

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Bus industry is becoming a lot greener

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That's why U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, other government officials and environmentalists say the switch to ultra-low-sulfur diesel is the biggest boost to cleaner air since lead was removed from gasoline in the 1970s.

For the buses and coaches currently in your fleet, the ultra-low-sulfur diesel is expected to result in a 10 percent reduction in exhaust emissions.

And, if you buy a new coach next year that complies with the 2007 EPA emissions standards, that bus will produce 90 percent less particulate matter than today's coaches and will greatly reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides. It also will be among the most environmentally friendly vehicles on the road.

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## Greener than airlines?

See story page 9



**THE MICHAEL JORDON OF BUS DRIVERS?** Anthony Griffith of Traveling in Style won the South Jersey Transportation Authority annual Bus Roadeo driver competition for the fourth time in this decade. See story on Page 12.

## FTA says Charleston agency violated federal charter rules

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The Federal Transit Administration has ruled that the public transit agency here violated federal charter rules when it provided bus service earlier this year for an event called the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition.

The expo brought thousands of visitors to Charleston for three days in February. The event's organizers paid Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority, known locally as CARTA, \$23,000 to provide shuttle service for the attendees.

During the previous 15 years, pri-

vate operators provided the shuttles for the exposition. This year, however, CARTA grabbed the service.

The local private companies competing for the contract lost out on the business, said Linda Morris, executive director of the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina, which lodged a formal complaint with the FTA. (See May 1 and July 1 issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

"When there's a willing and able private carrier available, (CARTA) is not supposed to provide charter service," said Morris.

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## Coach industry shrinks but may be on rebound

WASHINGTON — The North American motorcoach industry shrank dramatically during the years 2000-2005, resulting in the loss of its ranking as the No. 1 passenger-carrying industry to the airlines, newly released figures indicate.

During those years, there was a measurable drop in the number of motorcoach companies operating in the industry, the number of buses operated by the industry, and the number of people employed in the industry.

At the same time, new figures from the federal government show the industry's safety performance also declined, resulting in significantly more passenger deaths than on commercial airlines.

Still, updated figures put together for the American Bus Association suggest the industry slide

may have halted last year, though that assessment is based on a "mini survey" that was responded to by fewer than 6 percent of the operators in North America.

Other key findings from the ABA-sponsored research:

- Motorcoach companies operating 50-99 buses have been having a harder time coping with industry challenges than other operators — both larger and smaller.
- Nearly three-quarters of the operators that compose the industry are mom-and-pop companies, having fewer than 10 coaches.
- More industry miles are racked up annually by charter-and-tour operators than line-run companies — 55 percent vs. 28 percent.

About half of all coach operators say they have faced competition

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## FMCSA inches toward requiring passenger info

WASHINGTON — Seven years after the National Transportation Safety Board recommended that motorcoach operators be required to provide passengers with a pre-trip safety briefing, federal regulators are getting close to adopting a requirement for "a bus passenger safety awareness program."

However, what is likely to emerge from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration won't be a mandate that requires operators to hire a bus attendant who stands in front of the passengers, wearing a life vest, and explains all of the dos and don'ts of an emergency evacuation.

Instead, the FMCSA has indicated it will propose a flexible plan

that will permit several methods for informing coach passengers of what to do if there is an emergency.

And, what's more, the program will allow operators to pick and choose the type of briefing they consider "appropriate."

In late July 1997, there was a particularly ugly bus crash along Interstate 95 near Stony Creek, Va. A coach drifted off the side of the highway and down an embankment into the Nottoway River where it landed on its side. One passenger was fatally injured. The driver and three passengers sustained serious injuries, and 28 passengers had minor injuries.

After its investigation, NTSB said the crash highlighted the need

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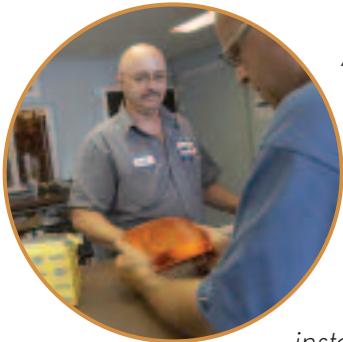
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## Trailways gains four, but loses big member

FAIRFAX, Va. — The Trailways Transportation System has added four members but lost its largest member, Peter Pan Bus Lines.

The four new members are:

- Sun Travel Inc. of Beaumont, Texas, now Sun Travel Trailways
- Gold Line Inc. of Hyattsville, Md., now Gold Line Trailways
- National Coach of Fredericksburg, Va., now National Coach Trailways
- Eagle Tours Inc. of Irving, Texas, now Eagle Trailways of Texas

The departure of Peter Pan was precipitated by a dispute over using the Trailways name.

"Peter Pan and Team Trailways view the importance of affiliation branding very differently," said Trailways President and CEO Gale Ellsworth. "We — the Trailways board and Peter Pan — both agreed that it was best that Peter Pan disaffiliate with Trailways. We wish Peter Pan success in all their future endeavors."

Just over a year ago, Trailways adopted tougher branding require-

ments for its member operators. (See Nov. 1, 2005 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.) And it decided to add teeth to its rules, meaning "strict enforcement" of the Trailways licensing agreement.

Among other things, the revamped rules required operators to prominently display the Trailways name or logo in at least two separate locations on each coach, with the name or logo a minimum of two-feet wide.

Additionally, the Trailways logo must be displayed or included on virtually all company printed materials, from brochures and contracts to business cards. Plus, the phone must be answered using the Trailways name.

Peter Pan, a Trailways member for 14 years, used the Trailways name but much more sparingly than the requirements. In the northeast where Peter Pan is well known, the Trailways name was added in small letters to its coaches. On routes where the Peter Pan name was not as well known, the

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## Coach industry donations favor Dems

Political donations from the bus and motorcoach industry this year are favoring Democrat candidates by a 3-2 margin, according to research groups that track political contributions.

That trend runs counter to political giving by associations and executives in industries allied with the motorcoach industry.

For example, the political action committee operated by the National Tour Association favors Republicans by better than a 5 to 1 margin, while giving through the National School Transportation Association has favored Republicans this year by a 3 to 1 margin.

And, as of the middle of October, the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association hadn't given one dime to Democrats but had contributed more than \$11,000 to Republicans.

Greyhound Lines, the only motorcoach industry company with its own political action committee, also has favored Dems over Republicans. It had contributed \$12,000 to Democratic candidates as of the middle of last month, versus \$9,000 for Republicans.

The PAC operated by the Amer-

ican Bus Association contributed nearly \$71,000 to political candidates as of late October, with 60 percent of the money going to Democratic candidates and 40 percent headed to Republicans.

The United Motorcoach Association does not have a political action committee.

The leading recipients of bus industry political largesse are who you would expect — members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

At least 18 members of the committee, including Chairman Don Young of Alaska and his No. 2, Thomas Petri of Wisconsin, got money from motorcoach industry political givers, as did the ranking Democrat on the committee, James Oberstar of Minnesota. Oberstar would be first in line to become chairman of the committee if the Democrats take control of the House.

Twice as many Democrats on the committee got political contributions from bus industry donors as did Republicans.

Races for the U.S. Senate get far less money from bus industry political contributors than do

House contests. For example, only five Senate candidates have gotten money from the ABA PAC, while 31 incumbent congressional candidates have received money. House candidates also tend to get more money.

Interestingly, Mike Sodrel, the former motorcoach and trucking company owner who is in a tight race to retain his House seat from Indiana's 9th district, has gotten less money from motorcoach industry political donors than some other candidates.

Most of the large individual political donors from the bus industry are top executives at the biggest outfits — think Greyhound, Coach America, Coach USA, Jefferson Lines, Peter Pan, Academy and Martz, or operate line-haul and commuter-run companies.

If you want to know why the trucking industry seems to get more attention from Congress than the bus industry, consider this: As of the middle of September, the United Parcel Service PAC had given \$2.06 million to political candidates. And the American Trucking Associations had given \$599,629.

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# THE DOCKER

## Groups oppose abolishing Canadian visitor tax rebate

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Plans by the Canadian government to eliminate the Visitor Rebate Program for its goods-and-services tax is being protested by the National Tour Association, Canadian bus organizations, and Canadian tourism groups.

"The elimination of the GST Visitor Tax Rebate further aggravates and impedes packaged-tour commerce to and from Canada," said NTA Legislative Counsel Jim Santini.

"This arbitrary decision hampers Canada's visitor-friendly image and will most definitely lead to a decline in visitor spending. We look forward to working with our Canadian colleagues to press for

the reinstatement of this rebate."

Currently, the Visitor Tax Rebate Program reimburses travelers for Canada's so-called value-added taxes on eligible goods and services. The Canadian government wants to eliminate the program effective April 1.

The visitor rebate reportedly costs the Canadian treasury roughly \$78 million annually.

Brian Crow, president of Motor Coach Canada, calls the policy shift by the Canadian government "bad news." Writing on the *Busesoverdrive* Web blog, Crow said if the rebate is dropped it will give foreigners another reason, like proposed U.S. passport rules, not to travel to Canada.

## Hill: Border to stay closed

WASHINGTON — John Hill, administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, says the opening of the U.S. border to Mexican trucks and buses is on hold for the foreseeable future.

"There are no immediate plans to open the border," Hill said during an online chat last month.

Earlier this year, acting Transportation Secretary Maria Cino and FMCSA officials said talks were under way with Mexican officials for a pilot project to provide a small number of Mexican carriers access to U.S. highways and that the project could be launched by the end of this year.

However, in response to a question during the Web session, Hill said there was "no specific time frame" for conducting such a test.

On another topic, Hill said there were five significant FMCSA rulemakings under review by the Bush Administration Office of Management and Budget. One rule, which Hill did not identify, was recently returned to FMCSA following its approval and it will be published in the Federal Register within the next few weeks.

"Based on OMB's schedule of a 90-day review, we expect the other five to be released later this year," said Hill.

## Calif. adopts cell-phone law

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California has a new law requiring drivers to use hands-free technology when talking on cell phones and operating a motor vehicle but it won't impact bus operators for a long while.

The law takes effect Jan. 8, 2008, for most drivers, but includes exemptions for commercial vehicle operators until July 1, 2011.

The law, signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, also provides exemptions for drivers making calls to emergency-service providers.

On another issue, California lawmakers failed to pass a law that would have required local air districts to develop plans to reduce diesel emissions. Areas affected would have included 10 airports,

5 seaports and 25 rail yards. (See July 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Those opposing the so-called magnet bill said it would create a patchwork of widely varied regulations, as well as dilute the authority of state and federal regulatory agencies over diesel-powered equipment operated at ports, airports and rail yards in the state.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration wants fresh input for a study — it has had under way for two years — of its compliance and enforcement programs.

The goal of the Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 is to develop

## Transits seek charter firms

The following public transit providers have informed the United Motorcoach Association of their intent to provide charter bus service unless willing and able private operators step forward to offer service. UMA urges appropriate operators to take the time to respond to these notices:

**Mason, Manistee, Lake and Oceana counties, Mich.** Deadline: Nov. 1, 2006. Write to: Vedra Gant, Director, Yates Dial-A-Ride, P.O. Box 147, Idlewild, MI 49642. Phone: (231) 745-7322.

**Brevard County, Fla.** Deadline: Nov. 7, 2006. Write to: James P. Liesenfeld, Transit Director, Space Coast Area Transit, 401 S. Varr Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922. Phone: (321) 635-7815 ext. 231. E-mail: [jim@ridescat.com](mailto:jim@ridescat.com).

**Milwaukee, Racine, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee counties, Wis.** Deadline: Nov. 10, 2006. Write to: Joseph A. Caruso, Marketing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System, 1942 N. 17th St., Milwaukee, WI 53205. Phone: (414) 937-3250.

**Floyd County, Ga.** Deadline: Nov. 13, 2006. Write to: Director, City of Rome Transit Department, P.O. Box 1433, Rome, GA 30162. Phone: (706) 236-4523.

**Scioto County, Ohio.** Deadline: Nov. 13, 2006. Write to: Larry Mullins, Coordinator, Access Scioto County Public Transit, 601 Eighth St., Portsmouth, OH 45662. Phone: (740) 353-5626 Ext. 208.

**Lancaster County, Pa.** Deadline: Nov. 15, 2006. Write to: David W. Kilmer, Executive Director, Red Rose Transit Authority, 45 Erick Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601. Phone: (717) 397-5613.

**Purcellville (100-mile radius), Va.** Deadline: Nov. 30, 2006. Write to: Mark McGregor, Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Regional Transit Association, 109 N. Bailey Lane, Purcellville, VA 20132. Phone: (540) 338-1610.

and implement a new "operational model," or approach, for FMCSA to use in identifying and dealing with unsafe drivers and companies.

To get new input, FMCSA officials will conduct a public "listening session" from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 16 at the Hyatt Regency

## Court tells UPS it cannot bar drivers who are deaf

SAN FRANCISCO — UPS violated anti-discrimination law when it blocked deaf and hearing-impaired workers from driving its delivery trucks, a federal appeals court here has ruled.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower-court ruling that the delivery giant violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by prohibiting deaf and hearing-impaired workers from becoming drivers.

UPS is considering an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. "We believe this case is about safety," said Norman Black, a UPS spokesman. "It has nothing to do with disability or discrimination."

UPS requires its drivers to meet U.S. Department of Transportation standards for CDLs that include vision and hearing tests. Those requirements apply to vehicles weighing 10,000 pounds or more — but the court ruled UPS should allow deaf and hearing-impaired workers to drive lighter vehicles.

UPS executives said the vast majority of vehicles in the company 90,000-vehicle fleet weigh more than 10,000 pounds.

"We have no idea how much it would cost to comply with this ruling," Black said. "But this is a bedrock safety issue for us. We want to apply the highest uniform safety standards."

## Mass. to toss turnpike tolls

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority board has voted to abolish all tolls on the turnpike west of I-95/Route 128, a move that appears to run counter to trends across the U.S.

The vote, which represents a sudden policy shift, came shortly before this month's election and will save bus and truck operators and thousands of commuters mil-

lions of dollars.

Under the plan, which is to go into effect June 30, taxpayers would assume the burden of running and maintaining the Massachusetts Turnpike from I-95, west through Springfield. A motorcoach running back and forth from Springfield to west Boston would save \$14.30, while auto commuters would save \$5.40 per round trip. Roughly 200 toll collectors would be laid off.

The move was orchestrated by Gov. Mitt Romney's administration. Eliminating the tolls — which does not require legislative approval — would cost the authority \$114 million in annual revenue. Romney administration officials said the loss would be partly offset by saving nearly \$40 million by laying off the toll collectors.

## Input wanted for FMCSA safety initiation

on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Ave. NW in Washington.

A notice summarizing the initiative was in the Federal Register on Oct. 17. Go to: <http://dmses.dot.gov/docimages/p87/419746.pdf>.

Submit comments at <http://dmses.dot.gov>. RE FMCSA-2004-18898.

# Minimum wage increases don't worry coach operators

On Election Day, voters will decide whether to increase the minimum-wage level in six Western and Midwestern states.

As often happens during election cycles, the U.S. minimum wage has had a higher profile this year. However, for the motorcoach and over-the-road bus industry, the issue is not anywhere near the top of the political priority list.

That's because virtually all employees at coach companies are paid above minimum wage, and other costs, notably fuel and insurance, garner more attention.

Still, on an indirect basis, the industry is affected when the minimum-wage level moves higher because allied industries, notably the restaurant, hotel and destination sectors, are significantly impacted.

In June, Congress declined to

increase the federal minimum wage — from \$5.15 hourly to \$6.95 — despite growing sentiment that \$5.15 is simply not enough.

Meanwhile, states have been taking the matter into their own hands.

Legislators and governors have increased the minimum wage in 22 states and another six states have the issue on the ballot next week.

Even some high-cost-of-living cities, like Santa Fe, N.M., San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., have legislated minimum-wage rates well above the national level.

The 22 states with minimum wage laws in excess of \$5.15 are: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New

Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The states voting on the issue are: Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Ohio. All were "red states" in the last presidential election.

Operators across the industry seem unfazed by all of the activity.

For example, late this past summer the California legislature voted to gradually increase the minimum wage to \$8 by January 2008, from the present \$6.25. But Herbert Guillory, owner of Guillory Transportation in Delano, Calif., doubts the increase will have any direct impact on his operating costs. The company is a family-run operation and, when it hires drivers, it pays by the trip rather

than by the hour.

Mike Waters of Coach America in San Francisco said that by and large Coach America does not have minimum-wage employees. In addition to drivers, the support staff and mechanics all make above minimum, and "the bus cleaners are unionized; so, they are not making minimum either."

Waters said the issue is much more important to the restaurant and hotel industries than the bus industry.

In Michigan, the minimum wage is increasing to \$7.40 per hour over the next two years. On Oct. 1, it went to \$6.95 in the first of three scheduled increases. Dave Cupp of Blue Lakes Charters & Tours in Clio, Mich., has few concerns, however. Cupp says Blue Lakes pays its drivers well above

minimum already, and he doesn't have any employees working at minimum.

Tom Westlund of Westlund Bus Lines, a charter and school bus operator in Marinette, Wis., took that state's minimum-wage increase to \$6.50 per hour on June 1, with a grain of salt. He said the increase was not nearly as significant as other operating cost increases — like fuel and insurance.

Comments from bus operators on the issue range from the humorous — "Would you buy a half-a-million-dollar bus and put it in the hands of a minimum-wage driver?" — to the dismissive, "even the fast-food places around here pay \$7."

For more information on minimum-wage laws in the U.S., go to [www.dol.gov/esa](http://www.dol.gov/esa).

# Understanding the bus industry overtime pay exemption

The motorcoach and school bus industries' exemption from federal overtime pay requirements pops up periodically as an item of interest.

The following is designed to help coach operators and private school bus contractors determine whether or not they must pay overtime for drivers and other employees who work more than 40 hours a week.

Under the motor carrier exemption to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, the overtime pay requirements do not apply to employees whose qualifications and hours of service may be regulated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

The secretary of transportation, through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, has the power to regulate employees of

motor carriers whose duties affect safety on the highways when either interstate passenger travel or interstate shipment of property is involved.

To establish that an employee is covered by the motor carrier exemption, the employer must show that (1) the employer is a motor carrier, and (2) that the activities of the employee affect highway safety, and (3) that the employee's activities involve the interstate transportation of people or goods.

To further clarify the three factors:

1. An employer is a motor carrier if it operates commercial motor vehicles. Commercial motor vehicles are those that have a GVWR of at least 10,001 pounds or that trans-

port more than 15 passengers, and are used in a "for-hire" business. Motorcoach and school bus contractors engage in "for-hire" business and all but the smallest school buses and commercial buses carry more than 15 passengers.

2. Drivers are employees whose activities affect highway safety. Mechanics who are responsible for maintaining buses in safe operating condition also affect highway safety, but courts have determined that other employees, such as dispatchers, are not covered under the exemption.

3. The exemption applies only if the motor carrier engages in interstate transportation. If your company does not provide interstate activity or charter trips, the exemption cannot be used.

What is somewhat less obvious is which drivers may be exempt and for what periods. The most conservative determination is that any driver who takes an interstate trip is exempt for the week in which the trip occurred. And the mechanic who worked on the bus that went out of state is exempt for that week as well.

But the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld a more liberal interpretation that says when interstate travel is an integral part of the employer's service, even though it may be a very small portion of the business, and when any driver can be assigned to an interstate trip, then all drivers are exempt from overtime as a class. However, another court decision determined that drivers who never engage in

exempt activities cannot be considered part of the class.

In determining whether to pay overtime to drivers and mechanics, the main question that an operator should ask is: "Is this driver eligible for out-of-state trips?" If the answer is "no" — that he or she is under 21, for example, or has opted out of activity trips — then he or she is not exempt and the operator must pay overtime for any hours over 40 in a week.

If the answer is "yes," then those drivers — regardless of how often they actually go out of state — are exempt from overtime pay.

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# Engine makers begin seeking certification for 2007 models

The three major engine suppliers to the North American motorcoach industry say they have submitted applications to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for certification of their 2007-

model engines.

Caterpillar, Cummins and Detroit Diesel expect to have their new, cleaner-burning engines available for sale by the beginning of the year.

A note of caution was sounded,

however, by Roger Gault, technical director for the Engine Manufacturer's Association: "Everybody has a high degree of confidence that they will have their certifications soon; whether or not that's a

mislaid confidence remains to be seen."

One engine builder, Caterpillar, received a black eye just as the certification process was being kicked off.

*Transport Topics*, the trucking industry publication, reported in a front-page article that the director of the world's largest truck manufacturer said there were serious problems with the '07 engines Caterpillar has provided to truck builders for testing.

"Cat's '07 engines don't work," the newspaper quoted Andreas Renschler, who runs DaimlerChrysler's Truck Group, as saying.

"We haven't been able to make 5,000 miles with one," Renschler said of the Cat engines. As a result, "we haven't sent a single one to customers" for over-the-road reliability testing.

At about the same time, International Truck and Engine Corp. executives told *Transport Topics* they planned to delay introduction of Cat engines in International's new ProStar-model heavy-duty trucks until at least August because Cat was not able to deliver test engines more quickly.

For its part, Caterpillar was quoted as saying it had 100 engines that meet the '07 emissions standards, and that it had "confidence" in its power plants.

Within days of the article appearing, DaimlerChrysler's Truck Group issued a statement, saying it

expected to begin providing some customers shortly with test-model 2007 Freightliner trucks outfitted with Cat engines.

DaimlerChrysler said Renschler's remarks, made in an interview with the editorial director of *Transport Topics*, "were taken out of context... and do not accurately convey the company's most-recent views regarding Caterpillar's engines."

The statement said Freightliner engineers have been working with Cat for two years, "and report Caterpillar is making steady progress in developing engines that deliver a high level of performance and reliability while achieving EPA '07 emissions standards."

Also weighing in was a leading Wall Street analyst who issued a statement to clients saying the "durability concerns" over Cat's engines "appear to be partially true but largely resolved."

The Wachovia Capital Markets analyst said that "early versions of the Cat 15-liter engines... did have durability issues. In later versions... Cat appears to have resolved those issues."

The engine Cat supplies to the motorcoach industry is the C13, a 12.5-liter model. It is widely believed that most motorcoach manufacturers who supply the North American market will not begin delivering 2007-model coaches equipped with 2007 engines until the second quarter of next year.

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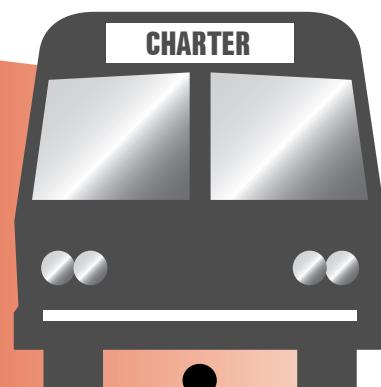
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# Coach USA parent battles airline over who's 'greener'

PERTH, Scotland — Stagecoach Group, the corporate parent of Coach USA and its budget bus line, megabus.com, has launched a bold marketing campaign that takes direct aim at the environmental impact of low-fare airlines.

The message being promoted by Stagecoach is that budget travelers should dump "gas-guzzler" airlines and switch to low-cost, intercity coach travel to minimize damage to the environment.

Along with the message, Stagecoach released figures showing that jetliners are significantly more damaging to the environment, pumping out particularly harmful emissions into the upper atmosphere where they do the most damage.

Bus and coach travel by comparison, says Stagecoach, is more fuel-efficient and produces less harmful emissions, such as carbon dioxide, per passenger journey.

Stagecoach says the Scottish government is examining the affect on the environment of the expansion of low-fare air travel in the United Kingdom.

Stagecoach compared the environmental impact of its budget megabus.com service with low-cost airline easyJet.com on the Glasgow, Scotland, to London, England, route. Results of the research showed that, on a per-

passenger basis, megabus.com is:

- More than six times more fuel-efficient than easyJet
- Produces seven times less carbon dioxide emissions
- Cheaper for budget travelers

"Previous international research has found that emissions from aircraft are especially potent because of complex chemical reactions that take place at (high) altitude," said Stagecoach. "The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that this gives aircraft 2.7 times more global warming impact than carbon dioxide alone."

Brian Souter, chief executive of Stagecoach Group, said the figures "show clearly that bus and coach travel is the greener way to travel and far less damaging than airlines. Not only is megabus.com easy on the wallet, it is easy on the planet," says Souter.

"The message is very clear — if you are a cost-conscious traveler who also cares about the future of our planet, drop the gas-guzzler airlines and go by the megabus.com green machine," Souter asserted.

He added: "Any transport has an impact on (the) environment, but we agree with the government and environmental groups that we all need to look carefully at how we can balance our desire to travel with steps to protect the planet."

The Stagecoach study compared the environmental performance of a Neoplan Skyliner megabus.com coach, with a capacity of 91 passengers, with that of an easyJet 737-700, having a capacity

149 passengers, between Glasgow and London.

The megabus.com coach used 2.3 kilograms of fuel per passenger, compared to 14.9 kilograms used by the easyJet plane. Carbon diox-

ide emissions per passenger were 6.2 kilograms for megabus.com and 46.9 kilograms for easyJet.

A ticket on easyJet costs roughly four times that of a ticket on megabus.com.

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## La. operator continues recovery

MARRERO, La. — One of the Louisiana motorcoach operators that was knocked for a loop by Hurricane Katrina continues to recover — thank you very much — from last year's devastation.

Louisiana Trailways was established 15 years ago on the west bank of the Mississippi River, across from New Orleans.

When Hurricane Katrina hit in August of last year, the company was driven from his facility in Marrero and forced to set up shop at its parking facility in Lafayette, La., 140 miles away.

"Despite all the challenges faced since Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana Trailways remains committed to providing the highest

standards in quality, safety and customer service in Louisiana," said company Vice President and General Manager Louis Sanders.

"We encourage the rest of the industry to help us re-New Orleans by visiting our great city soon."

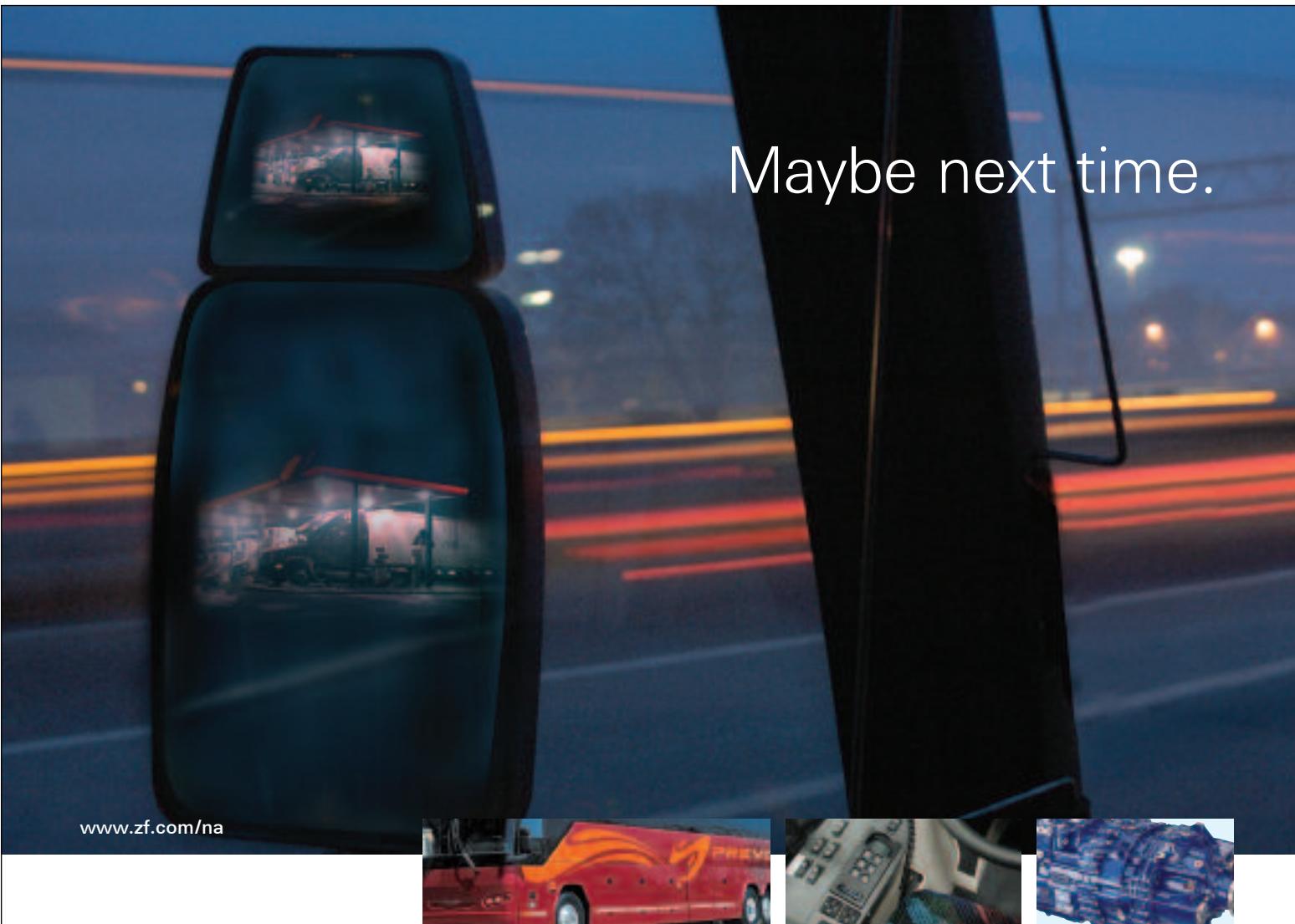
Sanders and Louisiana Trailways' Owner and President Don Sanders report they have taken delivery of two 2006 MCI E4500 motorcoaches.

The additions increase the Louisiana Trailways fleet to 23 MCI coaches.

Louisiana Trailways offers a full range of charter and tour work in the southeast Louisiana and Lafayette markets. It is the exclusive carrier for Trips Unlimited Inc., a full-service tour operator and travel agency.

The company's new E-model MCIs have Caterpillar C13 engines, ZF AS-tronic transmissions, and REI entertainment systems with flat-panel monitors.

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Transportes Intercalifornias' U.S. operation, which is based in Los Angeles, has more than 20 coaches. Find more information at [www.intercalifornias.com](http://www.intercalifornias.com).

## Canadian women make cancer walk

TORONTO — Four women employed by Parkinson Coach Lines in Brampton, Ontario, have raised \$11,000 for breast cancer research.

The four, Elaine Donnelly, Robin Gibson, Louise Lesarge and Lynn Murray, walked 60 kilometers through the streets of Toronto as part of The Princess Margaret Weekend to End Breast Cancer.

The program, which attracted more than 5,000 participants, raised more than \$17 million — a record — for breast cancer research. It was the fourth time the walk has been conducted.

The team from Parkinson Coach, which was led by fleet safety officer Lynn Murray, started at Exhib-

### Trailways

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Trailways name was more prominent. That practice didn't pass muster.

The new Trailways members from Texas bring to seven the number of Trailways operators based in the Lone Star state.

Schools, churches and senior groups are among the markets Sun Travel Trailways serves for tours with its fleet of 18 vehicles. The company has six limousines which are used to fulfill corporate contracts. Michael LaBrie is owner and president.

Gold Line Trailways and National Coach Trailways are subsidiaries of Martz Trailways of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., a founding member of the Trailways system. Plus, the two companies are the second and third companies Martz has added to the Trailways organization this year. First Class Trailways of St. Petersburg, Fla., became a Trailways member earlier this year.

"We've operated these companies for many years on an independent basis, but it doesn't make sense to have some of our companies under Trailways and some not," said David Snyder, general manager of both Gold Line and National Coach. "We want to be a cohesive unit."

Snyder said the two companies, which operate in the Washington, D.C. region, will be more competitive by being part of Trailways.

Eagle Trailways of Texas, which has been operating for 27 years, has a fleet of 14 vehicles, including motorcoaches and midsize and transit buses. It has a staff of 52 full- and part-time employees.

Company President Gene Shields expects the Trailways brand to help boost his marketing, especially in the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex.

bition Place on Day One and walked 33 kilometers to Downsview Park, where they camped overnight. On Day Two, they took a 27 kilometer scenic route back into the heart of the city.

"This was a very emotionally uplifting experience," said Murray. She said they walked alongside

many cancer survivors and people walking in memory of family members. "Hundreds of people came out to cheer," she added.

Calling themselves the "J Walkers," the team received strong support from Motor Coach Industries, which even supplied matching T-shirts, and others.



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© 2006, Freightliner LLC. All rights reserved. Detroit Diesel is a member of the Freightliner Group. Freightliner LLC is a DaimlerChrysler company.

## REI watch system is upgraded

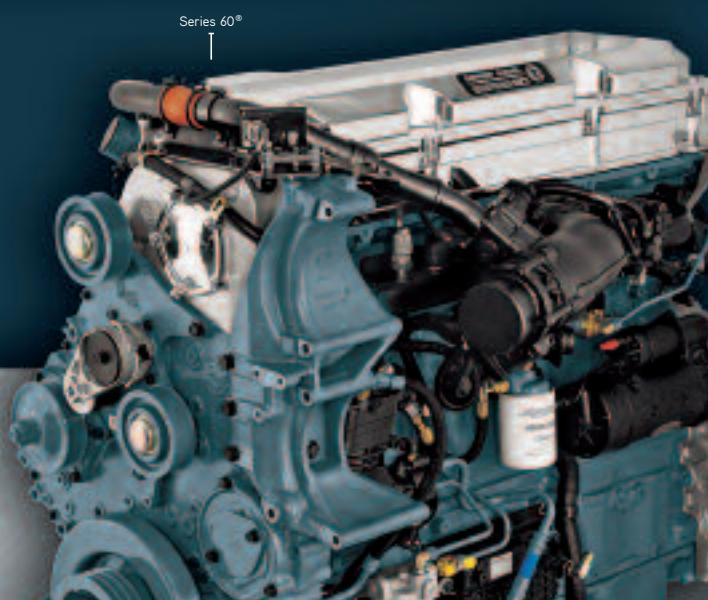
OMAHA, Neb. — Radio Engineering Industries has announced a series of upgrades to its BUS-WATCH family of mobile camera surveillance systems.

The digital BUS-WATCH IV DVR incorporates new features such as "smooth playback" of video and audio regardless of frame rate, and fail-safe "system on" protection.

The new DVR also has the ability to integrate with global positioning and automatic vehicle locating systems.

Other features of previous Digital BUS-WATCH models remain unchanged.

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## Driver wins Roadeo for fifth time

ATLANTIC CITY — Is Anthony Griffith the best bus driver on the East Coast?

Griffith, who brings tourists from northern New Jersey and New York to Atlantic City, won “Driver of the Year” honors — again — at the 16th annual “Bus Roadeo” sponsored by the South Jersey Transportation Authority.

Griffith, who lives in Glen Oaks, N.Y., and drives for Traveling in Style, won the competition for the fourth time in the past six years and for the fifth time overall. His first win was in 1994.

The South Jersey Transportation Authority driver and mechanic competition was conducted at the Atlantic City Transportation Center last month.

Griffith and 31 other drivers, representing 16 motorcoach companies, were tested on their appearance, a personal interview and an obstacle course that challenged their ability to negotiate tight spaces. The driving test required that they stop within three inches of a warning cone and maneuver the back tires of a coach between a two-foot wide space marked by tennis balls.

This year's second- and third-place finishers were Peter Frangomihalos of Astoria Queens, N.Y., a driver for Peter Pan Bus Lines, and Hani Hanna of Staten Island, N.Y., a driver for Atlantic Express.

In the competition for bus technicians, North Cape May, N.J. resident Scott Wolf of Lion Tours took “Mechanic of the Year” honors, his second win in three years.



Scott Wolf

The second place finisher was Egg Harbor Township, N.J., resident Greg Wilson of Greyhound Lines, and third place went to Egg Harbor Township resident Michael Levin, also of Greyhound.

The first-, second- and third-place winners in both categories won \$1,000, \$750 and \$500, respectively. The participants also received overnight hotel stays and meals.

The South Jersey Transportation Authority operates the Atlantic City Expressway and regulates Atlantic City-bound tour buses. Co-sponsors include: the Atlantic City Transportation Center, the Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association, the Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority, the Atlantic City casino and hotel industry, and many area businesses.

“This event is the largest of its kind in the country and recognizes the skills and professionalism of the men and women who bring millions of passengers to Atlantic City safely,” said Wade Lawson, director of SJTA's tourist services department.

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## Detroit Diesel streamlines overhauls

DETROIT, Mich. — Detroit Diesel Corp. has streamlined its Series 60 engine overhaul program by offering four distinct options.

The "StepUP Overhaul Program" has different levels of overhauls that Detroit says help extend the life of a Series 60, depending on length of ownership of the engine and its application.

For operators with lower mileage, fewer problems or looking for a "value" overhaul, there is Step 1. The program builds from there, adding a cylinder head and rocker

arm assembly in Step 2. A complete injector change out, plus water pump and turbocharger replacement are included in Step 3.

A remanufactured swing engine is available under Step 4.

"We've specifically designed our StepUP Overhaul Program to be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of customers depending on where they are with the lifecycle of their Series 60. We certainly don't believe in a 'one-size-fits-all' philosophy when it

comes to overhauling an engine because we know that just doesn't work," said Jeff Wallis, general manager of parts sales and marketing for Detroit Diesel.

"We also have developed the program to minimize downtime by grouping all the necessary components for each option. That means less time is spent looking for and ordering parts so a (vehicle) can be up-and-running much sooner," Wallis added.

For more information, go to [www.detroitdieselstepup.com](http://www.detroitdieselstepup.com).

## DaimlerChrysler integrates brands

GREENSBORO, N.C. — The three bus brands sold by subsidiaries of DaimlerChrysler in the U.S. and Canada have been integrated under the corporate name of DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses North America.

Until now, Setra motorcoaches, Orion transit buses and Dodge Sprinter shuttle buses have operated under their own legal entities.

The integration is designed to assure clarity, consistency and cohesiveness to the market, say

top DaimlerChrysler executives.

"It emphasizes to our customers that each of our products will reflect the values of our parent — an absolute commitment to leadership in safety, reliability, economy and environmental compatibility," said Andreas Strecker, president and CEO of DaimlerChrysler's North American bus operation.

DaimlerChrysler sold 1,015 buses and coaches in the U.S. and Canada last year, with each of its brands exhibiting strength.

Orion is a pacesetter in diesel-electric hybrid bus development; the Setra S 417 has especially grown in popularity in Canada where sales have more than doubled over the past year, and the Dodge Sprinter shuttle bus continues to gain adherents because of its flexibility and style.

"DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses leverages the unparalleled global technology and service support of its parent company to the benefit of its customers," said Strecker.

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## Cruising from New Orleans is returning next month

NEW ORLEANS — Royal Caribbean returns scheduled cruise ship service to New Orleans next month, but two other cruise lines are delaying by nearly a year their return to New Orleans for regularly scheduled service.

Royal Caribbean continues to promote its return to New Orleans, with five sailings scheduled for the

Grandeur of the Seas, beginning Dec. 2. The ship will call at Georgetown and Grand Cayman in the Bahamas, and Costa Maya and Cozumel in Mexico.

Meanwhile, Carnival Cruise Lines says it will not return until September 2007, when it will deploy two ships to the Port of New Orleans, making it the only cruise line

to operate year-round from the city.

Earlier this year, Carnival indicated it would return to New Orleans this fall with two ships. Now, plans call for Carnival Triumph to operate a year-round, seven-day program from New Orleans, starting in early September 2007.

It will feature two western

Caribbean itineraries. Prior to that start-up, Carnival Triumph will offer a special one-time, five-day cruise from New Orleans to Costa Maya and Cozumel, departing in August 2007.

Earlier this summer, Norwegian Cruise Lines announced it would not return to New Orleans until November 2007. It previously had

indicated it would be the first cruise line to return to New Orleans.

For more information about Royal Caribbean cruises go to [www.royalcaribbean.com](http://www.royalcaribbean.com). For information about Carnival, go to [www.carnival.com](http://www.carnival.com) or [www.bookccl.com](http://www.bookccl.com), and for information about Norwegian Cruise Lines go to [www.ncl.com](http://www.ncl.com).

### Charleston

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The executive director of CARTA maintained the service provided by his agency did not violate federal charter rules because it was a case of adding buses to existing routes and the buses were open to all passengers, not just those with pre-paid event passes.

However, FTA Regional Administrator Yvette Taylor said in her ruling it was not clear that the buses were open to the public. Although the transit authority had distributed pamphlets with notices about the additional buses, its pre-printed schedules should have been amended to denote the supplemental service as well, Taylor wrote in her ruling.

Also, bus stop signs and sign boards on the buses read "Special" and "Southeastern Wildlife Expo," she noted, indicating the service was not open door and available to all riders.

She cited a 1997 FTA decision involving the California Bus Association and its long-running charter-service fight with SunLine Transit of Thousand Palms, Calif. In that decision, the FTA said head signs that read "Supplemental Service or "Supplemental, Limited Service" are contrary to the notion that the service is open to the general public.

Neither Taylor's ruling, nor the letter accompanying it, mentions whether the FTA will withhold money from CARTA for the rule violation.

CARTA has decided not to appeal the decision, the transit's attorney, Charlton deSaussure, told a Charleston newspaper.

DeSaussure's spin on Taylor's ruling was that the FTA did not completely side with either party in the dispute. "I think they recognize that CARTA did not intend to provide prohibited charter service," he said.

Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at the United Motorcoach Association, was instrumental in filing the successful complaint. While he was still employed by Service Insurance Agency, Presley worked with UMA and members of the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina to put the complaint together on behalf of the association.

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Here are summaries of many of the Solution Sessions that will be offered during the first and second days of Expo, beginning Jan. 18:

**Pricing for Profit.** Making sure your pricing strategies encompass all costs to assure profitability over the short and long term.

**Using the Right Metrics to Measure Performance.** How do you measure success? What are the key indices that you focus on to make sure you're profitable at the end of the day?

**Driver Training and Recruitment.** Learn how to deal with one of the motorcoach industry's most difficult challenges. This session will help you identify new and successful strategies for recruiting quality candidates to keep your business moving forward.

**Alternative Fuels.** The pressure to make our country less dependent of foreign oil has led to new, and sometimes less effective, strategies to increase usage of non-fossil fuels. What's out there? What can we anticipate in the future and how should we deal with the growth of bio-fuel plants?

**Diversifying Your Fleet.** Buying equipment is often considered an operational decision. This panel of industry experts will discuss how the purchase of a new bus is as much, if not more so, a marketing decision, and not just a financial one.

**Buying New vs. Used.** When does it make more sense to buy a used bus rather than a new one? What kind of internal assessments are necessary to make sure you buy the right equipment to add to your fleet? This is a follow up to an Expo session held last year that drew standing-room only crowds.

**Working on the Business, Not in It.** How much time should you spend driving and maintaining your bus (working in your business) vs. looking at how you plan to grow your business over the short and long term (working on your business)?

**Building Your Website to Support Your Marketing and Sales Effort.** The influence of the web is growing every day, learn how to use this tool more effectively to reach customers.

**Improving Margins, a UMA 20 Group Primer.** Find out how this new UMA-member service can help you manage your business more effectively, identify and fix problems, plus learn from your peers, many of whom have already dealt with and fixed the same problems you're facing today.

**Preparing for a DOT Compliance Review and DOD Inspection.** UMA's Ken Presley will show how you can be best prepared for when the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration calls for a compliance review of your operation. Also, Ken will show you everything you need to have in place to pass a Department of Defense transportation inspection.

**School Bus Contracting: A case study on school district conversions.** School bus contracting has proven to be a lucrative alter-

nate avenue for revenue and growth for many motorcoach operators nationwide. Learn how to convert publicly run school bus districts to private contracting with your company.

**Reaching the Self-Directed Consumer.** In the world of the consumer, the sales process has become inverted. Consumers are designing products and services based on individual needs and wants, and it's the smart product provider who is listening, responding and catering to this high-margin customer. Learn how you can refocus your business towards a new generation of self-directed consumers.

**Increasing Equipment Value.** Learn strategies to help increase the value of your equipment over the long term.

**2007 Engine Requirements.** New coaches with 2007 engines will be introduced in the second quarter of next year. Find out what to expect from engine manufacturers, OEMs and others.

While it is not an educational session, the annual Expo Legislative and Regulatory Update is just as valuable. Attendees will be brought up to speed on key federal regulatory initiatives, as well as gain insight into what the industry can expect from the 110th Congress.

## Annual event to reflect New Orleans character

NEW ORLEANS — In keeping with the distinct character of the site of Motorcoach Expo 2007, the United Motorcoach Association is adding a number of exclusive events to next year's show.

"New Orleans remains one of the most exciting cities in the world and we are committed to presenting new and unique events at the New Orleans Expo," said Victor Parra, president and CEO of UMA.

For example, for the first time at Expo there will be a:

- Dedicated "Destination and Attractions Avenue" on the Expo show floor where motorcoach operators will have an opportunity to network with destinations and attractions from across the U.S.

- Maintenance Competition held in conjunction with Expo's traditional Maintenance Interchange. Participants will try to solve several maintenance problems in a race against the clock and each other.

- Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Project. UMA is partnering with the New Orleans Habitat for Humanity for a construction project on Tuesday, Jan. 16th. (See Aug. 15 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

- Solution Sessions on alternative fuels and building a Web site to support marketing efforts. (See related story on this page.)

And, on the show floor, coach builders will exhibit brand-new motorcoaches, engines and transmissions that comply with the 2007 reduced-emission requirements for diesel-powered, heavy-duty vehicles.

"With more than 55,000 square feet of space sold on the show floor and more than 125 exhibitors already signed up, New Orleans promises to be an exceptional show," said Parra. (See special insert in this issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

UMA has modified the schedule for Expo to better accommodate the Habitat for Humanity project. The 3rd annual Ray Dupuis Memorial Golf Tournament has been moved to Sunday, Jan. 21.

Expo will run from Jan. 16-21, with most activities taking place in the newly refurbished Morial Convention Center in downtown New Orleans.

For more information or to register for the show, go to [www.motorcoachexpo.com](http://www.motorcoachexpo.com), or call (800) 424-8262. Special advanced registration rates expire Oct. 27.

## Host hotel in heart of New Orleans action

NEW ORLEANS — Motorcoach Expo 2007 attendees who stay at the convention hotel, the New Orleans Marriott on Canal Street, will be right in the heart of the vivacious sights and sounds that make New Orleans unique.

Out the door and a short walk away is the famed French Quarter, with its trademark balconies and architecture, and the home of artists, artisans and hundreds of specialty shops and restaurants.

The Marriott also is a short stroll away from the world-famous or, depending on how you feel the next morning, infamous Bourbon Street. There visitors will find a taste of Mardi Gras year-round.

For the adventurous, New Orleans' Afro-Caribbean roots carry a rich tapestry of Creole culture and tradition, ranging from a

lively jazz and blues scene to the enlightening, and sometimes spooky, voodoo subculture.

The French Quarter is littered with shops catering to those curious about some of the more mystical qualities of New Orleans.

Find good luck charms and voodoo dolls for friends and family back home, but don't be fooled by the laid-back atmosphere, many New Orleans residents take voodoo myths very seriously.

Seemingly in every direction from the Marriott is a plethora of shops with New Orleans-themed knick-knacks, or go upscale with an excellent selection of designer boutiques.

A short drive from the hotel is New Orleans' Garden District residential area, site of elaborate and ornate "gingerbread-style" Victo-

rian homes.

About 20 new full-service restaurants have opened in New Orleans during the past year. Nearly all of the high-profile eateries in the tourism areas are serving meals, including Commander's Palace in the Garden District, which reopened last month.

Late last summer, celebrity chef Todd English opened a 170-seat French bistro, called Riche, in Harrah's Casino, which is down the street from the Marriott.

All of New Orleans' major museums and attractions are open, including the Audubon Zoo, the Aquarium of the Americas, the newly renamed National WWII Museum (formerly the National D-Day Museum) and Mardi Gras World.

Several of the streetcar lines are operating, though not the famous

St. Charles Avenue "Streetcar Named Desire" run, which remains closed until sometime next year.

Clearly, with Motorcoach Expo 2007 in New Orleans, attendees will be offered an intimate look at the beating heart of the Big Easy. And a critical piece of that heart is the local cuisine. After all, no trip to New Orleans is complete without taking the plunge and trying the city's unique fare.

For a relaxing afternoon, try a cup of coffee and a beignet at Café Du Monde, just a few blocks from the Marriott. The coffee is mixed with chicory, which softens the bitterness of the dark-roasted brew and adds a faint chocolate hue.

The beignets, French pastries sprinkled liberally with powdered sugar, will have you missing New Orleans even before you leave.

## Study

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from a public transit agency. However, the study did not attempt to quantify the nature of the competition or its impact.

- By a wide margin, motorcoach operators prefer to own their coaches than lease them.
- 70 percent of coach operators purchase their fuel only at retail.

• The average age of the companies responding to the survey was 26 years.

• About half of the companies surveyed operate other revenue generating vehicles besides motorcoaches.

### No comparison

Last month, ABA released two studies, called *Motorcoach Census 2005* and *Motorcoach Census Update 2006*. The 2005 census was designed to update a similar study conducted for the ABA in 1999 (released in July 2000), called *Motorcoach Census 2000*. The 2000 study was conducted by a Washington outfit called R.L. Banks & Associates that specializes in consulting work for the railroad industry.

The 2005 census and its 2006 update was conducted by Nathan Associates Inc., an Arlington, Va.-based company that provides economic analysis and testimony for

litigation and regulatory proceedings, as well as economic research for business and industry.

Interestingly, the very last sentence on the very last page of the 2005 census states that the methodology used in the Banks and Nathan studies "was somewhat different. Thus, the results of the two studies should not be used to discern trends in the motorcoach industry during 1999-2004."

Then, in something of a non sequitur, the study lays out the key findings of the two studies — side by side. Here are the results that were shown:

- Number of coach operators: 1999 — 4,000; 2004 — 3,581. That's a dip of more than 10 percent.
- Number of coaches: 1999 — 44,200; 2004 — 38,490. A decline of 13 percent.
- Number of passenger trips: 1999 — 863 million; 2004 — 595 million. A drop of 31 percent.
- Industry employment: 1999 — 190,000; 2004 — 163,000. A slide of 14 percent.

The newest census provides no insight into the reasons for, or cause of, the dramatic reduction in passenger trips.

### No longer No. 1

One of the consequences of the industry fall, however, is that it can no longer lay claim to carrying

more passengers than the airlines.

The U.S. airline industry carried 660 million domestic passengers last year, up from 635 million in 2004, or an increase of 4.1 percent. Those numbers do not include the more than 90 million passengers carried by Canadian airlines last year.

In the 2006 update Nathan Associates conducted for the ABA, it estimates there was a 6 percent increase in passenger trips on U.S. and Canadian coaches, boosting the total for the year to 631 million passenger trips. In response to a question, an editor for Nathan Associates said the update does include the impact of last year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the coach industry.

Still, the numbers mean U.S. and Canadian airlines carried at least 94 million more passengers than North American coach operators last year.

In addition to the increase in passenger trips last year, the 2006 update indicates the number of coaches operated by private North American bus companies increased 1.5 percent, to just over 39,000, and the total number of miles increased 2.3 percent to 2.44 billion.

### Motorcoach revenue

Nathan Associates also conducted a supplemental study of car-

riers — that had responded to the main census survey — to collect data on the revenue generated from operating motorcoaches. A total of 215 operators responded to the supplemental survey.

Charter companies operating 20 or more coaches generated an average of \$153,274 per coach in 2004, while those having 19 or fewer coaches generated an average of \$130,828 per bus. A carrier was categorized as a charter carrier if 70 percent or more of its revenue came from charter services.

Three weeks before the ABA released its study, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration released the preliminary results of its annual Safety Progress Report and it showed another increase in over-the-road bus fatalities last year.

The report shows there were 70 motorcoach fatalities last year, up from 57 in 2004, and nearly double the 36 fatalities in 2003. There were 22 airline fatalities in 2005, 14 in 2004, and 22 in 2003.

The number of large truck fatalities declined slightly last year to 5,212, from 5,235 in 2004.

The number of roadside inspections of buses jumped to 71,464 last year from 56,078 in 2004, the FMCSA said. In 2003, there were only 42,867 roadside inspections of over-the-road buses.

remain seated while the coach is in motion. And if it is necessary to walk while the coach is moving, passengers should always use handrails and supports. Keep the aisle free of all property and debris.

3. Emergency Contact. Advise passengers to call 911 via cellular telephone in the event of an emergency.

4. Emergency Exits. Point out the location of all emergency exits (push-out windows, roof vent and side door), and explain how to operate them, including the emergency door release located on the dash or in the stairwell.

Emphasize that, whenever feasible, the motorcoach door should be the primary exit. Encourage able-bodied passengers to assist any injured or mobility impaired passengers during an emergency evacuation.

5. Restroom Emergency Push Button. Inform passengers of the emergency signal device in the restroom.

6. Fire extinguisher. Point out the location of the fire extinguisher.

Among the alternative methods of presenting safety information likely to be endorsed by the FMCSA are:

1. During boarding, distribute informational pamphlets to passengers.

Find a copy of the FMCSA announcement in the Federal Register by going to [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov). In the 2006 search box, search for pages 50971-50973.

## Calendar

### NOVEMBER 2006

**3-4 Northwest Motorcoach Association Roadeo and Annual Convention**, Yakima, Wash. Info: (425) 971-6161 or go to [www.nwmotorcoach.com](http://www.nwmotorcoach.com).

**3-7 National Tour Association Annual Convention**, Salt Lake City. Info: (800) 682-8886 or go to [www.NTA.travel](http://www.NTA.travel).

**11-15 Ontario Motor Coach Association Annual Conference and Marketplace**, Sheraton Downtown, Toronto. Info: (416) 229-6622 or go to [www.omca.com](http://www.omca.com).

**12 Kick-Off Party OMCA Annual Conference**, Sheraton Downtown, Toronto. Info: Go to [www.omca.com](http://www.omca.com).

**22-25 17th National Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference**, Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, Wash. Info: (360) 705-7929 or [www.trbruralconference.org](http://www.trbruralconference.org).

**29-30 3rd annual United Motorcoach Association Safety Management Seminar**, National Transportation Safety Board Academy, Ashburn, Va. Info: (800) 424-8262 or to [www.uma.org](http://www.uma.org).

comments.

USDOT Web Site: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site.

By fax: 1-202-493-2251.

By mail: Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Submit three copies of written comments.

Hand Delivery: Submit three copies to Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C., between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Comments must refer to Docket Number FMCSA-2005-21324.

Questions? Contact Peter Chandler, FMCSA Commercial Passenger Carrier Safety Division, at (202) 366-5763. Or, write him at the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

Find a copy of the FMCSA announcement in the Federal Register by going to [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov). In the 2006 search box, search for pages 50971-50973.

## FMCSA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for coach passengers to receive pre-trip safety information similar to the evacuation information given during pre-flight safety briefings for commercial airline passengers.

NTSB officials also said that in several other coach crash investigations, passengers described a general sense of panic because they did not know what to do or how to get out of the bus.

Four years after the NTSB made its recommendations, the FMCSA held informal meetings with the United Motorcoach and American Bus associations and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance to discuss the issue. Out of those meetings grew a "working group" that began addressing the NTSB recommendations.

On the working group were coach operators and representatives from coach manufacturers, insurance companies, safety consulting, trade associations, state agencies, and other federal regulatory agencies and industry representatives.

Within about five months, the working group came up with a response to the NTSB recommendations. The group said it would be best to initially encourage the motorcoach industry to take volun-

tary action to improve pre-trip safety awareness.

The coach industry representatives maintained it was impossible to develop a uniform passenger safety awareness regulation that was flexible enough for industry-wide application due to the broad operational variations within the industry.

The group contended that development and promotion of a list of best practices was a more effective and realistic alternative to ensure motorcoach passengers receive safety information.

In a notice published in the Federal Register, the FMCSA says it intends to work with the industry and others to develop guidelines for informing bus passengers about safety and emergency issues before trips.

The FMCSA notice also outlines what are likely to be the topics to be covered when informing passengers of safety issues. These safety awareness minimums are:

1. Driver Direction. Advise passengers to look to the driver for direction and follow his/her instructions.

2. Avoiding Slips and Falls. Warn passengers to exercise care when getting on and off the coach, and to grab the handrail when using the steps. Encourage passengers to

remain seated while the coach is in motion. And if it is necessary to walk while the coach is moving, passengers should always use handrails and supports. Keep the aisle free of all property and debris.

3. Emergency Contact. Advise passengers to call 911 via cellular telephone in the event of an emergency.

4. Emergency Exits. Point out the location of all emergency exits (push-out windows, roof vent and side door), and explain how to operate them, including the emergency door release located on the dash or in the stairwell.

Emphasize that, whenever feasible, the motorcoach door should be the primary exit. Encourage able-bodied passengers to assist any injured or mobility impaired passengers during an emergency evacuation.

5. Restroom Emergency Push Button. Inform passengers of the emergency signal device in the restroom.

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Among the alternative methods of presenting safety information likely to be endorsed by the FMCSA are:

1. During boarding, distribute informational pamphlets to passengers.



Niagara Scenic purchased its first ABC M1035 midsize bus.



Prevost H3-45s were acquired when it launched its service.

## Niagara Scenic Tours grows by filling coach-service void

HAMBURG, N.Y. — When Coach USA retreated from upstate New York last year, Keith Fisher saw an opening.

Fisher, whose family has operated buses and trucks in the Buffalo, N.Y., area for nearly 80 years, restarted Niagara Scenic Bus Lines on Jan. 1. This time, however, he gave the company a slightly different name, calling it Niagara Scenic Tours.

Since then, even Fisher has been surprised by the success of the re-born Niagara Scenic. He describes it as "phenomenal."

Fisher, who is president of the family-owned Fisher Group, and another member of the family started Niagara Scenic Bus Lines in the early 1980s, but sold the business to Coach USA in 1996.

Meanwhile, the family continued operating Fisher Bus Service, a

school-bus operation, and Fisher North American Moving and Storage.

Fisher decided to recreate Niagara Scenic when Coach USA closed its North Tonawanda, N.Y. terminal. He invested \$1.6 million in new Prevost H3-45 coaches, plus a used 2002-model H3-45, and recruited a handful of employees.

Ten months later, the Niagara Scenic fleet consists of seven coaches and four midsize buses. The latest addition is a new ABC M1035 midsize bus, the company's first equipment purchase from ABC Companies.

The 29-passenger, 2006-model M1035 coach features a flush-type restroom, rear luggage compartment, and parcel racks with individual reading lights and A/C vents. Power-train components include a Mercedes Benz engine and

Allison transmission.

Fisher's coach operation provides charter and group-tour serv-

ices to tour companies, seniors, schools and college athletic groups. The company also offers tours to

New York City, New England, Atlantic City, down the eastern seaboard, and other destinations.

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## Diesel prices are projected to fall in '07

WASHINGTON — Diesel fuel prices in the fourth quarter are expected to average \$2.62 per gallon, a decrease of 30 cents from third-quarter prices, the U.S. Energy Department projects.

For all of 2006, diesel will average \$2.73 a gallon and \$2.66 per gallon next year, the DOE said in its monthly energy outlook.

A month ago, the department estimated that the price of diesel would average \$2.81 this year and fall to \$2.78 next year.

Part of the reason for the revised price projections is the higher inventories of distillate fuels, the DOE said. Distillate stockpiles in recent weeks have been nearly 24 million barrels more than during the same time last year and 24.6 million above the average of the last five years.

The price of heating oil, which often parallels diesel in winter months, will rise 6 to 7 percent this winter, DOE said. Both diesel and heating oil are distillate fuels.

Average retail regular gasoline prices also continue to decline. The average retail price for gasoline is expected to be \$2.29 in the fourth quarter, down 54 cents from the third quarter. Regular gasoline prices are projected to average \$2.58 in 2006 and \$2.51 next year, DOE said.

## Greener

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Someone has figured out that it would take roughly 60 2007-compliant diesel-powered coaches to emit the amount of soot produced by a single coach made in 1988.

The U.S. EPA reports that refinery production of ultra-low-sulfur diesel currently tops 2.4 million barrels a day, or more than 90 percent of the demand. So, the vast majority of fueling stations are selling it.

Once fully implemented, ULSD will result in the annual reduction of 2.6 million tons of nitrogen oxides and 110,000 tons of particulate matter, said the EPA's Johnson.

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## Dick Fullington of Fullington Trailways dies at age 87

CLEARFIELD, Pa. — J. Richard Fullington Sr., who not only was born into the bus industry but excelled in it for more than 65 years, died here Oct. 19, one week before his 88th birthday. He was the former owner and president of Fullington Trailways.

Mr. Fullington epitomized the relationship-driven nature of the motorcoach industry during the second half of the 20th century. He once told a magazine interviewer:

"The whole bus industry is real family oriented. Going to the conventions you see everyone. We're in competition but that doesn't get in the way of friendships." He reveled in the daily challenge of trying to sustain a successful bus business.

When Mr. Fullington was born in the fall of 1918, his father didn't have an automobile but he had a White bus. When it was time to take Mr. Fullington's mother, Iva, to the hospital, they took the White.

The Fullingtons had a bus because Mr. Fullington's grandfather began a surrey service in 1908 that became a bus service in 1915 when he purchased two Whites.

Growing up, Mr. Fullington's playground was the family bus barn. In his teens, however, he went to work in the family building supply business. At 21, he began his bus career, driving a 19-passenger coach between Clearfield in central Pennsylvania and Washington D.C.

In 1936, Mr. Fullington graduated from high school, the same year the family expanded into the school bus business. As a youth, Mr. Fullington excelled in sports and won a football scholarship to Pennsylvania State University, but family obligations kept him from attending.

As an adult, Mr. Fullington was a huge Penn State football fan. He was a member of the Nittany Lion's Presidents Club and The Nittany Society, and created an early "party bus."

Mr. Fullington enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1944, serving in the Pacific during World War II.

After the war, his life was largely devoted to the family businesses and the motorcoach industry. In 1956, he and his wife, Tillie, took over ownership and management of the company.

Under Mr. Fullington's direction, the business changed, diversified and grew. The company joined the Trailways Transportation System in 1980, and today operates nearly 50 coaches, 225 school buses and 11 limousines. He retired four years ago but retained the title of chairman.

Mr. Fullington was active in

industry organizations, including the United Motorcoach Association, the American Bus Association, the Pennsylvania Bus Association and Trailways. He has been

a supporter of the Museum of Bus Transportation in Hershey, Pa.

Mr. Fullington is survived by sons John Richard Jr. and Michael Lee, and daughter Aerial Fulling-

ton Weisman. Mrs. Weisman, who is married to Milt Weisman, is president/CEO of Fullington Trailways; Michael is vice president/COO.

Memorials have been estab-

lished with St. John Lutheran Church, 217 E. Pine St., Clearfield, PA 16830, and the Museum of Bus Transportation, 161 Museum Dr., Hershey, PA 17033.

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