

Indiana transit charter probe turns criminal

LAFAYETTE, IND. — A charter bus rules violation complaint filed against this city's public transit agency apparently has grown into a federal criminal investigation.

Agents from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General are looking into the possibility the Greater Lafayette Public Transportation Corp., which operates under the name CityBus, may have falsified documents so it would not have to first offer some charter business to private motorcoach operators.

Federal charter bus rules limit the type of charters that tax-funded public transit agencies are allowed to do without first giving private carriers the opportunity to bid on the work.

The Federal Transit Administration began looking into CityBus several months ago in response to a complaint filed by Imperial Travel Service of Lafayette, which contended the transit agency was conducting charter business that should have been offered to private companies.

The investigation is winding down and a ruling is expected to be announced within the next few weeks, according to the FTA regional office in Chicago.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►



A complaint filed with the FTA says the St. Petersburg downtown Looper trolley, shown above, is being used to provide illegal charters.

Feds investigate circulator in downtown St. Pete, Fla.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. — Federal transit regulators who are investigating a business group's operation of a downtown circulator service for possible charter rules violations are getting an assist from an unusual source — the area's public transit system.

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority said it not only is cooperating with the Federal Transit Administration, but also is gathering information from the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership about its operation of the popular Looper circulator.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►

The business partnership, which has been running the downtown service for several years, has been accused by a private motorcoach operator of joining with the city and expanding its circulator activities to include illegal charter services for a number of special community events.

The complaint with the FTA was filed by Brian Scott of Escot Bus Lines in Largo, Fla., who says private carriers were not given the opportunity to provide the service — as required by federal rules.

Bill would require tougher ADA enforcement efforts

WASHINGTON — A bill in Congress aimed at “curbside” bus operators that routinely ignore requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act has angered small and midsize tour and charter bus operators across the U.S. who see the legislation as creating a regulatory nightmare for them while it seeks to protect the turf of Greyhound and other large line-run carriers.

The bill is called the Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act of 2007 (H.R. 3985) and it is being pushed aggressively in Congress by the American Bus Association on behalf of its largest line-haul members who face stiff competition from curbside operators on their routes, particularly in

the northeastern U.S.

But while the bill — as currently written — ostensibly would bring federal regulators crashing down on the curbside operators because they do not provide wheelchair accessible buses and reportedly frequently discriminate against people with disabilities, its long-term impact would be felt everyday by all private bus operators.

Among other things, it would substantially increase record-keeping requirements; make compliance reviews more onerous and risky, and open up private operators to the increased possibility of fines and enforcement action by the U.S. Department of Justice working hand-in-glove with the Federal Mo-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

Seatbelt bill introduced

WASHINGTON — A bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate that would require seatbelts and fire fighting equipment on over-the-road buses, as well as stronger windows and roofs.

In addition, the bill calls for better testing of commercial drivers before their licenses are granted.

The Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act of 2007 was introduced by Texas Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, who say they were motivated by the tragic Hurricane Rita bus fire

of two years ago and the Bluffton University baseball team overpass crash of earlier this year.

“I am pleased to co-sponsor new legislation that will enhance federal safety guidelines governing motorcoaches,” Hutchison said in announcing the bill. “With an eye toward prevention, we can help avert future motorcoach accidents and make the roads safer for everyone.”

Added Brown: “In the wake of the Bluffton bus crash, one thing is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

Prevost coaches get Volvo power

STE. CLAIRE, Quebec — Prevost Car has made it official, a Volvo engine will be available as an option in its coaches beginning early next year.

Since Volvo invested in Prevost a dozen years ago, it has been a forgone conclusion that it was just a matter of time before Volvo-branded engines showed up in production Prevost coaches.

The coming out party for the new

Prevost-Volvo combination will be at UMA Motorcoach Expo next month in San Francisco.

An H3-45 model with a Volvo D-13 engine will be displayed at the Prevost stand on the Expo floor, while a Prevost X3-45, also outfitted with a D-13, will be available for text drives on the streets of San Francisco.

Prevost Vice President of Coach Sales

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►

Detroit Diesel debuts DD15 engine

REDFORD, Mich. — Detroit Diesel, the long-time No. 1 engine supplier to the motorcoach industry, has officially taken the wraps off the successor engine to the Series 60.

Detroit says it spent nearly five years and more money than any engine manufacturer has ever invested in the development of an engine — \$1.5 billion — to bring the heavy-duty DD15 power plant to market. The DD15 displaces 14.8 liters and is a six-cylin-

der, in-line design.

In announcing the engine, Detroit Diesel said the DD15 is designed to provide “best-in-class fuel consumption, as well as industry-leading power and performance.”

To achieve those results, Detroit says the DD15 employs a new “amplified common rail” fuel-injection system, as well as “innovative turbo compounding” technology.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►



MCI'S GO GREEN SALE INCENTIVE

Fast-track your way to a greener fleet and get a \$6,000 credit.

Upgrade to a low-emission MCI® J4500 or D4505 coach today and enjoy big year-end incentives. See our ad on page 7 and contact your regional sales manager.

Sale ends December 15, 2007.



Call 1-800-466-1446 or visit www.mcicoach.com/greenbucks.



TAKE A BIGGER BITE OUT OF CO₂ EMISSIONS

INTRODUCING THE VAN HOOL TD925 –
TAKING ECO-FRIENDLY TRANSPORT TO A HIGHER LEVEL.

Imagine one vehicle with the potential to reduce the congestion, pollution and fuel consumption of up to 83 cars. Then go a step further and envision reducing your fleet size with one solution that carries 26 more riders than a standard 57-seat coach. The new eco-engineered Van Hool TD925 double deck intercity coach clearly demonstrates our commitment to environmentally-responsible technology – delivering our highest capacity equipment, loaded with onboard features designed to attract and impress more riders than ever before!

- comfortable, secure seating for up to 83 passengers
- centrally located restroom
- front and rear staircases for efficient loading/unloading
- luggage compartment
- ADA access with 2 tie downs
- State-of-the-art HVAC with zone control
- Ceiling mounted flush TV monitors and 2 deck entertainment system
- Exciting upper level views and so much more!



Exclusive U.S.  Distributor

www.abc-companies.com

Drive more green to your bottom line with the high capacity, eco-friendly TD925. Contact your ABC Account Executive for details.

MIDWEST 800-222-2875	NORTHEAST 800-222-2873	SOUTHEAST 800-222-2871	SOUTHWEST 800-222-2877	WESTERN 800-322-2877
--------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

Diesel continues to set records

The price of a gallon of diesel fuel soared above \$3.50 a gallon in many parts of the U.S. last month, nearly \$1 a gallon higher than it was a year ago.

Practically every week in November the price set a new record, smashing the previous record of nearly \$3.16 a gallon, first set in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in October 2005.

The average price of diesel has been above \$3 for a record ten consecutive weeks, the U.S. Department of Energy reported late last month.

The average retail price has soared in every region tracked by the DOE.

The biggest increases, however, were in the Central Atlantic states, on the West Coast and, of course, in perennial high-price-leader California.

At one point, the average retail price in California was hovering near \$3.70 a gallon, and talk of \$4 diesel was everywhere.

A year ago, the retail price of diesel averaged \$2.68 a gallon in California.

The "lowest" prices for diesel,

if anyone considers \$3.32 a gallon low, were in the Gulf Coast and Lower Atlantic states.

The price difference between standard ultra-low-sulfur diesel and cheaper, but increasingly hard to find, low-sulfur diesel continued to shrink, to 5.7 cents. The low-sulfur diesel in the national system is not being replaced as it's used up.

Tight supply, including spot shortages in some places; growing demand worldwide, and "heightened geopolitical risks" are sufficient to explain the high prices of diesel and gasoline, says the DOE.

Pope Benedict to visit U.S.

BALTIMORE — Pope Benedict will make his first visit to the United States in April, creating a significant business opportunity for motorcoach operators.

The five-day visit will include public Masses at the new Washington Nationals Stadium in the District of Columbia and at Yankee Stadium in New York.

The pope arrives on April 15, with his first event a meeting with President George W. Bush at the White House on April 16, followed by a gathering with U.S. bishops at the Shrine of the Immaculate Con-

ception.

The Mass in Washington will be April 17, giving the public its first chance to see Benedict XVI. Later in the day the pope will take part in an inter-religious event at the John Paul II Cultural Center.

The New York leg of the papal visit will begin with an address to the United Nations on April 18.

The following day, the pope will visit a seminary and say Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral. On the 20th, the pope will visit Ground Zero and conduct a Mass at Yankee Stadium.

Strategic show alliance unveiled by UMA, NTA

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The National Tour Association and the United Motorcoach Association have established a partnership to collaborate on their annual conventions.

UMA will coordinate future motorcoach exhibits at the NTA Annual Convention, and the UMA Motorcoach Expo will feature the NTA Destination and Attractions Avenue.

In announcing the arrangement, the two associations acknowledge each other's expertise and focus in the travel marketplace, and said they will support each other's members from those positions.

"The motorcoach is an important component in the tour operator product," said outgoing NTA Chairman and CEO Randy Julian of Julian Tours. "UMA's expertise will further enhance NTA operators' knowledge of new motorcoach product that will assist them in product development at the NTA Convention and beyond."

"We are pleased and excited to formalize our relationship with NTA," added UMA Chairman Brian Scott of Escot Bus Lines. "The membership makeup of the two organizations are a natural fit, bringing together the best of the touring and motorcoach industries."

UMA Motorcoach Expo 2008, which will take place Jan. 16-20 in San Francisco, will feature an aisle composed of NTA-member destinations and attractions that will have an opportunity to promote their products and services to UMA-member companies.

"NTA members represent the full gamut of destinations and packaged travel," noted UMA President and CEO Victor Parra. "We want NTA members' diverse product to be featured for our members at the UMA Expo to ensure UMA members are a part of the NTA tour operator product. This new partnership will profit not

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

Nat'l Interstate names CEO

RICHFIELD, Ohio — National Interstate Corp. has announced that David W. Michelson will become its president and chief executive on Jan. 1.

Michelson succeeds National Interstate founder Alan R. Spachman, who will remain company chairman.

The change is the latest iteration of a management succession

plan that was started more than two years ago.

Michelson has served as company president and chief operating officer during the past year and has held several other key positions since joining the company 15 years ago. He has spent his entire 28-year professional career in the insurance industry.

Spachman, who has served National Interstate's chief executive since the company's inception in 1989, said Michelson has earned "the recognition and increased responsibility this promotion represents."

The company also announced that its board had a five cents per share dividend. The dividend is payable Dec. 14, to shareholders of record on Nov. 30.

Correction

A photograph in the Nov. 15 issue showed Thomas J. Carrigan, senior staff consultant for the Daecher Consulting Group, conducting a training session onboard the Motor Coach Industries' coach driving simulator. Carrigan was incorrectly identified in the photo.

LCD UPGRADES!

It's As Easy As 1,2,3,

Replace Your CRT Monitors



With NEW 10.4" LCDs

or

UPGRADE Your Current 10.4" LCDs To NEW 15.4" LCD Widescreens



Stick with the Trusted. DEMAND REI.



REI

www.radioeng.com

Toll-Free SALES 1.800.228.9275

THE DOCKET

Biodiesel makers warned about lousy quality fuel, EPA threatens big fines

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency has warned producers of biodiesel they could be fined up to \$32,500 a day if their fuel does not meet quality standards.

In a “guidance document” sent to producers and blenders last month, the EPA said it plans to increase enforcement to assure biodiesel producers are complying with quality and technical standards set by ASTM International.

EPA said that “any biodiesel that does not meet the version of ASTM D 6751 in effect at the time of registration will be considered an unregistered fuel subject to... civil penalties of up to \$32,500 per day, per violation.”

For example, the ASTM (formerly American Society for Testing and Materials) standards set the flash point for biodiesel at 199.4 degrees Fahrenheit, and limits glycerin content to 0.24 percent of the total volume.

Jenna Higgins, a spokeswoman for the National Biodiesel Board, said the industry group worked with EPA on the guidance document, which was part of a larger industry outreach program to raise awareness about biodiesel quality.

The group also has “been working with state and federal agencies to request that they engage in fuel quality enforcement. That level of enforcement is something our own members — many of them fuel suppliers — asked us to do. That should give you an idea of how serious our industry is about quality,” Higgins said.

There have been reports in recent months that a significant number of producers were failing to turn out biodiesel that meets the ASTM quality specifications.

Some in the trucking industry want the EPA to get tougher with

biodiesel producers because of problems caused by off-spec biodiesel. The truckers want enforcement proceedings against producers and resellers that fail to meet the required quality specifications.

Higgins said the biodiesel board was supportive of increased enforcement and the use of fines. “We absolutely encourage fuel-quality enforcement, including fines if necessary,” she said. “It would be to the detriment of our industry to wait for the market to sort out the bad actors.”

In its advisory, EPA also said buyers should purchase biodiesel only from reputable dealers.

“Improperly processed biodiesel may contain unreacted or partially reacted oils or fats — measured by the total glycerin — which can cause the fuel to gel at higher than expected temperatures,” the agency said.

With winter quickly approaching, colder temperatures can cause problems with poor-quality biodiesel. In fact, a lot of the biodiesel quality concerns are exacerbated in cold weather.

For example, one of the common problems experienced by biodiesel producers is the failure to remove glycerin from the finished product. In warmer weather, a higher glycerin concentration than what the spec allows may not immediately cause a clogged fuel filter. However, in colder weather, that same off-spec product could strand a vehicle.

Higgins noted that it is against the law to sell any fuel that does not meet an ASTM specification, and that biodiesel in blends of up to 20 percent made with on-spec biodiesel, will perform all winter just like diesel, provided the fuel distributor has properly treated the blend for cold weather use.

Congress extends ban on Internet tax

WASHINGTON — Both houses of Congress have voted to extend — for another seven years — the ban on state and local taxes on access to the Internet.

The House first extended the preemption for four years, and then the Senate made it seven years. The House went along with the Senate’s change.

The existing tax moratorium, which has been in effect for nine years, and had already been extended twice, would have expired last month.

The only controversy over the extension was whether or not to make it permanent, but state government opposition prevented that.

The bill is H.R. 3678.

Cheating on drug tests: Too easy

WASHINGTON — Just how difficult is it for commercial vehicle drivers to cheat on drug and alcohol tests?

Not difficult at all, according to federal investigators, and many small truck and bus companies are “overseeing their own substance abuse programs.”

There was a Congressional hearing on the issue last month and the Government Accountability Office was asked to come back in May with suggestions for making improvements to federal drug test requirements and procedures.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration data indicate that 1.3 to 2.8 percent of commercial drivers randomly tested between 1994 and 2005 tested positive for illegal drugs.

However, in two 72-hour sessions this year, Oregon roadside inspectors collected 500 urine samples from commercial drivers — mostly heavy-truck drivers — and found an average of nearly 9 and 10 percent positive results. The Oregon samples had been tested anonymously, so follow-up was impossible.

Of course, there are other possible explanations for the Oregon rates, such as false positives and differences among testing methods, but the results suggest the problem may be more widespread than FMCSA figures indicate.

In February, the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit heard a Minneapolis television station report that four of the five local USDOT drug test collection sites allowed ways to cheat on urine tests. Based on that report, the committee asked the GAO to conduct an undercover investigation.

Investigators invented two trucking companies, produced bogus driver licenses and then posed as truckers to test 24 collection sites nationwide. The GAO also interviewed all parties involved in testing, from carrier representatives to federal officials, and analyzed regulations and data.

By using their bogus driver licenses to gain access to the 24 sites investigated, the GAO investigators demonstrated that a drug user could send someone to take a drug test using fake identification.

Twenty-two of the 24 selected sites did not adequately follow the remaining protocols. For example, 75 percent of sites tested didn’t

Truckers ask Congress for better drug, alcohol testing

WASHINGTON — The trucking industry wants Congress to upgrade drug and alcohol testing procedures for commercial vehicle drivers.

The call by the American Trucking Associations for enhanced testing came just days before the Government Accountability Office — the investigative arm of Congress — issued a report saying it was surprisingly easy for drivers to cheat on random drug tests. (See accompanying article.)

“Trucking has worked diligently to eradicate drug and alcohol abuse from its work force,” said Bill Graves, ATA president and chief executive officer. “And we’ve made great strides in recent years. But now, trucking is looking to the government for additional help.”

ATA urged Congress to authorize and fund a centralized

restrict access to items that could be used to change the specimen, such as running water, soap or air freshener.

The GAO team also bought drug-masking products over the Internet and was able to mix them with real specimens at the drug-testing sites “without being caught by site collectors,” the agency said.

Drug-screening labs never realized there was a problem. Every drug masking product went undetected by the drug screening labs.

The GAO investigators also found a significant lack of drug and alcohol testing compliance among carriers, particularly small operators and self-employed truckers.

Here’s the problem: A one-vehicle bus or truck company still has to implement a drug and alcohol testing program. These companies usually do it using a third-party administrator. However, that administrator doesn’t have the authority to enforce regulations if drug use is indicated.

According to the National Transportation Safety Board, these small carriers “are in the precarious position of overseeing their own substance abuse program.”

Drug testing protocol violations are noted in more than 40

clearinghouse for positive drug and alcohol testing results of commercial drivers to ensure that motor carrier employers are aware of previous positive test results during the hiring process.

The association also asked Congress to encourage the U.S. Department of Transportation to implement an incentive-based random testing rate requirement and focus on motor carriers with above-average positive test results.

Recommendations further included banning the manufacture, sale and distribution of products that help drivers evade drug tests and penalizing those who use them; directing the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and USDOT to initiate a rulemaking that allows the testing of hair as an alternative to urine; and improving oversight of specimen collection facilities and practices.

percent of FMCSA safety audits conducted since 2003 of carriers that have recently started operations and more than 70 percent of the compliance reviews conducted on carriers in the industry since 2001.

Even when FMCSA is able to ensure that carriers are in compliance with drug testing requirements, the urine test can be subverted. Drug masking products such as adulterants work well and destroy the evidence of their presence.

In 2005, the GAO testified that 400 products were marketed to mislead drug tests. Furthermore, the required test covers only five drug categories and it may provide a clean result if a person has not used any of these drugs recently.

Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minn., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who asked GAO to investigate, said the report was “frankly astonishing and shocking and dismaying. You can manipulate the tests, you can mask substance abuse and go undetected on the roadways.”

Oberstar said the system was broken and was placing other drivers in danger. “It fails, it is not sufficient, it is not protecting the public interest,” he said.

Wisconsin vehicle registration fees jump 30 percent

MADISON, Wis. — Vehicle registration fees, including those for over-the-road buses, are going up more than 30 percent in Wisconsin effective Jan. 1.

The increases, included in legislation that ended a deadlock over a budget for the state, were adopted by the state legislature and signed into law last month by Gov. Jim Doyle.

Adoption of a state budget had been delayed for months because of wrangling over various tax proposals Gov. Doyle had offered up. Among his ideas that were shot down by the legislature were an oil company franchise fee (a fuel tax that would have been imposed at the wholesale level; see March 1 Bus & Motorcoach News); no combined reporting for corporate income tax; no fuel tax increase, and no diversions from the state

transportation fund.

A very expensive health-care proposal for the state also was shot down.

In the place of these proposals, Wisconsinites got a huge increase in vehicle registration fees — across the board. Here are examples; the fee for:

- A 38,000-pound motorcoach goes from \$593 to \$772.
- A 44,000-pound motorcoach goes from \$708 to \$921.
- An 80,000-pound tractor-trailer combination goes from \$1,987 to \$2,560.
- Autos and light trucks go from \$55 to \$75.

Tom Howells, president, of the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association, which manages the Wisconsin Motor Coach Association, said his organization and its members were none to happy about the

increase.

The budget package also included enabling legislation that

will allow Wisconsin to participate in the Unified Carrier Registration Agreement, effective for 2007.

For more information, contact Howells at (608) 833-6800 or howells@witruck.org.

UCR payments are posted on FMCSA Safer System

WASHINGTON — Unified Carrier Registration data for motorcoach operators and truckers is now being posted on the Safer System Website of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

That's significant because state and federal authorities can instantly tell whether an operator's Unified Carrier Registration fees have been paid or not.

The Unified Carrier Registration Agreement is the new program that replaces the old Single State Registration System.

The 34 states that are members of the new system began collecting 2007 UCRA fees about three months ago and enforcement of

the program began Nov. 15.

The UCR information can be found at <http://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov>.

Under the list of "FMCSA searches" at the bottom of the page go to the last item, "Unified Carrier Registration," and click on that link. When the next window pops up, enter a USDOT number or MC/MX number.

A box will come up showing whether an operator has registered for the current year; the most recent UCR registration year for which the operator has paid; the date the operator registered; the operator's UCR registration base state, and the date the base state provided the update to the feds.

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 provide the service.

UMA urges appropriate operators to take the time to respond to these notices.

Clay County, Ga. Deadline: Dec. 7, 2007. Write to: Gerald V. Anderson III, Commission Chairman, Clay County Board of Commissioners, P.O. Box 519, Fort Gaines, GA 39851. Phone: (229) 768-3238.

Brevard County, Fla. Deadline: Dec. 10, 2007. Write to: James P. Liesenfelt, Director, Space Coast Area Transit, 401 S.

Varr Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922. Phone: (321) 635-7999.

Monterey County, Calif. Deadline: 5 p.m. Dec. 12, 2007. Write to: William Morris, Contract Transportation Manager, Monterey-Salinas Transit, One Ryan Ranch Rd., Monterey, CA 93940. Phone: (831) 899-2558.

Jackson, Tenn. Deadline: 2 p.m. Dec. 20, 2007. Write to: Michele T. Jackson, Marketing/Planning Coordinator, Jackson Transit Authority, 241 E. Deaderick St., Jackson, TN 38301. Phone: (731) 423-0200.

San Angelo, Texas. Deadline: Dec. 31, 2007. Sean Scott, Concho Valley Transit District, P.O. Box 60050, San Angelo, TX. Phone: (325) 944-9666.

Some Introductions,

Simply Need No Introduction



The all-new Dodge Sprinter shuttle bus from DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses has the versatility you have been looking for, only now with a refined look and overall increase in length and height. It can now comfortably seat up to 15 - plus driver, and provides superior ride and handling. With its roomy passenger cabin with plenty of standing room, effortless passenger boarding, and other optional onboard amenities, the Dodge Sprinter shuttle bus will become one of your most demanded shuttles in your fleet.

Continuing to lead the way, the all-new Dodge Sprinter shuttle bus offers extended maintenance intervals and provides exceptional fuel savings, making this the vehicle of choice. All-in-all, it opens new opportunities with endless possibilities — contact us today to discover the all-new Dodge Sprinter shuttle bus.

DAIMLERCHRYSLER
Commercial Buses North America

SPRINTER

contact us: 800.882.8054 | sales@dcbusna.com | www.dcbusna.com

Seatbelt bill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

clear — we need stronger safety regulations. This bill takes the lessons learned from the tragic events of the Bluffton University baseball team's motorcoach accident and aims to correct them for future riders. It will ensure that motorcoaches are built, equipped and operated to be as safe as possible."

The legislation would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to overhaul federal safety standards applicable to motorcoaches and improve the operational requirements of drivers and companies.

The legislation supposedly would lead to the adoption of available safety technologies, strengthen oversight and compliance with federal safety rules, and encourage better training of motorcoach operators to protect passengers from death and injury due to ejection, rollover, roof crush and fires.

"We are in favor of anything that improves passenger safety," said Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association, which represents 900 bus operators.

But Parra said he was concerned the bill did not mandate extensive testing of bus enhancements before requiring operators to install them.

"We're not against seatbelts, we just want to make sure that science drives policy," said Parra. "Not the other way around."

There is a provision in the bill for testing but it is not clear exactly how much testing would be required.

"If there's a better way to protect people on motorcoaches, we're all for it," Parra reiterated. "But let's look at the best way to do it."

He noted that coach windows are designed to open easily during an accident or fire to allow passengers to escape. And he pointed out that there's no guarantee those on-board will wear seatbelts.

Two distinctly different views

For the Bluffton team

*From the Toledo Blade
Toledo, Ohio*

THE nation needs tougher safety standards for long-distance passenger buses. The National Transportation Safety Board has known that for years.

The horrifying tragedy the Bluffton University baseball team suffered last March brought that home to the nation. Now, Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) have introduced a long-overdue bill that would help save lives.

Their efforts are at least partly because of the perseverance of John Betts, the father of one of the five baseball players killed, along with the bus driver and his wife, in that March 2 crash.

Yet, the United Motorcoach Association is indicating it will do what it can to stall, or kill, that bill. That must not be allowed to happen. The Brown-Hutchison bill calls for seat belts on charter and passenger buses that travel interstate, better design to prevent passengers from being ejected in a crash, stronger roofs that will hold up in rollover accidents, and more mandatory training for drivers.

The federal government has recommended some of these improvements for years. The NTSB says seat belts could keep passengers from being tossed around or ejected from a bus. True, it is not clear whether more of the Bluffton baseball players would have survived if they had been wearing seat belts — though two of the

dead were thrown out of the bus and pinned beneath it, something that would not have happened had they been belted in.

Some of the teammates were stretched out on their seats or lying in the aisle fast asleep when the early morning crash occurred. Victor Parra, president of the motorcoach association, has been arguing that restraints wouldn't have helped those students — and technically, he's right. But, that's no excuse to dismiss making safety improvements. His claim that more testing is necessary is merely a stalling tactic, and a contemptible one, in view of what happened to the team. We have every right to be not just disappointed but angry that the association isn't more cooperative.

Long-distance buses account for more than 630 million passenger trips a year — two for every man, woman, and child in America. Tragically, about 23 people die in bus accidents every year.

We all owe Mr. Betts a debt of gratitude. This grieving father was not content simply to accept what he was told. He had to find some answers, and gallantly examined the bus wreckage himself. What he found was that every one of the bus seats was still intact, but that there were belts in the front seats only. Had they been available for every seat and if passengers were required to wear them more lives might have been saved.

Congress needs to remember that when they address this bill, and not allow industry lobbyists to

Cheap politics

*From the Lima News
Lima, Ohio*

One expects Ohio's Democratic U.S. senator, Sherrod Brown, to push for more government regulations. He campaigned on his belief in the government solving all our problems. It would be nice, however, if Brown would refrain from exploiting tragedy no regulation could have prevented to promote his belief in the Nanny State.

Brown and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, ... introduced a bill that they say would increase motorcoach safety. In reality, the impact would be insignificant to safety.

The bill certainly would increase costs, as all regulation does, but it wouldn't guarantee riders are going to survive a crash such as the one the Bluffton University baseball team experienced.

Yet Brown decided the Bluffton University baseball team's bus crash in Atlanta earlier this year was the appropriate tragedy to use in promoting his and Bailey's bill.

"In the wake of the Bluffton bus crash, one thing is clear — we need stronger safety regulations," Brown said in a news release

announcing the bill. "This bill takes the lessons learned from the tragic events of the Bluffton University baseball team's motorcoach accidents, and aims to correct them for future riders. It will ensure that motorcoaches are built, equipped and operated to be as safe as possible."

Hutchison had her own bus tragedy to tie emotion to a greater hand for government.

The bill would require a variety of safety features, such as seat belts, anti-ejection glazing on windows, crash-resistant roofs and improved driver training.

But the Bluffton bus crash happened when the driver mistook an exit ramp for a continuation of the interstate. The bill doesn't address such mistakes, and couldn't.

Six people died in the accident and a seventh died later as a result of it. Short of the hand of God, it's hard to know what would have protected those seven people once the bus went over the side of the overpass.

Brown and Hutchison can't legislate an end to drivers making such a mistake. Their pretending to do so is nothing more than playing politics with tragedy.

'The bill certainly would increase costs, as all regulation does, but it wouldn't guarantee riders are going to survive a crash'

water down the measure.

(Bus & Motorcoach News

note: Only the driver seat was equipped with a seatbelt.)

How to contact us

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

E-mail: bsankey@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Fax: (405) 942-6201

Mail: 3108 NW 54th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

Call: (866) 930-8421

To subscribe or inquire about your subscription:

Call: (866) 930-8421

E-mail: ebalm@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Fax: (405) 942-6201

Mail: 3108 NW 54th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

To report corrections:

Call: (866) 930-8421

E-mail: bsankey@busandmotorcoachnews.com

To advertise or to mail advertising-related materials:

Call: Johnny Steger
(866) 930-8426

E-mail: jsteger@busandmotorcoachnews.com

Mail: 2200 N. Yarbrough, Suite B
Box No. 336
El Paso, TX 79925

To contact the
United Motorcoach Association:

Call: (800) 424-8262

Online: www.uma.org

To send advertisements or photographs
via the Internet:

E-mail: BMNews@jezac.com

©2007 by the United Motorcoach Association.
Reproduction in whole or in part without
written permission is prohibited.

ISSUE NO. 113
Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

Staff

Editor & Publisher
Victor Parra

Sales Director
Johnny Steger

Industry Editor
Ken Presley

Editorial Assistant
Amy Stalknecht

Accountant
Ted Williford

Senior Editor
Bruce Sankey

Associate Editor
Ellen Balm

Editorial Assistant
Mark Gedris

Art Director
Mary E. McCarty

Advisory Board

William Allen
Sierra Trailways
Sacramento, Calif.

Larry Benjamin
Northfield Lines
Northfield, Minn.

Dave Bolen
New World Tours
Bristow, Va.

David Brown
Holiday Tours
Randlemann, N.C.

Steve Brown
Brown Coach
Amsterdam, N.Y.

Bob Foley
ABC Companies
Faribault, Minn.

Gladys Gillis
Starline Transportation
Seattle

Robert Hume
Travel Mates Trailways
Harrisonburg, Va.

Daryl G. Johnson
J & J Charters
Crosby, Texas

Dale Krapf
Krapf Coaches
West Chester, Pa.

Godfrey Lebron
Paradise Trailways
Hicksville, N.Y.

Joan Libby
Cavalier Coach
Boston, Mass.

Marcia Milton
First Priority Trailways
District Heights, Md.

Michael Neustadt
Coach Tours
Brookfield, Conn.

Jeff Polzien
Red Carpet Tours
Oklahoma City

Tom Ready
Ready Bus Lines
LaCrescent, Minn.

Brian Scott
Escot Bus Lines
Largo, Fla.

Michelle Silvestro
National Interstate Insurance Co.
Richfield, Ohio

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

MCI'S GO GREEN SALE INCENTIVE

Sale Ends
12.15.07



Fast-Track Your Way to a Greener Fleet

Right now, MCI is offering **\$6,000** toward your purchase of a Fast-Track, in-stock low-emission MCI® J4500 or D4505 coach if you take delivery by **December 15, 2007!**

Apply your \$6,000 voucher toward • finance payments • coach graphics • MCI service center maintenance package • parts credit • coach-driving simulator rental. Take your pick, and you're green to go!

This year's introduction of **new engine technology** has been a success, with some powertrain combinations helping operators reduce their costs. If you have not experienced one of these new coaches, contact your regional sales manager today for a test drive and take advantage of our Go Green Sale Incentive.

Act early for the best selection of Fast-Track powertrain choices!

For more information on MCI's new motor coaches, call your regional sales manager today, or contact us at **1-800-466-1446** or visit www.mcicoach.com/greenbucks.



Going further!



MCI GreenBucks
\$6,000

toward the purchase of a new 'Fast-Track' 2008 MCI J4500 or D4505 coach by December 15, 2007.*

Not original voucher. Please visit www.mcicoach.com/greenbucks to download your actual voucher.
The number of coaches available and the time period are both limited. Offer expires December 15, 2007.

Get your new 'Fast-Track' 2008 MCI J4500 or D4505 coach equipped with a clean-diesel, low-emission engine today!

* Purchaser must take actual delivery of the new coach by December 15, 2007 using only one voucher per coach purchased. Does not apply to coaches purchased or funded by government agencies. Voucher is in U.S. dollars and has no cash value. For complete terms, visit www.mcicoach.com/greenbucks.

You've done Expo, now enjoy special tours of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO — After all the noise of UMA Motorcoach Expo 2008 has quieted down, after you have shaken hands with hundreds of colleagues and viewed the latest innovations in the industry, why not take a break and complete your Expo experience with a relaxing motorcoach tour of San Francisco or its surrounding area?

The United Motorcoach Association and Coach America/Franciscan Lines have partnered to offer Motorcoach Expo attendees discounted rates on a variety of tours. Whether you have three hours or three days to explore, you will find a tour that can meet your schedule.

Choose from the following:

Deluxe City Tour. Your guided journey will highlight famous landmarks and familiarize you with the unique sociology of San Francisco. Scheduled stops include Vista Point at the Golden Gate Bridge, the panoramic view of the city from atop Twin Peaks and other photo opportunities recommended by your driver-guide. Highlights and points of interest include the Civic Center, the Opera

House, Union Square, Chinatown, North Beach, Pier 39 and much more. Tour cost: \$33*

Monterey & Carmel Tours. This is a fully narrated motorcoach tour. The tour focuses on California's rugged Central Coast, a view that will both humble and inspire you. The tour includes scheduled stops at Steinbeck's Cannery Row in Monterey, 17 Mile Drive, Carmel and Silicon Valley. Tour cost: \$49

Muir Woods & Sausalito Tours. Marin County, home of the Muir Woods, is home to the few remaining groves of virgin coastal Redwoods. These redwoods are among the tallest and oldest trees in existence. The "Natural Trail" at Muir Woods leads you to the heart of its cathedral-like grove. In addition, you will visit Sausalito, an alluring village of art galleries, quaint shops and waterfront restaurants. Tour cost: \$35*

Wine Country Tours. You will experience Napa and Sonoma to the fullest with this tour, as you visit both large scale/high tech and small boutique wineries while learning about wine production

NTSB chairman to speak at Expo

SAN FRANCISCO — Mark V. Rosenker, the sometimes outspoken chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, will be a featured speaker at UMA Motorcoach Expo 2008 here next month.

Rosenker became the 11th chairman of the NTSB, the federal government's transportation accident investigative arm, in August 2006. He had been serving as acting chairman since March 2005. His two-year term as chairman runs until next August.

He joined the NTSB board in March 2003, and is in his second term, which expires at the end of 2010.

During his four-plus years on and enjoy wine tasting. Lunch opportunities abound at either Sonoma's historic Town Square or Yountville's rustic Vintage 1870 — a collection of 30 specialty shops and galleries. Tour cost: \$48

Yosemite Tours. One of the natural wonders of the world, Yosemite Valley has an unforgettable impact on everyone who visits it. Getting an early start, you will cross the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge at sunrise. Yosemite's glacier-carved grandeur awaits you in the Sierra Nevada

Mountains to the east. Your stay will include both a guided tour as well as time on your own for hiking, shopping and dining in Yosemite Village. Tour cost: \$110

the board, Rosenker has become very familiar with motorcoach-related safety issues. Earlier this year, he chaired the NTSB investigative hearing on the Hurricane Rita bus fire that killed 23 infirm nursing home residents. (See *March 15 Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

During that hearing and afterwards, Rosenker was highly critical of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, saying the agency's failures directly led to the September 2005 bus fire tragedy.

He also has testified before Congress on motorcoach safety. (See April 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Rosenker has a diverse profes-

sional background. He is a former deputy assistant to the president and director of the White House Military Office, and a retired major general in the Air Force Reserve.

His interest and experience in transportation safety dates back more than three decades to his time at a major national public affairs organization. His clients there included the American Safety Belt Council, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, and the Safety Helmet Council of America.

Mr. Rosenker's also served at the U.S. Department of Interior, the Federal Trade Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The 2½ hour Motorized Cable Car tour offers a more complete tour that includes the Golden Gate Bridge, Japan Town the Palace of Fine Arts and more. Tour cost: \$21

*Indicates this tour includes items which may be added for an additional fee. Be sure to ask a representative for more details on how to maximize your San Francisco experience. And ask about other possible discounts for Motorcoach Expo attendees.

To make reservations for any of the tours, call (888) 428-6937.



As the economy slows, it's time to think (a lot) smarter

By Dave Millhouser
ABC Companies

It was late September 2001, and it seemed as if everything to do with the motorcoach business had come to a grinding halt. Charter buses sat idle and new coaches seemed to be stacked like cordwood on manufacturers' lots.

That afternoon, as coincidence would have it, I made back-to-back phone calls to two nearly identical charter bus lines. Each was mid-sized, had immaculate equipment, good drivers and all the earmarks of a well-run company.

The owner of "Btfsplk Bus Line" was apoplectic. "The phones have stopped ringing, everyone has cancelled their trip and wants their deposit back. We're doomed." A little black cloud hovered over the whole conversation.

But at "Shmoo Lines," company president Ari was too busy to talk. He was calling all his customers booked to New York and Washington (then perceived as "destinations of death") and asking if they'd like to go somewhere else. Then he was going to search his

records to find groups that had gone to other venues and see if he could encourage them to go again... now.

The contrast was startling. I'm not sure how effective Ari's strategy was, but at least he HAD one.

If we're lucky, we may never again see such a disaster. In the aftermath, many companies failed but others learned valuable lessons that helped them survive, then thrive.

There are those who believe we're approaching an economic downturn, and that these lessons may need to be dusted off. In effect, it doesn't really matter. If the economy doesn't slow now it will cycle down eventually. It seems like a good idea to point out some operators' ideas in the hopes at least one or two may be helpful.

The most obvious was to downsize (we manufacturers HATE that). The upside is that many companies analyzed, for the first time, exactly how much business they had, and where it came from. 9-11 gave everyone an excuse to tighten belts without appearing to be a failure.

A few operators took an additional step.

They evaluated their customers in terms of who was willing to pay for quality, and who was a bottom feeder. They reduced their fleet to accommodate only the customers worth keeping, and worked hard at serving that clientele. The "fired" customers ended up occupying competitors, without adding to their bottom line.

One small bus line took out a Yellow Pages ad. Until this point, he'd relied on his home phone number, and did a huge amount of overflow work for a nearby carrier. But the small operator quickly figured out that, in slow times, "Big Bus Line" was going to use its own buses first, and he'd better get a grip on his own destiny.

He was the only bus line I knew that was too "thrifty" to have a Yellow Pages listing, but certainly not the only one to put his fate in other's hands.

You simply can't do that because, when bad times come, the other guy must take care of himself first. Even in good times, he is controlling your pricing.

A number of operators did some soul searching, in an effort to decide where their real strengths lay. One family operation came to the conclusion that, because they were savvy at coach repair... it didn't make sense to buy new equipment.

Ignoring their bus salesman's pain, they took advantage of a depressed used coach market and haven't purchased a new coach in years. They remain a pre-eminent carrier in their region.

Another carrier looked at his shop's skill set and decided that, if he turned equipment over at the right time, he could save a ton on maintenance and overhead. He buys nothing but new buses and thrives.

They're both right because they adapted their equipment strategy to their unique strengths.

Surviving in tough times demands a bit of ruthlessness, and the first victim needs to be our own egos. Buying used equipment is not a step down, if it's a wise use of skills. Paring back overhead that looks good, but doesn't contribute, is smart, not demeaning. Downsiz-

ing to a rational size and shedding unprofitable customers is both wise and satisfying.

Operate as the market, not pride, demands. Buy that Yellow Pages ad, and whatever else you REALLY need to control your future.

If you're in a market that demands new buses, suck it up and buy them. Trim mercilessly elsewhere to make it possible because, ultimately, the part of your business that creates revenue is your coaches. A sexy garage is fun, but contributes little.

Both "Shmoo" and "Btfsplk" remain in business. "Shmoo" is thriving and "Btfsplk" is surviving. And anyone who can use the words "sexy" and "garage" consecutively, in the same sentence, is slipping badly.

Dave Millhouser is an account representative for ABC Companies. Contact him at: dmillhouser@abc-companies.com.



Dave Millhouser



CAT® Engines with ACERT™ Technology

Your bottom line—and your reputation—depend upon the reliable performance of your motorcoaches day after day, mile after mile. That's why it pays to spec a Cat® C13 engine with ACERT™ Technology. Proven over millions of miles, Cat engines provide the same performance, reliability and overall value while meeting tougher EPA emissions standards. And the C13 is built tough enough to rack up a million miles to overhaul. For the full story, contact your Cat dealer or visit our Web site at MOTORCOACH.CAT.COM



C13 | 380-430 hp @ 2100 rpm, 1450-1650 lb-ft torque @ 1200 rpm

St. Petersburg

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Pinellas Suncoast became embroiled in the investigation because it financially supports the Loper by leasing the partnership five trolley buses for \$1 a year, plus provides it with \$140,000 in annual operating subsidies.

The transit authority, in fact, is the actual party named in the complaint filed by Scott because it is the recipient of federal transit dollars and would be the one subject to penalties by the FTA if charter rules violations are found.

"The problem is, the partnership is the one running the service and we are the ones that would get in trouble," noted Bob Lasher, the transit agency community relations manager.

He said immediately after the complaint was filed, Pinellas Suncoast directed the partnership to stop leasing the trolleys to the city for the event shuttles, and has been collecting records and other information from the partnership and turning it over to the FTA.

"We plan to give the FTA everything they want and if something is wrong, then we'll fix it," he added. "We want to make sure we are in compliance."

After being told by the transit

authority it no longer could use the trolleys for the city's event shuttles, the partnership began leasing buses from private carriers so it could continue offering the service.

According to financial records, the Loper in the past three years has taken in \$210,000 in revenues from operating shuttles for such events as the St. Petersburg Grand Prix and the St. Anthony's Triathlon. Because the work was not competitively bid, the Loper was able to undercut normal charter prices by 35 to 65 percent.

Eric Carlson, transportation director for the partnership, said he believes the shuttle service meets the FTA requirements because it is open to the general public, has a single fare for everyone and operates on a fixed route.

"That's my understanding of the rule," he said. "But we are working hard to resolve it and anxious to get a clear direction on how we can move forward." The city, meanwhile, said it is waiting to see the results of the investigation before deciding if it should make other arrangements for shuttling people to the special public events.

The investigation drew the interest of the United Motorcoach Association, which said in a letter to Pinellas Suncoast that the trade group has a "no tolerance posture"

regarding charter rules violations and believes that unresolved charter issues should be investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice under the Racketeer and Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act.

"It is truly unfortunate and a sad situation when local officials are observed bending rules to suit their political and financial desires at tremendous cost to the taxpayer and private sector alike," wrote UMA Vice President Ken Presley. "I encourage you to take this charter complaint seriously as PSTA (Pinellas Suncoast) will be the party subject to FTA penalties and a possible lawsuit filed on behalf of the private sector."

Lasher said Pinellas Suncoast has an outstanding track record of complying with federal transit regulations and wants to remain so. "We don't want to get in trouble," he said. "It won't do us any good if something is wrong and we try to hide it. We want to find out what is going on so we can fix it."

Presley also had words for city officials, accusing them in a letter to the *St. Petersburg Times* of harming private businesses by backing the partnership's operation of the shuttle service.

"What makes matters worse, is the city of St. Petersburg actively supports and defends this practice

Indiana

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While Imperial President James Galloway says in his complaint that CityBus has frequently violated federal charter bus rules, he singled out its charter shuttle service for the annual Feast of the Hunter's Moon Festival, which draws thousands to the city.

He said CityBus attempted to pass off its shuttle service to the event as simply an extension of its regular daily bus route, which could make it legal for the agency to provide the service. However, Galloway says the route CityBus said it was extending ran only on weekdays and the event was held on the weekend.

Inside sources also have told Galloway that the route was extensively modified and "decoy buses" were used to try to mask the illegal operation.

"We never even had a chance to bid on the festival," said Galloway.

while at the same time fails to be good stewards to taxpayers by avoiding a competitive bid process, negatively impacting local businesses and supporting an entity, the Loper, that pays no taxes," he emphasized.

He added that if the FTA penalizes Pinellas Suncoast, by with-

"We should not have to compete with the government because they have very deep pockets."

The FTA began its probe as a routine charter bus rules violation investigation, but brought in criminal investigators from the Inspector General's Office after it received information from Galloway that CityBus may have altered some applications for charter service to show the customers required buses with wheelchair lifts, when, in fact, they had not done so.

Such a request would boost the opportunity for CityBus to provide the service because most of its fleet is equipped with wheelchair lifts and special seating areas.

Madeline Chulumovich, a spokeswoman for the Inspector General's Office in Washington D.C., declined to comment.

Also, City Bus Manager Martin Sennett would not comment, according to agency spokesman John Mitzinger.

holding federal funds, it will be the residents of the city who use the public bus service who would be the ones to suffer.

"This is not leadership but rather politics as usual, and brings to question why leaders would support such harmful and alleged illegal practices," he said.

Take Control of Your Costs and Odors!

Ultra PowrPak XL

Better than ever. Controls odors all week long.



chempace
corporation "the solution people"

Call for Free Samples!
1-800-423-5350

339 Arco Drive • P.O. Box 3484 • Toledo, OH 43607
419-535-0101 • Fax 419-535-0531 • www.chempace.com

Shuttle Bus Leasing

"Your Solution For Shuttling & Fixed Route Contracting"

Leases Terms Available From 3 Months to 2 Years

High Quality, Transit Shuttle Buses

Over 1000 Buses In Inventory

22' To 60' Models Available



Parking Lot Shuttles ~ Seasonal Coverage
Employee Shuttling ~ Peak Demand Coverage



Top Quality Transit Buses Also
Available for Sale

800-287-7253

1863 Service Court, Riverside, CA 92507
www.ShuttleBusLeasing.com

UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION
in partnership with the **PMA INSURANCE GROUP**
presents **UMA COMP**,
a new workers'
compensation program
exclusively for
UMA MEMBERS



UMA Members –

It's easy to participate in the UMA-PMA Comp Program.

Just ask your agent to call KF&B. Founded in 1915, today the PMA Insurance Group is a multi-line property and casualty insurer including Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association Insurance Company, Manufacturers Alliance Insurance Company and Pennsylvania Manufacturers Indemnity Company which are subsidiaries of PMA Capitol Corporation (NASDAQ: PMACA). For more information visit the PMA website, www.pmagroup.com

K F & B, INC. + PROGRAM MANAGERS FOR UMA COMP

For details call or email Ron Schwarz (RSCHWARZ@KFBINS.COM)

425 W. Broadway, Suite 408, Glendale, CA 91204

Tel (818) 242-5100 • Fax (818) 242-6800 • Toll Free (877) 242-7700

CA Lic.
0E08513

Detroit Diesel

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It is the first in a series of new heavy-duty engines from Detroit Diesel that eventually will cover three displacement categories: 12.8 liters, 14.8 liters and 15.6 liters.

The first vehicles to get the DD15 will be new-model Freightliner trucks in the second quarter of next year. Eventually, it will make its way to the motorcoach industry and ultimately will be manufactured by parent company Daimler Trucks in Germany and Japan.

U.S. production will be at Detroit Diesel's plant in Redford, near Detroit, which has under gone a \$275 million renovation and retooling.

The DD15 will be offered in output and torque variants from 455 to 560 horsepower and 1,550 to 1,850 foot pounds of torque, plus dual torque ratings for special applications.

"The DD15 is a best-in-class engine that embodies what the Detroit Diesel brand is all about: performance and efficiency," said Chris Patterson, president and chief executive of Freightliner LLC.

"Instead of revamping one of our current engines to comply with EPA standards, we designed a

brand-new platform that takes all of the emissions requirements into account," said Jim Gray, Detroit Diesel program director for the DD15.

According to Gray, early internal and driver testing have shown that the amplified common rail system, low-inertia dual overhead hollowed camshafts and compact, simplified turbocharger help give the DD15 up to 75 percent better torque response than the current Series 60 engine.

The torque response was measured by comparing relative times required to reach peak torque levels on demand.

Initial testing has included more than two-dozen units conducting endurance runs in the United States, Germany and Japan, compiling more than 100,000 operating hours — the equivalent of several million miles on the road.

A total of 20 tractor-trailer combinations are currently undergoing road trials in the U.S., Germany and South Africa, and have jointly covered nearly 4 million miles.

The compact design of the DD15 is based on six vertical in-line cylinders with an overall engine length of 56 inches. The total engine oil capacity is 47

quarts.

Grouped on one side of the engine are the turbocharger, turbo compounding unit, starter and the crankcase ventilation. Grouped on the other side are the motor control module, oil cooler, a module with fuel filters, fuel pump and air compressor.

Normal service intervals are every 40,000 miles. The oil filter, oil filler pipe and oil/water cooler are grouped into a module on the left side of the DD15, with the coolant pump, coolant filter and thermostat installed nearby. Also on the left side, a compact fuel-filter module that accommodates the pre-filter and main filter, as well as the water separator for the fuel system.

Detroit Diesel has developed an updated version of the Jacobs engine brake, which is integrated into the engine, improving effectiveness and making it less noisy, says Detroit.

The Jacobs engine brake in the DD15 operates in three stages: in the first stage the brake acts on cylinders one and two and on cylinders three to six in the second stage. In the highest stage, the Jacobs engine brake acts on all six cylinders. Maximum braking performance is 500 horsepower.

Prevost/Volvo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dann Wiltgen said the Volvo D-13 will boost the performance and reliability of Prevost coaches, while reducing operating costs.

He based his assertions on the D-13 having a torque rating of 1,650 pound-feet, versus 1,450 for the Detroit Diesel Series 60, long the standard engine in Prevost coaches. Detroit Diesels will continue to be available in Prevosts.

Plus, says Wiltgen, the maximum torque of the D-13 is available over a wider RPM range, resulting in improved performance when climbing grades and merging with traffic. The suggested rear-axle ratios are 4.10 and 3.91 to maximize performance and fuel economy.

Wiltgen also pointed out that the D-13 Volvo was specifically designed to use exhaust gas recirculation technology, while EGR has been adapted to other diesel power plants. Additionally, the normal oil and filter change interval for the D-13 is 35,000 miles; the engine has a capacity of 38 quarts.

Other features of the D-13 Wiltgen says operators will appreciate are:

- An optional Volvo engine brake that delivers "outstanding

mid-speed performance...and a quick response"

- Less engine vibration
- Quieter operation, reducing noise pollution

• A two-year unlimited warranty Service will be through the six Prevost North American service centers where each parts facility will stock Volvo maintenance parts.

All Prevost service center technicians have received extensive Volvo engine training and are ready to perform maintenance and warranty or repair work using Volvo tools and diagnostics, said Wiltgen.

In addition, several Volvo Truck Centers throughout North America have been selected as Prevost service providers, offering maintenance and warranty work for the D-13 engines, plus other maintenance.

The D-13 is produced by Volvo Powertrain, the world's largest manufacturer of heavy duty diesel engines, at a plant in Hagerstown, Md. The engine factory recently underwent a \$150 million upgrade. Included in the plant renovation was a new:

- D-13 assembly line
- Camshaft and crankshaft manufacturing operation
- Engine laboratory to support development of products to meet the latest emissions regulations

NIMCO/Bus Division

973 589-9265 • Toll Free 800-526-8055
FAX 973-589-2253 • P.O. BOX 5157 • NEWARK, NJ 07105
www.nimcobus.com

*Supplying the Transportation Industry with
Used, Serviceable & Rebuildable Bus Parts
for Over 25 Years!*

VOLUME DISCOUNTS • PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE

DEEP DISCOUNTS!
on all Detroit Diesel & Allison
Transmissions

SAVE MONEY ~ SAVE TIME

We sell good running qualified bus components.

NO RISK PURCHASE PLAN

We unconditionally guarantee our customers satisfaction.

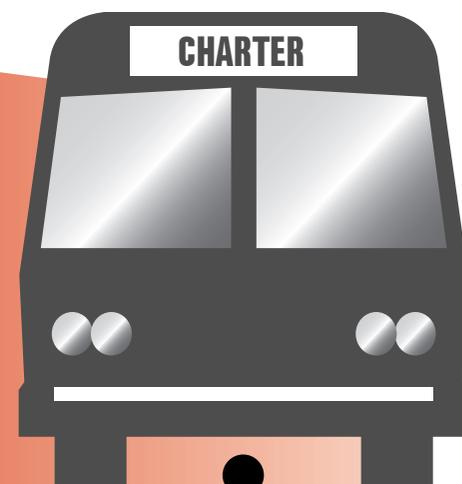
WE ALSO STOCK

- Front and Rear Axle Parts • Engine Accessories
- Alternators and other Electrical Components
- Air Conditioning Components • Body Parts

We Buy & Sell Buses... Call for a Quote

**Dump
CLEAN...**

**Dump
LEGAL!**



WASHROOM WASTE DISPOSAL UNIT

Installs directly into your existing sewer system!

Laboratory dump hopper is assembled and ready to install in your existing sewer system. Its cover plate is easily rolled back with the remover tool. Each of your service lanes can easily be equipped with this time-saving unit, which has been the industry standard for over thirty years. All major credit cards accepted.

Call 1-866-LAV-DUMP or email
lavdump@yahoo.com for additional information.

▲ Washroom waste is removed quickly, easily and safely

HUDSON RIVER CORPORATION

Call toll free: 1-866-LAV-DUMP | Fax: 1-201-420-3322

'10 will be divergent year for new engine technology

The difficult purchasing decision new motorcoach buyers are facing this year — whether to buy buses equipped with new 2007-reduced emissions engines — is going to be infinitely more difficult in three years.

It has become increasingly clear in the past few weeks that buyers will face choices in 2010 unlike any they have faced in more than a generation.

Two major engine makers, Cummins Inc. and Navistar International, have announced their intention to comply with the next change in Environmental Protection Agency emission requirements by updating the same technology they've used since 2004 to meet the first two steps of a three-step program.

Some form of this technology, exhaust gas recirculation, is currently in use by all major U.S. heavy-duty diesel engine makers.

Volvo, which begins supplying engines to Prevost Car next year (see story on page one), and Detroit Diesel, the major motor-

coach industry engine supplier, have said they will add selective catalytic reduction to meet the 2010 restrictions on nitrogen oxides.

Caterpillar has yet to announce its technology path.

The key characteristic of SCR is that it injects a mixture of urea and water into the exhaust stream to cleanse residual NOx emissions. This requires vehicles using this technology to have a storage tank for the urea solution. Drivers will have to ensure the tank has fluid in it or the bus or truck will lose power.

Concerns have been raised about supplies of urea and that the extra tank will add weight and cost to new buses and trucks.

At the same time, some analysts are saying that competing technologies could be good for buyers, offering operators a choice and encouraging suppliers to keep prices down.

If competing technologies reduce buyer anxiety and give them less cause to rush to update their equipment with existing technolo-

MCI hybrid buses going to Houston

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — The public transit agency in Houston is buying 52 diesel-electric hybrid commuter coaches from Motor Coach Industries, with an option to purchase a total of 142 of the hybrids.

The purchase price is roughly \$715,000 for each of the new-look D4500 coaches.

MCI was the first intercity coach builder to launch a public-sector commuter hybrid electric-diesel bus five years ago, and the new coaches it will build for Houston METRO are upgraded versions of that technology with further reductions in emissions and improved fuel efficiency.

The contract calls for deliveries to begin next fall.

"This marks yet another milestone for Houston METRO and MCI," said Michael Melaniphy, MCI vice president public sector.

"Houston METRO is commit-

ted to cleaning up the environment and already has hybrid transit buses in operation, but this is the first time this agency will fully utilize the technology in its long-distance commuter application," added Melaniphy.

Within the next decade, Houston METRO plans to convert its entire fleet of 1,200 buses to hybrid-diesels.

In 2002, MCI delivered four D4000 prototype hybrid commuter coaches to New Jersey Transit. Still in operation, those buses use first-generation hybrid components with an Allison EP-50 electric-drive hybrid propulsion system and a Cummins ISL engine.

Melaniphy said the NJ Transit hybrids have performed well and lessons learned from those prototypes are being applied to the coaches for Houston METRO. "We've enhanced the installation

based on feedback from NJ Transit, improving the location and access to some components for easier maintenance," he said.

The Houston METRO coaches will use the latest version of the Cummins' ISL engine along with an upgraded Allison propulsion system. MCI says the engine and advanced electric power management system offers performance that's comparable to a large diesel engine but with improved fuel economy and reduced carbon emissions.

Houston METRO's new MCI hybrids also will use shore power at the depot to activate the air conditioning unit, cooling the passenger cabin prior to departure, eliminating reliance on engine idling.

The METRO coaches will have wheelchair lifts; 55 forward-facing seats with individual overhead LED reading lights and airflow controls, and parcel racks.

gy, so as to avoid the new engines, that is seen as being good for everyone — engine makers, coach builders and other suppliers.

What wouldn't be good is if the situation creates the kind of split that divided video cassette

recorders between the Beta and VHS formats in the early 1980s. Many consumers withheld purchases, waiting for the market to decide which format would survive, on the theory that both couldn't make it. And, of course,

by 1985 VHS had won.

Certainly a lot will be written and said during the next three years as announcements are made, testing of 2010 engines progresses, and potential buyers make their views known.

SEFAC
Mobile Column Lifts

800.826.3486
www.sefac.com

COACH CRAFTERS INC.
Engine and Transmission Service and Repair Specialists

- Nationwide service
- State-of-the-art maintenance and repair facilities
- Remanufacturing, maintenance, collision repair and component upgrades
- Mechanics certified in HVAC systems, D.O.T. inspections, brakes and diesel engines
- Quality, innovative solutions at affordable prices

800-334-2871 • buses@coachcrafters.com

Serving the nation from our Florida facility
27530 Cty Rd 561 Tavares, FL 32778

Ferrone honored with civic awards

CHICAGO — Veteran motorcoach operator Donald Ferrone and his two companies, Chicago Sightseeing Co. and Gray Line of Chicago, have received two distinctly different honors for community service and business acumen.

Ferrone received the Mayor's Certificate of Appreciation for the significant contributions he has made within Chicago's Italian-American community. He was nominated for the honor by the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans and presented the certificate by Mayor Richard M. Daley.

On Dec. 6, the company will be recognized by being named winner of the 2007 Illinois Family Business of the Year Award in Small Business Category A.

The small business award is presented annually by the Loyola University Chicago Family Business Center.

Chicago Sightseeing was picked from 88 applicants for this year's award, which recognizes innovation, community contributions, family business linkage, multiple generation involvement and overall business success.

Chicago Sightseeing marked its 100th year in business earlier this year.

GAO report is critical of ADA enforcement

WASHINGTON — A lack of data and limited enforcement options are inhibiting federal oversight of ground passenger transportation accessibility requirements of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

That's the gist of a new report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office to a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee on appropriations.

The report particularly noted the lack of data from private bus operators that are not complying with annual ADA reporting requirements. Barely more than one in 10 coach operators submit the reports.

The report covers all modes of ground transportation and public rights of way, including over-the-road or commercial buses, plus privately run transportation operations that are open to the public, such as airport shuttles and taxis.

According to recent estimates there are some 50 million people in the United States with disabilities who may use a wheelchair or some other aid.

Others are visually impaired who may need assistance or may have hearing disabilities that make it difficult or impossible for them to hear announcements.

Since ADA requirements became effective, the report states, access to surface transportation in the U.S. has improved. Various reports indicate that more public and private transportation vehicles are accessible than before the law was passed.

"While data indicate accessibility is improving for public transit, the extent of ADA compliance for other modes of transportation and public rights-of-way is unknown due to a lack of reliable data," the GAO says.

Where's the data?

The GAO notes that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration solicits compliance data from registered commercial bus companies, but the response rate was only 13 percent in 2006. U.S. Department of Transportation rules require commercial bus carriers to supply compliance data to the FMCSA.

Even so, the FMCSA has not even bothered to verify any of the skimpy data it receives, the report states. Agency regulations require the FMCSA to analyze the data it collects.

Still, the report says the agency has developed a preliminary strategy for doing so and plans to finish its analysis by next year.

The report also notes that federal agencies face specific difficulties in overseeing and enforcing ADA compliance. The lack of data, for example, limits the USDOT compliance efforts.

"Without the necessary information on the extent of compliance, agencies are not able to target their enforcement efforts where most needed or to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts," the GAO says.

The GAO report, sought by and addressed to Rep. John Oliver, D-Mass., chairman of the Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, notes that some transportation providers, including commercial bus drivers, "have refused to accommodate service animals, such as guide dogs, as required by law."

Few complaints but...

The report says the USDOT

and the Department of Justice have data on ADA-related complaints for all modes of transportation, and while the complaints are relatively few, that alone is not considered a good indicator of ADA compliance.

FMCSA has an ongoing court case that points to a shortcoming in the system. The agency has the authority to penalize commercial bus companies for safety violations, but it cannot withhold operating authority or issue civil penalties for ADA violations.

The GAO recommends that USDOT develop a legislative proposal that would give the agency the authority to impose civil penalties for noncompliance.

Although FMCSA shares information with the U.S. Department of Justice, the report says there is no formal mechanism for coordination. "As a result," the report states, "there appear to be gaps in oversight and enforcement for — commercial buses."

What's more, USDOT has the option to refer cases to the Justice Department for investigation, but has done so only twice, the GAO says.

ADA bill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tor Carrier Safety Administration.

"No doubt, charter operators in Missouri will fully appreciate Greyhound's plight with curbside operators and welcome the additional scrutiny in their next compliance review," one industry executive observed.

"The United Motorcoach Association Legislative and Regulatory Committee reviewed this bill very carefully and immediately recognized the potential for increased recordkeeping and unnecessary scrutiny," said Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at UMA.

In the three years since the responsibility for monitoring the motorcoach industry's adherence to ADA requirements was dumped in the lap of the FMCSA, the agency has been a reluctant watchdog.

That's because the FMCSA sees its role as enforcing commercial vehicle highway safety, and virtually every audit of the agency during the past eight years has been critical of its performance.

The agency has the largely impossible mandate of regulating the safety performance of more than 900,000 truck and bus companies. It annually inspects only a small fraction of the commercial carriers operating in the U.S. because of resource and manpower

constraints.

Consequently, its administrators see tasks like monitoring ADA requirements as distracting from its primary role and robbing manpower.

"The FMCSA passenger carrier division, under the leadership of Administrator (John) Hill, has made great strides — with limited resources, improving the safety and compliance of our industry," said Presley. "They do not need any more diversions from the job of making the highways safer for our passengers and operators. They are not a social service agency."

However, the Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act would significantly expand the FMCSA ADA-enforcement mandate, including making ADA compliance integral to the compliance review process.

The bill does not amend the ADA but, rather, amends the law that gives the FMCSA its authority, adding ADA regulation to the list of items FMCSA must consider in granting and revoking operating authority.

UMA/NTA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

only members of NTA and UMA, but also the industry overall."

The UMA Motorcoach Exhibit will debut at the 2008 NTA Convention, Nov. 15–19, in Pittsburgh.

"Noncompliance with ADA is a civil rights issue and (enforcement) should remain with the U.S. Department of Justice," said Presley.

The accessibility act would require the FMCSA to implement it within 30 days, and come up with a coordinated enforcement agreement between itself and the Department of Justice in six months. Such deadlines would mean the FMCSA would have to drop other priority projects and dive into ADA enforcement.

In addition to the ABA, the bill is being strongly supported by advocacy organizations for people with disabilities.

"On some issues, such as occupant protection, we continue to work very close for a positive outcome for the whole bus and motorcoach industry. But on this issue, we're just not on the same page with ABA," said Presley.

"We must protect the interest of the backbone of this industry, the family-owned and smaller charter and tour operators, who all too often know the pain of regulatory abuse."

"This strategic alliance between two leading industry organizations opens doors to new business opportunities and synergies," said NTA President Lisa Simon, CTP. "Members of both NTA and UMA will benefit from this progressive move."

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING



2001 Prevost H3-45
Excellent Condition
Low Mileage
\$259,000

56 passenger, DD Series 60,
Allison B 500, Jake Brake,
AM/FM/DVD/VCR/Cass/PA,
5 Monitors, Cruise Control, Alum

Wheels, Enclosed Overhead Parcel Racks, Lav, Card Table, 327,000 miles

Call Tom (800) 366-8641

email for more pictures - info@mccarneytours.com

2007 VAN HOOL T2145

Van Hool, 2007 New Look T2145 with rear window, 89,000 miles, 16-month full coach factory warranty left, extended Cummins and Allison warranties, Durabrite wheels, Michelin tires, XM radio, KVH low-profile satellite system, 15-inch REI monitors, curtains, VHS and DVD. **\$389,000.**

Call 1-888-262-4864

REPOS FOR SALE

Variety of makes and models of "Bank Repos" across the United States and Priced to Sell!

1-877-737-2221 Ext. 716 for more information!

Greyhound offers reserved seating

DALLAS — Greyhound Lines Inc. has launched a priority seating initiative on select departures from select cities in the U.S.

The service allows passengers to reserve a specific seat for a \$5 fee and board before other passengers.

The company also is partnering with Peter Pan Bus Lines to expand the program on select routes in the northeastern U.S.

All seats, whether purchased online or at a terminal, must be reserved at the ticket counter — up to 30 days — before departure.

“Greyhound heard our customers’ desire to board the bus

early, and go to a specific seat, so we tested the priority seating concept and found overwhelming positive customer response,” said Dave Leach, Greyhound president and chief executive.

“This program allows us to provide a more enjoyable travel experience by giving our customers first choice and a guaranteed seat on select schedules.”

The reserved seating is sold one way and on the date and schedule for which customers have booked the trip. Customers have the option of purchasing reserved seating from 30 days in advance, to 45

minutes prior to departure, but must be present at the gate no fewer than 20 minutes before departure.

Greyhound and Peter Pan are offering the priority seating between New York and Boston, and Washington and Baltimore. It also is available on the following Greyhound routes: Dallas and Houston; Chicago and Minneapolis, and Atlanta and Orlando.

Other one-way cities include Atlanta to Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago to Memphis, Tenn. or Milwaukee; Seattle to Vancouver, British Columbia; Los Angeles to Las Vegas, and Dallas to San Antonio.

Greyhound launches ad campaign

DALLAS — Greyhound Lines has launched its first new national advertising campaign in years and revealed for the first time the price tag for the coach and terminal renovation program it has had underway for the past three years.

The ad campaign was kicked off last month after being delayed for months while Greyhound’s former parent company, Laidlaw International, was being acquired by British bus and rail operator

FirstGroup plc. That deal was completed Oct. 1.

The multi-million-dollar ad program, which had been scheduled to start in June, uses broadcast, print and billboard advertising.

The first television spot shows an old bus pulling into a terminal and the driver disembarking to take a break. An auto-racing pit crew quickly installs new seats, paints the bus, and changes the driver into a new uniform.

The ads are being aired on cable channels and late-night television. Print ads are planned for Rolling Stone, SPIN and other magazines, with versions also for online search engines.

The campaign’s slogan: “We’re On Our Way.”

The ad push is designed to bring back former customers and attract new riders between 18 and 24, plus Hispanics.

For its bus and terminal up-

Coach USA to outfit buses with latest SmarTire system

RICHMOND, British Columbia — Coach USA will specify SmarTire tire pressure monitoring systems on all new coaches and plans to begin retrofitting the system on its existing fleet of more than 1,500 coaches.

The SmarTire units Coach USA is buying are being integrated with the Saucon TDS telematics system. The combined system will allow Coach USA to monitor, in real time, tire conditions on all of its coaches from remote locations using satellite and Web technology.

The system will not only provide an early warning to the driver but alerts also can be sent via e-mail and text message directly to maintenance personnel on their personal computer or mobile communications device.

“We believe the combination of the SmarTire (tire pressure monitoring system) with the Saucon GPS system should enhance safety and operational levels for our

grade initiative, Greyhound says it has spent \$60 million since 2004 to refurbish more than 900 buses with new seats and paint jobs, as well as

employees and customers,” said Dale Moser, chief operating officer of Coach USA.

Announcement of the deal was made by Richmond-based SmarTire Systems, maker of the SmartWave brand monitoring system, which is designed to help operators reduce tire failures, roadside downtime, fuel consumption and tire costs while increasing safety.

The SmartWave unit, which can be installed on any existing vehicle, displays each tire’s temperature and pressure information. If the system detects a loss of air pressure or abnormally high tire temperature, a warning automatically alerts the driver to the condition.

“This commitment and order is the result of over one year of development and road testing, and we believe it successfully proves the value of our tire pressure monitoring products for fleet customers in the motorcoach market,” said Dave Warkentin, president of SmarTire.

spruce up 125 of its roughly 940 terminals by repainting, renovating restrooms and adding plasma-screen televisions in waiting areas.

REPAIR, RENEW AND MORE WITH COLLISION SERVICES FROM ABC.

Whether you’ve had a serious accident, a fender bender or want to add a wheelchair lift feature to your equipment — **ABC Collision Repair & Retrofit** is the clear choice!

Our crew of collision-repair technicians, service technicians and **wheelchair lift install specialists** offer the widest range of professional repair and refurbishment services that can add years of life to your equipment including:

- Major Collision Repair
- Paint, Custom Graphics and Body Services
- Wheelchair Lift Installation
- Coach and Transit Refurbishment

Drive into any world-class ABC facility, and experience the expertise of ABC collision professionals.

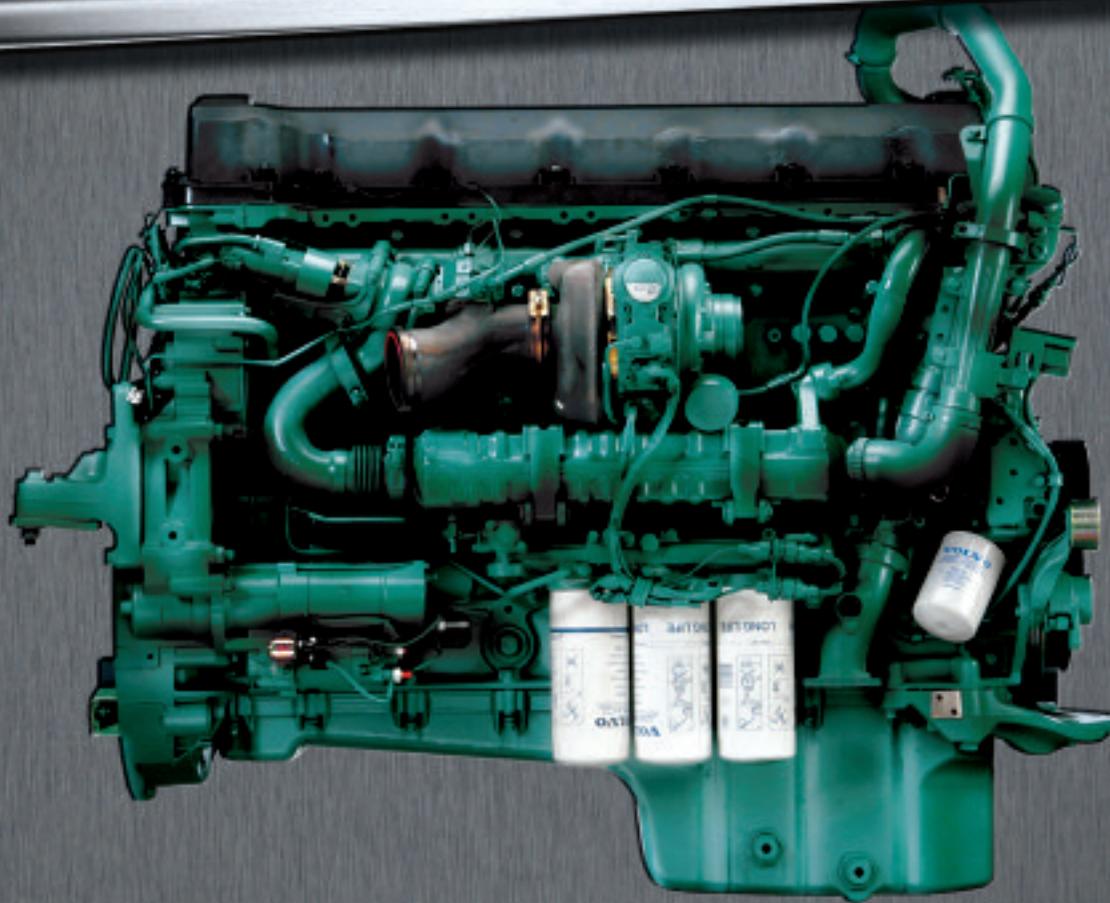


Exclusive U.S.  Distributor

www.abc-companies.com

MIDWEST 800-222-2875	NORTHEAST 800-222-2873	SOUTHEAST 800-222-2871	SOUTHWEST 800-222-2877	WESTERN 800-322-2877
--------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

VOLVO MADE. PREVOST APPROVED.



FEW ENGINES REV UP TO OUR STANDARDS.

We're excited to bring you a new engine option exclusive to Prevost. The Volvo D-13, designed to meet current and future EPA regulations, delivers exceptional quality, outstanding performance and easy serviceability. The D-13 is 100% assembled in the United States by Volvo Powertrain, the world's largest producer of heavy-duty diesel engines. And has proven itself again and



again in the trucking industry. It is cleaner, lighter and more efficient. And it comes with the full support of our nationwide network of service providers. So not only does it rev up to our standards, it will rev up to yours as well. The Volvo D-13; Volvo made Prevost approved. For more information please talk to your Prevost representative. www.prevostcar.com **THE ULTIMATE CLASS**



The H- and X-Series coaches by Prevost.
Now available with Volvo D-13 Power.

