update on the book *Trading Up: The New American Luxury* that two of the consulting group's partners published last year.

The report includes an in-depth discussion of the travel industry, with a particular focus on a seemingly unlikely segment: over-the-road bus transportation. The study authors say bus travel provides an outstanding illustration of the polarization of consumer spending.

Traditionally, bus travel has been dominated by standardized,

one-size-fits-all offerings from Greyhound, the Trailways affiliates, and a handful of other regional operators.

However, in the competitive Boston-to-New York market, customers have an opportunity to shift their spending away from these traditional offerings.

At the high end of the spectrum is LimoLiner, a luxury bus service whose coaches seat 28, in comparison to the 55-seat capacity of a conventional 45-foot coach. (See story on Page 1.)

Launched last October, LimoLiner charges \$138 round-trip, more than double the \$55 charged by Greyhound (but significantly less than the airline shuttles). LimoLiner provides roomy leather seats, Internet access, TV, power outlets and an on-board concierge.

At the other end of the spectrum is Fung Wah Bus. This service has been carrying passengers from Chinatown in Boston to Chinatown in New York for \$10 for the past eight years. The seats on Fung Wah are cramped, there are no on-board services, and there is no terminal at either end — passengers are picked up and dropped off curbside.

But, the company claims to be the largest bus service operating between New York and Boston.

The Boston Consulting Group report suggests that traditional demand curve economics don't always hold. In Economics 101, we were taught the demand curve is fundamental in a competitive market. There is a trade-off between price and quantity, and companies either have a high-price, low-vol-

ume niche of an industry, or they sell large quantities at a relatively low price.

The Boston consultants make the point that if companies are able to tap into a polarization of customer spending, they can sell a higher-priced product and increase volumes at the same time.

Starbucks is the classic example. Coffee consumption in the U.S. was decreasing before Starbucks entered the market; since its entrance, the volume of coffee sold in the U.S. has increased despite the fact that a cup of coffee at Starbucks can easily cost more than \$3.

Profits are weighted at the ends of the spectrum. The consultants estimate that in most product categories, new luxury goods (goods on which consumers are splurging) account for only about 20 percent of industry volume, but as much as 60 percent of profits. At the same time, the low-cost end of the spectrum can also be highly profitable for companies with the leanest cost structures, as Wal-Mart and Southwest Airlines have clearly demonstrated.

Though still not yet readily evident in all consumer segments of the economy, the polarization of customer spending appears to be a fundamental and growing trend.

The next time you find yourself shelling out \$60 for a ticket to a Cyndi Lauper concert and show up for the event in slacks you had dry cleaned for \$1.75, it may be worth thinking about where you personally trade up and trade down, and whether there is an application to segments of your business.

# Highway Watch continues to gear up operations

WASHINGTON — In its report on the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the 9/11 Commission concluded that the absence of information about potential threats and the inability of intelligence and law enforcement agencies to share information effectively rendered the U.S. blind to what was about to happen.

With this in mind, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration — under the Department of Homeland Security — is trying to bridge the gap between law enforcement agencies and those in the private sector that may hold missing pieces to the puzzle known as counterterrorism intelligence.

Specifically, the TSA has established the Highway Information Sharing and Analysis Center and it has reoriented the American Trucking Associations' Highway Watch Program.

Although the Highway Watch program began in 1998 as an ATA highway safety initiative, the program has been expanded to link transportation professionals with law enforcement and the intelligence community in an effort that works to reduce the possibility that a commercial vehicle is ever used as a weapon.

Highway Watch is training truck and bus drivers, truck stop operators and other transportation personnel to identify and report suspicious activity that may be considered a security threat.

This could include reporting stolen buses or trucks, suspicious surveillance activity of critical infrastructure or suspicious persons

renting commercial vehicles without the proper identification.

The goal is to train more than 400,000 sets of eyes to monitor the nation's highways. In addition, the establishment of the Highway Watch Hotline allows the trained individuals to report suspicious activity. Calls are taken at the program's call center, where professionals collect relevant information such as location, time and descriptions.

This information is then reported to local authorities who can quickly respond to and investigate any irregularities.

The information also is sent to intelligence analysts at the Highway Information Sharing and Analysis Center at the TSA operations center. They in turn collate, analyze and disseminate any relevant incidents originating from the Highway Watch call center.

In addition, these analysts have access to other information resources, such as law enforcement contacts and private sector businesses that may have otherwise remained untapped by the intelligence community.

Together with colleagues from federal agencies such as the FBI, ATF and the military, these analysts can begin to detect patterns and trends that may give vital information concerning the where, when and how terrorists may strike.

If you would like to participate or know more about the Highway Watch or the Highway ISAC, go to the ISAC website at [www.highway-isac.org](http://www.highway-isac.org) or send an e-mail to [hwisac@trucking.org](mailto:hwisac@trucking.org).

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## Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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# New FMCSA hiring rules challenge to operators

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Two new rules from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration will soon have a substantial impact on the way motor carriers hire new drivers and put them to work, says a hiring specialist.

Adam Mertz, a senior manager for Beaverton, Ore.-based Unicru Inc., which markets sophisticated hiring systems, says the FMCSA's new Safety Performance History and Driver Investigation History Files regulations, should help operators make better hiring decisions but present administrative challenges. Writing in *Transport Topics*, a leading trucking industry publication, Mertz has a few suggestions for helping separate the good from the bad.

The rule on safety performance history for new drivers changes an important step in the hiring process by adding requirements for motor carriers to verify the driving and employment history of new drivers for the past three years. Plus, carriers must now also verify accident involvement, a driver's alcohol and controlled substance history, and any drug and alcohol rehabilitation efforts and/or failed efforts.

While carriers must respond within 30 days to a request for this information made by a driver's new employer, the American Trucking

Associations has petitioned the FMCSA requesting a change to five days.

The Driver Investigation History Files rule, which is scheduled to take effect Oct. 29, requires carriers to create a driver investigation history file for a holder of a commercial driver license whenever the carrier performs a background investigation of a driver applicant. The file is to be kept with the driver's employment record, and is to follow him from employer to employer and contain at least three years employment history, background on any traffic violations and results of any previous drug or alcohol tests.

These new rules are already testing motor carriers, says Mertz, adding that just managing the employment verification process can be a major challenge.

Employees who might not remember their full work history, misstatements on applications and even poor handwriting are just a few of the headaches faced by operators, contributing to a constant back-and-forth between recruiters, applicants and other carriers as they seek to verify a driver's safety history, according to Mertz.

Given there will always be new and evolving FMCSA rules, Mertz says there isn't a silver bullet to

"...just managing the employment verification process can be a major challenge."

solve the entire problem. However, he says that with the aid of technology and solid business processes, operators can remove some of the sting from the paper-intensive process and focus on improved internal communication and productivity in the hiring process. Here are a few best-practice

suggestions from Mertz:

**Hiring Management Technology.** Utilize technology to automate the hiring and starting processes. Not only can technology streamline these steps but it can also eliminate a great deal of paperwork and administrative burden.

**Prioritize.** Prioritization is the key to maximizing recruiting efficiency. Develop a system that assures that the "hottest" prospects — those with the highest potential to pass your checks — are highlighted. Automated assessments and other pre-qualification tools that illustrate a driver's potential impact to your organization can be used early in the application process to help define a driver's

priority.

**Databases.** Utilize and integrate third-party companies into your hiring workflow that have employee-verification databases. By scanning these databases for previous verified work histories, you can save time and money by immediately seeing results rather than waiting for a carrier's response.

While presenting new challenges to the industry, Mertz says the new rules also present an opportunity for carriers to restructure their hiring processes and technology infrastructure with a focus on finding and hiring the highest quality drivers — drivers who will be around for years to come.

## MCI touts benefits of online warranty system

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — Motor Coach Industries says its new online warranty tracking system is already providing benefits to operators.

MCI's Customer Care online warranty tracking system was created to simplify the warranty claims process for operators by eliminating time-consuming paperwork. Operators can use the system to file a claim, order replacement parts and check on reimbursement status.

However, the system also reports customer warranty claims and issues to MCI's manufacturing and engineering divisions. MCI says the claims data are reviewed by

company engineers for ways to refine vehicles. "Already, the system has helped MCI improve new-coach quality — in effect, addressing many potential warranty issues before they ever affect operators," says MCI.

To use the online system, customers with coaches still in warranty register by phone with MCI's warranty department — (800) 241-2947. Customers are given a password, allowing them to use the system for filing or tracking a claim.

MCI Chief Executive Tom Sorrells said the company is committed to providing easy access to its aftermarket services.

## Dana to sell aftermarket business

TOLEDO, Ohio — Dana Corporation, a long-time supplier to the motorcoach industry, has signed a definitive agreement to sell its automotive aftermarket business to The Cypress Group for approximately \$1.1 billion in cash.

The sale includes 52 facilities employing about 13,000 people. Combined annual sales for these operations totaled approximately \$2 billion last year. The transaction involves several replacement product brands including Raybestos brakes.

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## INDUSTRY NEWS



## Red Arrow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

success is due to the personal touch and quality service passengers get when they travel on one of Red Arrow's coaches.

Colborne, on the other hand, points to the company's efforts to market its service to more than just the business community. "We attract students, seniors, the disabled and unaccompanied children," he said. "If we had focused only on the business traveler, I don't think we would have survived."

Red Arrow, which offers six daily runs from Edmonton and Calgary and also has twice-daily service from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, puts quite a punch into its service.

The company uses 45-foot Prevost coaches that have been modified to accommodate 36 passengers in over-sized seats — all leather in some coaches — in a two-plus-one configuration.

"The aisles are two-foot wide," noted Trudell.

The coaches offer television and movie monitors, credit card-activated cell phones, a fax machine and a galley where customers can help themselves to coffee, tea, sodas, juices, cookies, crackers, breadsticks and other snacks. Each seat is equipped with an individual electric port for a laptop computer and headsets for the entertainment system. And, there's even a daily newspaper to read.

The company also offers a reservation service that can be accessed by telephone or the Internet; discount fares for frequent travelers, students and passengers who bring along a friend, and a pay-the-driver option for last-minute travelers. Car rental and hotel packages, city and national park sightseeing tours and depot-to-depot and door-to-door parcel delivery service also are available.

"It's real quality service," emphasized Trudell.

The special attention provided passengers actually was what allowed Red Arrow to begin offering the service back in 1979.

Colborne said the company needed the blessing of government regulators at the time to begin running between Edmonton and Calgary and had to prove that the proposed service would not compete with Greyhound Canada, which already operated service between the two cities.

"We proved it by showing that our type of coach was different than Greyhound's and we would not be going after the same type of customers that Greyhound had," he said. "We said we did not want to be the travel of last resort as Greyhound was."

Greyhound fought the proposal, but after a 45-day hearing, the regulators sided with Red Arrow and allowed the company to go ahead with its luxury service.



Mike Colborne



Joel Trudell

While business travelers were the main target of the service — and still are today — others have joined the ridership mix. The men and women who ride the coach regularly to business appointments and meetings in Edmonton or Calgary, now share the 200-mile trip with young people who attend the universities and colleges in the two cities, senior citizens, families and unaccompanied children.

Colborne said unaccompanied children have become a big part of the weekend runs, many of which are sold out regularly.

"There are a lot of divorced parents who live in Edmonton and Calgary and every weekend our coaches have numerous children riding alone to visit one of their parents," he said.

Red Arrow allows children to travel alone if they are between the ages of 6 and 12 and those under 6 to travel if they are accompanied by someone 13 or older. Also, a maximum of three youngsters per family are permitted to travel before adult supervision is required.

Colborne said the number of businesswomen using the service also has grown substantially over the years and they now make up a large portion of the weekday ridership. "Women see the service as productive and safe," he said. "They can reserve a single seat (under the two plus one seating arrangement) and know that they won't be harassed by someone."

Red Arrow passengers, many of whom ride weekly or even more often, have become the company's biggest marketing tool.

While the company buys radio and television spots and does promotions at community events and business conferences, it has found that the best method of getting the word out is from riders talking up the service to others.

"Our most effective form of any type of media or advertising definitely has been word of mouth," Trudell said. "Every year, that beats any amount of money we spend on radio or TV advertising or any other promotions."

It's all been good, too. Not only did the company reach its 25<sup>th</sup> year last month, but it is drawing riders in near record numbers. "We're having a banner year," said Trudell. "If it is not the best ever, then it is coming very close to it."

He said that while an upturn in the motorcoach industry in Alberta and much of Canada has helped with the surge in ridership, the high price of gasoline also has been a major contributor. "In my conversations with customers, I am finding that people are getting tired of paying the price at the pump and they know the service we offer, so they are using us as an alternative to driving."

With all of that success behind it, is Red Arrow looking to spread its good fortune further?

"We've kicked around possibly expanding from time to time, but right now we don't have any plans to do so," said Trudell. "Our main focus is to concentrate on our current market and get everything just right."

It seems like they may have already done that.

## Prevost opens facility in northern New Jersey

SOUTH PLAINFIELD, N.J. — Prevost Car officially opens a state-of-the-art parts and service center here this month. The 58,800-square-foot facility replaces Prevost's long-time service center in Lyndhurst, N.J.

The service area of the new complex occupies nearly 15,000 square feet and has eight service bays. Service at the New Jersey branch runs the gamut of coach, motorhome and transit bus repairs. In addition, accident repairs, comprehensive renovation projects for large fleets and a wide array of other services also are available.

The center's parts warehouse occupies almost 39,000 square feet of space and is managed through an automated inventory handling process known as a radio frequency inventory management system. It provides real-time inventory updates.

Additionally, a wire guidance warehouse system is being used to increase warehouse capacity and parts availability. To minimize delivery time and increase accuracy, the inventory management system interfaces with the shipping companies' software.

New Warehouse Manager Mike Feretich said the facility's

in-stock inventory includes more than 25,000 parts for coach and transit vehicles. Plus, there are OEM parts for most makes of coaches and transit buses, as well as parts for motorhome and other specialty conversions.

"Whether it's a matter of preventive maintenance or performing small or large accident repairs, customers will be in good hands with our experienced and well-trained personnel," said Service Manager Anthony Cirillo, who was hired to manage the new facility. "We work on all makes and models of coaches," Cirillo added.

Customers waiting for a vehicle the customer lounge, which has cable television, coffee machine and Internet access.

The facility also is headquarters for Dan Marrazzo, Sue Evans and Tony Febbo from the Prevost new coach and pre-owned sales' departments.

The address of the new center is 201 South Avenue in South Plainfield, which is situated in the triangle formed by Interstates 78 and 287 and the Garden State Parkway — just east of Piscataway.

The local phone number is (908) 222-7211, and the toll-free number is (800) 223-0830.

## Bailey

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The coach will travel the East Coast for the next 16 months as it's chartered by Bailey Travel customers. When it is not being chartered, it will be used as a mobile billboard at malls, on public squares and along roadsides, promoting the games.

The bus even played a key role in revealing the news that York had been named host city for the games. A media event to announce the selection featured the wrapped coach rolling into the York Expo Center and dignitaries disembark-

ing for the announcement.

"It was really, really neat," says John Bailey.

The Bailey Coach represents the first time a wrapped bus has been used to promote the games.

The Keystone Games feature multi-sport competition, providing amateur athletes an opportunity to compete against others throughout the state in the Summer Games, a Winter Sports Festival and the Pennsylvania Senior Games. Between 15,000 and 20,000 people will attend.

Modeled after the Olympics, the games are expected to boost the local York economy by \$21 million.

## Rimrock stages

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Eastbound, Rimrock will arrive in Fargo at 2:05 p.m. to connect with Greyhound's eastbound bus to Minneapolis that leaves at 3:30 p.m.

Service north and south of Fargo on Interstate 29 is provided by Jefferson Lines of Minneapolis.

Tom Forseth, president of Rimrock Stages, said his company felt compelled to take over the service to protect its existing route system

in Montana. "We want to do this because we think we can do it profitably," he said. "But, second, we have to do it in order to preserve our schedule base here in Montana."

Still, Forseth is gambling. "We're really going to have to scramble to make this work," he said.

Rimrock serves major Montana cities, including Billings, Great Falls, Kalispell, Missoula, Butte and Helena, and many smaller communities in between.

## 25 coaches from ABC go to Belize

BELIZE CITY — The premier tour operator in the Central American country of Belize is expanding its motorcoach fleet with the acquisition of more than two dozen used coaches from ABC Companies of Faribault, Minn.

Cruise Solutions Belize Ltd., which was formed five years ago to develop and promote cruise-ship tourism in Belize, is upgrading its fleet with the addition of 25 40-foot MCI 102A3s.

The 47-passenger coaches will allow thousands of cruise-line passengers to travel in clean, air-conditioned comfort when they come ashore for excursions ranging from exploring ancient Mayan ruins, to biking, to horseback riding, to birding, to city tours.

Tourism is flourishing in Belize, which is the northern-most country in Central America.

Cruise Solutions was formed by long-time Belizean tourism leader David Gegg, who set up one of the first tour companies in Belize more than 20 years ago. In addition to its many land-based excursions, Cruise Solutions also offers expeditions involving snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking and canoeing, and airplane sightseeing.

“Our destination offers a wealth of cultural, historical and recreational activities,” says Gegg, who is managing director of Cruise Solutions. “As our operation continues to evolve we want to reflect that vitality in the service we provide. Our mission is to offer cruise-

line executives and their travelers the best possible customer experience through services that meet the highest expectations for safety, convenience and reliability.”

Ron Cornell, president and CEO of ABC, said the Cruise Solutions expansion represents an important partnership for both companies. “We can make equipment readily accessible anywhere around the globe, but more importantly we can support operations with advanced maintenance and fleet service.”

ABC’s deal with Cruise Solutions includes a service agreement that assures the Belize company of greater performance and minimal downtime for its newly acquired equipment.



### Coach Canada Peterborough, Ont.

Coach Canada has upgraded its operation with the purchase of 16 new Prevost H3-45 motorcoaches, bringing the total number of Prevosts in its fleet to 55.

The Canadian affiliate of Coach USA, which bills itself as a one-stop shop for ground transportation, offers scheduled service and chartered tours, as well as specialized bus services.

James Devlin, president of Coach Canada, said the new Prevost coaches are appealing to both the company and potential customers. “I find the Prevost motorcoaches are good performing

vehicles that are easy to maintain. In addition, they have great curb-side appeal and that’s important. Potential customers notice them on the road.”

Coach Canada’s new Prevosts are equipped with Detroit Diesel Series 60 cooled-EGR engines, Allison B500 transmissions, Jake Brakes, Prevost seating, Carrier A/C systems, REI five-monitor A/V systems, Isringhausen driver seats, and Goodyear tires.

While Coach Canada’s head office is in Peterborough, the company has a presence in major cities of Ontario and Quebec.



### David Thomas Tours Philadelphia

David Benedict, president of David Thomas Tours and Travel, said he wanted the top of line when he purchased his latest coach, so he bought another MCI E4500. “That’s what we like.”

The company, which has been around for 27 years, has a fleet of 14 MCI coaches, including three other E4500s.

“Our focus is on delivering the latest, well-maintained fleet and professional service to consistently make our customer’s experience the best,” said Benedict. “Our most important service is not low-price; it is service and quality.”

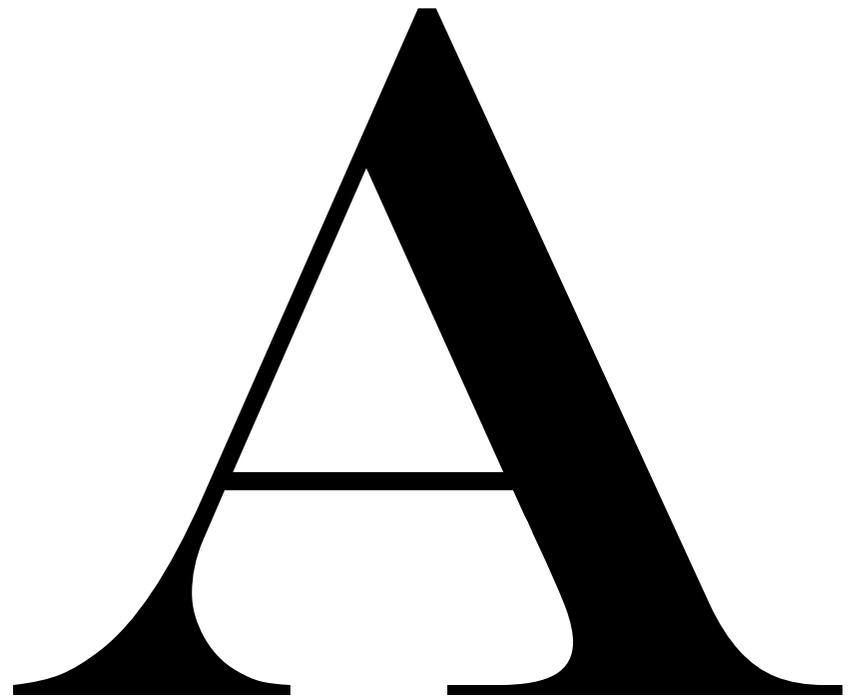
David Thomas Tours’ newest E4500 is equipped with a Ricon wheelchair lift and Caterpillar C-13 engine. It features a REI A/V system with six flat-screen monitors, National seating, Alcoa wheels, Carrier A/C, Isringhausen driver seat, Allison B500 transmis-

sion, and Jake Brake.

Tours promoted by David Thomas Tours run the Mid Atlantic gamut, including such favorites as its Baltimore-area seafood buffets, plus gospel, comedy and cruise variations on the all-you-can-eat seafood theme.

Even with the industry-wide setbacks of the past three years, Benedict has seen his business grow, posting a 10 percent increase last year. He expects to carry as many as 30,000 passengers by the end of this year.

Benedict is proud that upwards of 90 percent of his drivers have joined the company through referral, and he’s happy to reward them for their good work. And, in a move Benedict considers good both for business and for drivers, he prices trips and pays according to actual miles — no deadheading. It’s fair, he maintains.



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## INDUSTRY NEWS



## Limoliner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

McCann's total investment in LimoLiner is upwards of \$2.5 million.

To gauge its marketing success for yourself, do a Google search for LimoLiner on the Internet. The amount of publicity is little short of astounding. LimoLiner has even found a niche among Internet bloggers. Techno-geek bloggers like to ride LimoLiner and broadcast their impressions of the trip via the Internet as they roll through the Connecticut countryside. LimoLiner offers on-board internet service.

Once it gets someone new on board, LimoLiner focuses on getting them to come back, and to bring a friend or business associate with them the next time they travel. To do that, the company flaunts its first-class equipment, first-class service and competitive pricing scheme.

LimoLiner's equipment includes top-of-the-line MCI E4500 coaches that have been dramatically redone to include 18 reclining leather seats with foot rests in a two-plus one configuration in the front of the coach, a galley in the center, 10 more leather seats with two large worktables in the rear, and a restroom with hot and cold running water.

"Those big leather seats are the biggest plus that our customers mention when we ask them about LimoLiner," said McCann.

Onboard amenities include satellite television and radio, contemporary movies, charger ports for cellular telephones, and outlets that power laptop computers and connect them to the Internet. There's also an attendant who provides passengers with newspapers, magazines, pillows and blankets and serves them light meals and a variety of snacks and hot and cold drinks.

"You just don't get that kind of service on the train or the plane," noted McCann.

The \$138 roundtrip fare for the luxury trip stacks up well against the \$198 that the Amtrak Acela Express charges for a roundtrip ticket on its commuter trains and the \$247 that the airlines typically charge for their shuttle flights.

In addition, LimoLiner riders get special rates and discounts at hotels in New York and frequent riders build mileage that can be used for discount travel tickets. Also, riders who bring along a companion get extra mileage and their friend gets double mileage.

For some business passengers, the triple offering of good equipment, service and prices has been an easy sell.

"Our entire sales team recently traveled to New

York aboard the LimoLiner and raved about the experience," said Linda Szymialis, sales manager of Boston radio station WMJX. "I was especially pleased because the trip was not only comfortable but it was also productive. We were able to check our e-mail, hold a team meeting and even watch a training video."

Craig Conti, president of the Boston-based Charles Technology Group, said he has been talking up the service to business associates since he gave up waiting in airports, sitting in cramped seats on planes and enduring unpleasant taxi rides, and became a LimoLiner regular. "The LimoLiner provides a first-class seat allowing me to get my e-mail out of the way, read the paper and catch up on the news or a movie," he noted. "The cabin attendant and driver are both professional and friendly and the food should be an example for what should be offered by airlines and trains."

Leisure travelers, too, have discovered the service and have been climbing aboard in increasing numbers, according to McCann. "I think our price has been the main reason they have been riding with us," he said, adding that nonbusiness travelers now account for close to half the ridership.

While the price has been an important part of the attractiveness of the service, it also has been the Achilles heel for the company that is not doing as well financially as it would like. "Our \$69 one-way fare was an introductory offer for us to get established and we wanted it to be attractive," he explained. "But that's one of the reasons we have not been able to break even yet because it is difficult to make money at that price."

Although LimoLiner is a small company, McCann indicated expenses probably run well ahead of most motorcoach companies its size. In addition to the elevated cost of its upgraded coaches — about \$600,000 each — the company has to pay for two onboard employees rather than just one, the food and drink service and a seven-day, 24-hour telephone reservation service.

To try to fix the problem, McCann said the fare will have to be increased soon, even though it could result in a decline in leisure ridership. "Maybe the percentage of leisure riders will decline as the price rises, but we will have to do it sooner or later," he said.

The third coach being added to the fleet could help bolster revenue, too. With three luxury coaches, McCann said he will be able to increase the limited amount of corporate charter work it is now doing. "It will give us more flexibility," he said.

In addition to juggling the fare structure, the company probably will have to add more daily trips to its schedule as well.

McCann said the biggest concern he hears from business customers is the limited number of weekday trips the company offers. "Having only four a day is not enough for business people whose plans can change constantly," he said. "If they get out of a meeting early they don't want to wait around until 6 p.m. to go back."

The lack of frequency results in some would-be LimoLiner customers turning to the train, which runs hourly during most of the day.

While McCann would like to see his company grow, he's not looking to expand the service to other cities just yet. "The New York and Boston route is the key route in North America for business travelers," he said. "I think any other markets would be very difficult to make work."

## ABC expands Web ability with online parts ordering

FARIBAULT, Minn. — ABC Companies has expanded its e-commerce capability to include online ordering from its parts division, ABC Parts Source.

The new system enables customers to use their personal computers to easily and quickly search, view, price, order and track a comprehensive range of parts and accessories, says ABC.

"The new online system is designed to provide customers with a cost-effective alternative to traditional parts ordering," said Tim Guldin, vice president and general manager of ABC Parts Source. "It features accurate, up-to-date pricing, as well as a host of user-friendly tools, including comprehensive online parts catalogs and convenient search and sort links to help customers expedite and track parts orders."

Another feature of the system allows users to build "draft orders" during the day, meaning the order can be modified with additions, deletions or changes right up until

it is finished and submitted.

"This added functionality offers a significant time-saver for customers who want to maximize flexibility to create custom orders or make last-minute changes," said Guldin.

Web-based orders placed for available inventory are shipped within 24 hours — just like regular phone-in orders.

ABC expects to continue making improvements to the online system, focusing on enhancements that will further simplify the process and ease navigation.

The Online Parts Ordering system is available by clicking on the link at [www.abc-companies.com](http://www.abc-companies.com), and completing the online registration. ABC's Customer Care Call Center — (877) 427-7278 — can provide technical assistance or answer questions about accessing or using the site.

ABC Parts Source supplies original OEM and aftermarket parts.

## Security

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

targeting the Citigroup Center building and the New York Stock Exchange in New York, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank buildings in Washington and Prudential Financial Inc.'s headquarters in Newark.

The extensive street closings in Washington became the subject of considerable grousing, not only by motorcoach operators but others as well.

The complaints centered on the fact the street closings appeared to be a knee-jerk reaction rather than based on sound intelligence or logical thinking.

Ridge identified only two buildings in Washington as being on the terrorists' watch list, but police forces that guard many other buildings in the vicinity of the Capitol decided they would get in on the action and close streets around the buildings under their protection.

That meant, for example, that buildings like the U.S. Treasury, which wasn't on the terrorists' list, suddenly became fortresses.

The U.S. Capitol Police has released a list of Washington streets where increased security, including vehicle screening checkpoints and street closures, is in effect. There are now several checkpoints for vehicles accessing the Capitol

grounds. Here are the vehicle security checkpoint locations:

- Second Street and C Street, NE
- Second Street at Constitution Avenue, NE
- Second Street and Maryland Avenue, NE
- Maryland and Constitution Crossover, NE
- Second Street and A Street, NE
- Second Street at East Capitol Street, NE
- Second at East Capitol Street, SE
- Independence Avenue Second Street, SE
- Independence Avenue and Washington Avenue, SW
- Maryland Avenue and Third Street, SW
- Pennsylvania Avenue and Third Street, NW
- Constitution and Louisiana Avenue, NW
- First Street at Louisiana Avenue, NW
- New Jersey Avenue and C Street, NW

The following street will be closed: First Street NE between Constitution Avenue and D Street NE

The Capitol Police is encouraging anyone traveling near these areas to utilize alternate routes.

Questions about the new procedures can be directed to the Capitol Police Public Information Office at (202) 224-1677.

## Edwin Wilbanks: Tour bus owner dies in crash

CORNELIA, Ga. — Edwin O. Wilbanks, a business man who developed a love for the motorcoach industry at the age of 55, was killed late last month when the bus he was driving apparently caused a multi-vehicle wreck.

Mr. Wilbanks, 69, had operated BOWA Trails Inc. of Cornelia and Kingston, Ga., as well as Jacksonville, Fla., since acquiring the company in 1990. He also owned Cornelia Tractor & Implement, a farm equipment business he had operated since 1964.

Mr. Wilbanks was pronounced dead at the scene of a four-vehicle crash involving the coach he was driving on Interstate 20 near Columbia, S.C.

Also killed in the wreck was the driver of an auto; 51 others were hurt, said Lance Cpl. J.M. Robinson of the South Carolina Highway Patrol. The pileup involved a pickup truck, a tractor-trailer, a automobile and the motorcoach.

"They were all stopped in traffic on I-20," Robinson said. "Then, for some reason — unknown and still under investigation — the bus struck the Ford Focus, slamming the Ford Focus under the tractor-

trailer. The tractor-trailer then struck the pickup. The driver of the Ford Focus and the driver of the passenger bus were fatally injured," Robinson added.

The incident occurred about 2:30 p.m. in the westbound lanes of I-20. The coach Mr. Wilbanks was driving was carrying a family back home from a reunion.

Mr. Wilbanks purchased BOWA Trails from a relative early in 1990, when it had two buses. Today, the company has 10 coaches and offers tour and charter service nationwide.

"Edwin loved to drive his bus," said John Klappmeyer, BOWA Trails general manager. "He was a good man." Because of his love for driving, Mr. Wilbanks included himself in the normal rotation of drivers.

Mr. Wilbanks was a deacon and member of Level Grove Baptist Church and a U.S. Army veteran.

Survivors include his wife of nearly 49 years, Mozelle; two sons, Donald and Danny, and a sister, Patricia DeWitt.

A memorial has been established in Mr. Wilbanks name at the Level Grove Baptist Church, P.O. Box 416, Cornelia, GA 30531.

## Hands-free cell phones no safer

WASHINGTON — New research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and others has found that using hands-free cellular telephones while driving may actually add to the overall risk, compared with holding a cell phone, *The Wall Street Journal* reports.

*The Journal* said research has found that headsets and speaker-phones do not improve safety because it's the mental distraction of talking on the phone, not simply holding the devices, that causes the most danger while driving.

In addition, the devices could actually increase risk by encourag-

ing people to spend more time on their cell phones and drive faster while doing so, the *Journal* noted.

Last month, New Jersey and Washington, D.C., joined New York in requiring drivers to use headsets or other so-called hands-free devices when they talk on cell phones.

## FAA wants fewer flights to O'Hare

CHICAGO — Federal aviation officials are threatening to limit commercial flights in and out of Chicago's O'Hare airport to reduce delays that are causing congestion throughout the nation's aviation system.

Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Marion Blakey

said the agency could take that step if airlines do not agree to cut their schedules voluntarily.

Flight cutbacks at O'Hare could impact many Midwest bus companies that operate shuttle services to the giant airport from communities throughout the region.

Chicago is the nation's prime

connecting hub. Delays at the airport, many of which are caused by bad weather, ripple through the aviation system, causing backups at other airports.

There were nearly 59,000 delays at O'Hare this year through June. A flight is considered delayed when it is at least 15 minutes late.

## Passengers, Greyhound driver killed in rear-end collision

JACKSON, Tenn. — A Greyhound coach rammed into a tractor-trailer as the truck was pulling back onto Interstate 40, killing the bus driver and two passengers.

Seventeen other passengers in the coach were taken to hospitals.

The incident occurred just outside Jackson, in western Tennessee, at about 4:30 a.m. Aug. 6.

The bus driver was Thomas Dickerson, 48, of Memphis. Two passengers, Charlotte Thompson, 76, of Cincinnati, and Willie Walker, about 60, of Detroit, also died.

"The bus ran into the back of the trailer...The tractor-trailer was in the emergency lane and pulled back onto the interstate," said Highway Patrol Sgt. Glenn Taylor. "We don't know why the bus ran into the truck."

Two men in the truck — driver Alex Yu Chang of Diamond Bar, Calif., and Kevin Lin of Walnut, Calif. — were not injured. The tractor-trailer is owned by Coastal

Group Corp. of Industry, Calif., and Trans-USA.

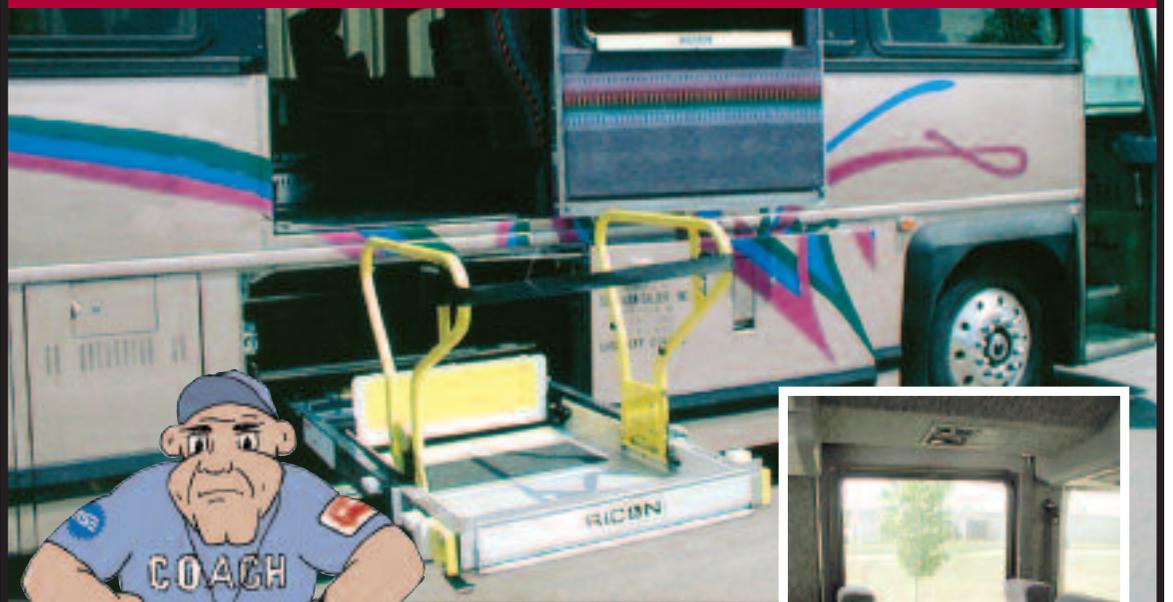
The crash happened in the westbound lanes. The impact pushed the truck across the median and into the eastbound lanes, but no other accidents occurred. The weather was dry and clear.

The bus was enroute from Louisville, Ky., to Memphis. It had made its regular stop in Jackson just before the crash.

The incident is similar to two others that prompted the National Transportation Safety Board to launch an investigation of motorcoaches slamming into the back of tractor-trailer rigs pulling onto highways.

The NTSB announced at the end of May it would investigate a May 24 crash near Houston involving a coach returning from a casino run. It slammed into a tractor-trailer that was pulling back onto an interstate. And the NTSB will probe a similar crash that happened Oct. 13 near Tallulah, La.

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

## Arcola named DaimlerChrysler dealer

CARLSTADT, N.J. — One of the East Coast's best-known midsize bus dealers, Arcola Bus Sales, has been added to the DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses' dealer network.

Carlstadt-based Arcola will offer DCCB products and support services to customers throughout New Jersey.

Established in 1977, Arcola Bus Sales offers a complete line of vehicles, from mini- and midsize buses and shuttles, to motorcoaches and transit buses.

Arcola's sales efforts will focus primarily on DaimlerChrysler's Sprinter and CL 100 shuttle buses and the CL 300 midsize coach, said

company President Andy Rolfe.

"There is a growing need for these types of vehicles in our market and we believe the Sprinter and CL Series models will fit our customer's application needs very well," added Michael Forcella, vice president for Arcola Bus Sales. "We're excited about our new partnership with DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses and the new line of quality products we'll be able to offer our customers."

Arcola Bus Sales also provides after-sales support, including a staff of seven technicians specializing in bus maintenance, repair and paratransit and mobility equipment. The company employs more than

30 people.

"Partnering with a trusted dealer, such as Arcola Bus Sales, allows us to provide the highest level of service and support to our customers," said Jeff Shank, vice president of sales and marketing for DCCBNC.

Arcola Bus Sales is one of the country's largest midsize bus distributors, representing a number of manufacturers. A division of Arcola Sales & Service Corp., Arcola Bus Sales also is a distributor of school, commercial, transit, paratransit and specialty buses.

For more information, go to [www.arcolasales.com](http://www.arcolasales.com) or call (888) ARCOLA-1.

## Calendar of Events

## AUGUST 2004

**15-17 Motorcoach Association of South Carolina 2004 Annual Meeting and Market Place**, Marriott Resort at Grand Dunes, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Info: (888) 376-1150 or go to: [www.scmotorcoach.org](http://www.scmotorcoach.org).

**17-19 Family Motor Coach Association Convention**, Redmond, Ore. Info: Go to [www.fmca.com](http://www.fmca.com).

**25-28 International Motorcoach Group Strategic Alliance Meeting**, Mont Tremblant, Quebec. Info: (913) 906-0111 or go to [www.imgcoach.com](http://www.imgcoach.com).

**27-29 Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Meeting**, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, Ala. Info: (866) 376-7770 or go to [gamotorcoachoperators.org](http://gamotorcoachoperators.org).

**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](http://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@cvs.org](mailto:stevek@cvs.org).

**10-12 Greyhound Birthday Celebration and Retirees Reunion**, Greyhound Origin Museum, Hibbing, Minn. Info: E-mail: [gom@cpinternet.com](mailto:gom@cpinternet.com).

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

**12-14 Louisiana Motorcoach Association Annual Meeting**, Radisson New Orleans. Info: (877) 501-1878 or go to [www.twmlcm@centravelva.net](http://www.twmlcm@centravelva.net).

**13-14 Eagle Bus Rally**, Branson City Campground, Branson, Mo. Info: (417) 753-2285 or (417) 840-9343.

## OCTOBER 2004

**1-4 Virginia Motorcoach Association Annual Convention**, Valley Forge, Va. Info: (434) 376-1150 or e-mail [info@vamotorcoach.com](mailto:info@vamotorcoach.com).

**6 14th annual South Jersey Transportation Bus Rodeo**, Atlantic City Transportation Center. Info: (609) 345-5572, Ext. 423.

## OMCA sets 75th birthday party

TORONTO — The Ontario Motor Coach Association will use its annual conference in November to mark its 75th year of serving the Ontario motorcoach industry and more recently the Canadian motorcoach industry.

The OMCA Annual Conference will be Nov. 7-10 in Toronto and planning has begun for a celebration to recognize the organization's founding in 1929.

Ray Burley, a past chairman of OMCA, has been named chairman of the 75th Anniversary Committee. Initial plans call for "A Wall of Achievement" that will highlight 75 years of information, networking, lobbying and professionalism.

"The wall will highlight the milestones, achievements and significant gains of the association since 1929," said Burley.

There will be a number of other displays, including memorabilia from Greyhound Canada, which also is celebrating its 75th Anniversary.

There will be special presentations to the organization's first supplier member, the first tour operator member, the first bus supplier member, and a grandson of one of the first operator members from 1929.

For information, contact OMCA President Brian Crow, (416) 229-6622.

## IMG meeting this month in Quebec

MONT TREMBLANT, Quebec — The 2004 Strategic Alliance Meeting of the International Motor Coach Group Inc. and its owner/operator companies will be Aug. 25-28 at the Fairmont Tremblant resort north of Montreal.

The annual program includes three Business Trade Meetings that provide invited suppliers and vendors an opportunity to meet with decision-making representatives

from IMG-member companies.

In addition, the program includes networking and marketing opportunities during meal functions and receptions, open-forum discussions and other scheduled events and activities.

The goal is to build long-term strategic partnerships.

For more information on IMG and its meeting, go to [www.imgcoach.com](http://www.imgcoach.com) or call (913) 906-0111.

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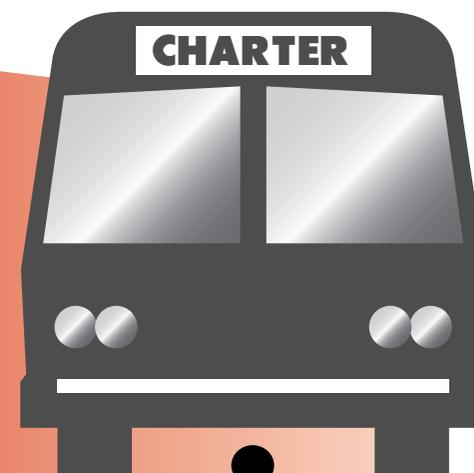
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