

Texas vows better treatment of evacuation drivers

New concern: sloooooow pay

AUSTIN, Texas — Motorcoach operators who answer future calls to help evacuate Texas residents threatened by major hurricanes can expect to be treated a little differently than they might have

been in the past.

That's the word from state officials who say they have listened to the concerns of operators who say some of their drivers who took part in moving thousands of Gulf Coast residents from the path of Hurricane Ike in September were mistreated, and they are doing something about them.

"We've met and we have iden-

tified what went right and what went wrong and we are addressing those issues now, and we are satisfied they will be resolved in a positive way by the time we have another hurricane and need them again," said Ted Maddry of the governor's division of emergency management.

Among the key decisions reached at a meeting of emergency

management officials was for the state to hire a private contractor to provide some of the necessities the drivers complained were not available to them while they waited for two or three days at a large staging area near San Antonio.

Drivers complained there were shortages of food, sleeping quarters and bathroom and shower facilities and they were not allowed

to drive to town to do laundry or purchase food and personal items.

A meeting of a larger group of state officials is scheduled for this month where the overall evacuation operation, including the concerns of the motorcoach operators, will again be reviewed.

Maddry acknowledged there were problems, but maintained

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U.S. Capitol's visitor center opens Dec. 2

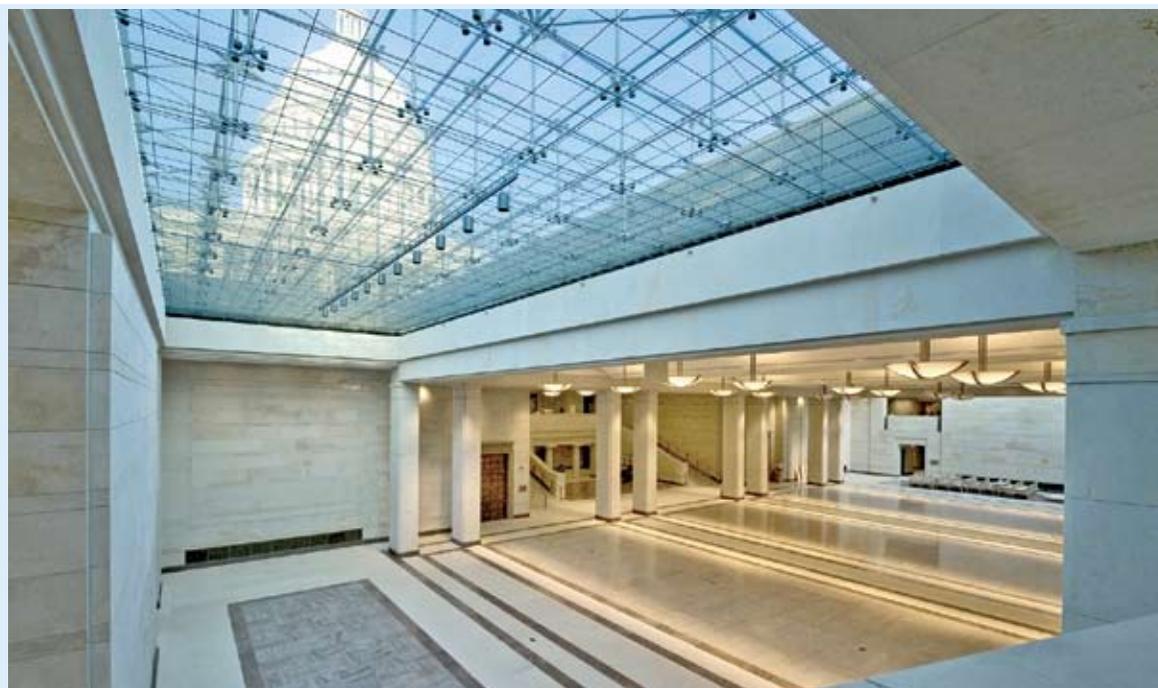
WASHINGTON — The grand, brand-new and not-a-little controversial Capitol Visitor Center, which will handle all visitors to the U.S. Capitol, opens Dec. 2.

The center is the largest addition to the Capitol in its 215-year history and the biggest since completion of the massive dome in the 1860s.

The complex is where visitors will assemble, out of the weather, for tours of the Capitol, or to experience the center's exhibitions and other amenities without taking a Capitol tour.

It features a 530-seat restaurant, two posh orientation theaters and two gift shops. There also are 26 restrooms.

No tickets are required for en-



The underground Capitol Visitor Center features giant skylights with awesome views of the Capitol dome looming above.

trance to the center. Free tickets, which can be obtained in person, online or over the phone, are required for the theaters and tours of the Capitol, which will start in the center.

The center's main entrance is at First and East Capitol streets, across from the Supreme Court. Barring late changes, tour buses probably can get no closer than two or three blocks from the entrance, meaning

passengers face a hike.

The center is expected to more than double the number of visitors to the Capitol each year to about three million, making it one of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

Obama ceremony becomes windfall for bus operators

WASHINGTON — The impact of an Obama Administration on the motorcoach industry is still anybody's guess, but there's no question about the impact of the inauguration of Sen. Barack Obama as the nation's 44th president: it's going to be a bonanza.

Obama's election seemingly has touched off a stampede by his supporters to see his inauguration and the inaugural parade on Jan. 20.

Coaches by the hundreds are being chartered by groups across the U.S., as millions of Americans view Obama's inauguration as the defining moment of not only their generation but of generations to come.

Victor Parra, president and chief executive of the United Motorcoach Association, told *The Washington Post* he expects the Obama swearing in to be the best-attended inauguration in history and possibly the biggest event ever.

"It's like nothing I've ever seen before," he said.

As tens of thousands of people scramble to make arrangements for their once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Washington, officials here are bracing for a massive

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

Diesel below \$3; long-term outlook not good

The national average retail price of a gallon of diesel fuel has fallen below \$3, the lowest price in more than a year.

On-highway diesel now averages around \$2.90 a gallon, down more than 50 cents from a year ago.

The highest prices are in the New England region, where the av-

erage remains above \$3 a gallon, while the lowest prices are in the Midwest at close to \$2.80 a gallon.

Diesel prices hit a record of \$4.75 a gallon just five months ago.

Crude oil prices, which form the basis of diesel fuel prices, continue to swing wildly in world markets. In the U.S., the price has been

around \$60 a barrel, but on some world markets it has fallen to around \$50, reflecting the worldwide economic slowdown. Some analysts see a \$30-\$40 a barrel price as the worldwide economic slump worsens.

Crude oil hit a record \$147.27 in mid-July.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Depart-

ment of Energy is forecasting even lower diesel fuel and gasoline prices for next year.

On-highway diesel is forecast to average \$2.73 in 2009, down \$1.08 from this year's average. Gasoline will average \$2.37 per gallon in 2009, says USDOE.

Many analysts say the signifi-

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Driver can't break habit, he keeps stealing buses

LAOTTO, Ind. — A former part-time bus driver with a history of stealing motorcoaches and using them to make charter runs has been arrested again for possessing a stolen coach.

Derrick Jones of Toledo, Ohio, was arrested by law enforcement officials in Erie County, Mich., after a coach belonging to American Heritage Trails of Laotto, went missing.

Five years ago, Jones was arrested and charged with stealing a coach — for the second time — from Lakefront Lines' garage in Toledo, Ohio. (See July 1, 2003 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

This time around, officials think Jones stole a bus from American Heritage and drove it to Erie, Mich., where he parked it in space he had rented on the lot of an RV dealer.

Here is Jones' M.O. for his latest caper:

On Oct. 27, he paid a visit to American Heritage Trails, saying he was interested in booking trips for his church group. He identified himself as John Johnson.

One week later, a 2007 MCI E4500 coach disappeared from American Heritage Trails' lot. Interestingly, Johnson/Jones was the first person to pop into the minds of American Heritage personnel when they thought about who could have taken the coach.

That's because Johnson/Jones had had access to the area where coach keys were kept when he visited the company on Oct. 27. And, in talking with Johnson/Jones, American Heritage staff learned he was familiar with coaches. The E4500 has a keyless entry system and only someone knowledgeable about buses would have known

how to deal with the system.

American Heritage also caught a break. E-ZPass records showed the coach passed through a toll booth late on the night it was taken. Indiana Toll Road officials were able to provide a photo showing Johnson/Jones behind the wheel of the coach.

Knowing which direction the stolen coach was headed, American Heritage dispatched employees to scour the countryside, looking for the bus. It was a pair of American Heritage staffers who spotted the coach on the RV lot in Michigan.

American Heritage alerted law enforcement and police set up a sting and arrested Johnson/Jones on the lot while he was attempting to remove the coach decals.

"Jones told the RV dealership ... he was planning on using the bus to take passengers to the Obama presidential inauguration in Washington in January," said Bill McKinley, American Heritage vice president.

So far, Johnson/Jones has only been charged with possession of stolen property. Officials are trying to develop enough evidence to also charge him with theft, a more serious allegation that carries a much stiffer penalty.

On at least two occasions early in this decade, Johnson/Jones stole buses from Lakefront Lines and used them to make charter runs he had booked. McKinley said Johnson/Jones also had been convicted of stealing a bus from Ground Transportation Specialists in Taylor, Mich., and a fourth coach from another company.

How does Jones keep getting away with it? "He tells a good story," says McKinley.

Luxury service launching in Pa.

PITTSBURGH — Two railroad entrepreneurs are starting a luxury motorcoach service, operating between Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, and Pittsburgh.

Called the Steel City Flyer, the twice-daily service is designed to replace US Airways' flights that were eliminated in September and to connect with Amtrak service, running east from Harrisburg.

Henry Posner III and Robert Pietandrea, chairman and president, respectively, of Railroad Development Corp. of Pittsburgh, say their venture developed from their own travel frustrations, and was ac-

celerated by the US Airways' cut-back and the prospect of connecting passengers with the improved Amtrak service to Philadelphia, Trenton, N.J., and New York.

The impetus was just too many bad experiences traveling in and out of the Steel City, said Posner. "In one case it took me 25 hours to get to Princeton, N.J. (a distance of 315 miles). In another case I was in New York City when my flight home was proactively canceled eight hours in advance," Posner continued.

"As an extreme business traveler, going between destinations from

Cedar Rapids (Iowa) to (the eastern European country of) Belarus, my personal experience over the past several years has suggested there has to be a better way.

"Business travelers like to complain but few are in a position to actually do something about it. We are putting our money where our mouth is in anticipation of the support of the business, professional and government traveler," he said.

Starting in late November, Steel City Flyer passengers will be able to travel the 204 miles between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg for \$69

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NYC parking: New hassle

With apologies to Benjamin Franklin, there are three certainties in life — death, taxes and parking problems for motorcoach operators in New York City.

If the holiday season is approaching, then motorcoach operators can count on being hassled and fined when they try to park in the Big Apple.

This year, the hassle is in the form of tickets for parking in spaces designated for "commercial vehicles." Only in New York would passenger-carrying buses not be considered commercial vehicles.

A Pennsylvania-based coach company reports its drivers have been cited for parking in a space with a sign specifying it's for commercial vehicles. The fine is \$115 per incident.

After its drivers were cited, the coach company researched the rules and found that New York essentially specifies that only trucks can use "commercial" parking zones and meters.

"Other than changing (New York City) laws, we have to live with this," said the operator. "This is going to be so confusing to drivers. I just hope other cities do not decide to do this."

Then the operator added: 'Tis the season to ticket buses in NYC. This is just one more revenue stream for them to get from the people they begged to come after 9/11 — and the people who operate according to the (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration)," which rightly considers passenger buses commercial vehicles.

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THE DOCKET

Voters say 'no' to tax proposals

Voters across the U.S. rejected a number of significant ballot measures in November that would have made changes to state tax systems.

In Massachusetts, citizens voted — by a wide margin — against a proposal to repeal the personal income tax. (See Oct. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

In North Dakota, voters soundly rejected proposals to cut the personal income tax in half and significantly reduce the corporate tax.

Colorado voters said no to a sales tax increase of 1 percent that would have been dedicated to specific social services. They also said no to a ballot measure that would have shifted part of the revenue from the state severance tax on oil and gas to cover highway costs.

And, in Oregon, voters were asked if they wanted to lift the cap on the amount of federal income tax paid they can deduct on their state income taxes, and they said no.

But while voters were saying no to various tax initiatives, they generally were approving transporta-

tion-related ballot measures. Initiatives totaling \$71 billion for transportation-related funding won approval, according to one industry tabulation.

In 17 states, the American Road & Transportation Builders Association tracked 37 state and local transportation funding-related ballot initiatives. Of the 37 measures, 32 — or 86 percent — asked voters to initiate, extend or increase taxes, or approve bonds to fund transportation improvements. Twenty-five — 78 percent of the bond and tax measures — were approved according to the association.

Among the most expensive initiatives was a \$9.9 billion bond issue in California, to partially finance a high-speed train between San Francisco and Southern California.

However, Washington voters rejected Initiative 985, which would have opened car pool lanes and diverted a slice of state automobile sales taxes toward traffic-relief projects (see Oct. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*).

\$12 million available for 2009 bus security grants

WASHINGTON — The Department of Homeland Security has announced it will award roughly \$11.7 million in security grants to over-the-road bus operators for fiscal 2009.

Both fixed-route intercity and charter bus operators may apply for the money through the department's competitive grants process.

The maximum federal share of any awarded project is 75 percent, meaning those winning the grants will be required to come up with the remaining 25 percent of project costs.

The program is little changed from previous years, with 55 percent of the money going to operators having at least 250 over-the-road buses (Tier I) and the remaining 45 percent going to smaller operators (Tier II). Most charter bus operators fall in Tier II.

To be eligible for the money, an operator must make at least 50 trips annually to one or more of 62 urban areas the Department of Homeland Security considers to have the highest risk of a terrorist attack.

Additionally, any company applying for the money must have completed what the Homeland Security Department calls a "vulnerability assessment" and a formal "security plan." Any company not having a security assessment and plan can only apply for money to help pay for an assessment and plan. Then, in future years, it can apply for money to make security improvements.

For fiscal '09, the program has been fine-tuned in two areas: The money can now be used to pay overtime and other costs associated with training, drills and security

exercises, and the department's methodology used to score applications has been made more transparent.

The minimum amount that may be requested for projects focused on training and/or exercises is \$5,000, while there is no minimum for vulnerability assessments or security plan development.

The minimum amount that may be requested for other projects is \$25,000.

Applying for a bus security grant is not for the faint of heart. The Department of Homeland Security readily admits its application process is "complex."

However, it has developed comprehensive guidelines to help applicants. All details are contained in the "Intercity Bus Security Grant Program Guidance and Application Kit" available on the splash page of the United Motorcoach Association website at www.uma.org. Deadline for applying is 11:59 a.m. Jan. 13. Not noon, but 11:59 a.m.

The department is conducting a series of teleconferences between now and Jan. 13, to answer questions about the grant program. All of the phone conferences will be between 2 and 3 p.m. eastern time, the toll-free phone number for conferences is (877) 988-9660, and the pass code is 6827433.

Here are the dates of the teleconferences: Nov. 25, Dec. 2, Dec. 9, Dec. 16, Dec. 23, Dec. 30, Jan. 6, and Jan. 13. Questions (outside the conference calls) can be directed via e-mail to AskCSID@dhs.gov and TSAGrants@tsa.gov.

UMA members can contact resident expert Ken Presley at (800) 424-8262 or by e-mail at kpresley@uma.org.

Fake USDOT letters show up again

INDIANAPOLIS — Official looking but phony letters seeking financial information from motor carriers have surfaced again.

The Indiana State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division has issued a new warning to commercial carriers based in that state about attempts to gain access to company information under false pretenses.

An auditor assigned to the division found a fraudulent document while auditing a business in Auburn, Ind., the warning said.

The sender of the letter portrays itself, falsely, as a branch of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. A U.S. Department of Transportation website notes more than 20 similar cases have occurred elsewhere.

A motorcoach operator in Minnesota received one of the phony letters earlier this year. (See Feb. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

In the Indiana case, the "authorization to release financial information" document appeared to be written on official USDOT letter-

head and asked for company financial records, documents and security numbers.

Two websites have been set up by the FMCSA to warn businesses about such scams, www.dot.gov/ost/m60/fraudulent_letters.htm and <http://www.oig.dot.gov/item.jsp?id=2353>.

Coach operators in Indiana who get a questionable letter should contact the State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division at (317) 615-7373 or (800) 523-2226.

Michigan gets 'secure' license

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan is joining four other states in adopting an "enhanced" driver's license designed to meet increased federal security rules.

The new license will allow Michigan residents to cross the U.S.-Canada border without having to have a costlier U.S. passport.

The enhanced license will be available only to Michigan residents who also are U.S. citizens. It will cost no more than \$50. It will

be available by spring.

The upgraded license provides drivers an affordable, single-document option that meets residents' driving and border crossing needs.

Washington, New York, Vermont and Arizona all have enhanced state driver's licenses.

Beginning June 1, all drivers and travelers crossing U.S. borders will need either a passport or another approved secure document to enter the country by land or sea.

Double standard for radar cameras?

PHOENIX — The director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety wants to adopt a double standard when it comes to drivers of cars and commercial vehicles who are caught speeding by a network of radar cameras that are being installed statewide.

The law permitting the cameras

specifies that violations won't go on people's driving records unless they're doing more than 15 miles an hour over the speed limit.

But DPS Director Roger Vanderpool wants the law changed so violations — no matter how small — would go on the record of holders of commercial driver licenses.

Ohio Turnpike to use E-ZPass

BEREA, Ohio — Motorcoach operators with E-ZPass will be able to use their transponders on the Ohio Turnpike as soon as next fall.

The Ohio Turnpike is the only northern-tier toll road — between Illinois and the East Coast — that does not use the E-ZPass electronic toll-collection system. E-ZPass uses a universal transponder for the 12 northeastern states in its network.

Officials hope to be marketing transponders to customers by spring 2009 and have all 31 interchanges up and running with E-ZPass about a year from now.

The current toll rate for a 40,000 pound gross weight motorcoach traveling the full length of the turnpike is \$24.

Tolls are likely for I-73 in S.C.

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Portions of proposed Interstate 73 that will connect I-95 in South Carolina with I-73/I-74 in Rockingham, N. C., will most likely be tolled, say South Carolina officials.

The South Carolina Department of Transportation has completed plans for the proposed 36-mile section of I-73 in that state.

The roadway will eventually connect Myrtle Beach, S.C., to northern Michigan via North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio.

The Federal Highway Administration has placed I-73 in the top five projects of national significance, and officials acknowledge that tolling could play a major role in bringing it to fruition.

Industry legend Marvin Walsh dies

LENOIR, N.C. — THE senior citizen of the over-the-road bus industry, Marvin E. Walsh, died here late last month, less than 10 days after marking his 102nd birthday.

Mr. Walsh spent his entire adult life in the industry and, although not one of the original signers, he attended the 1936 Chicago meeting at which five bus companies formed the National Trailways Bus System.

He owned and operated Safeway Trailways Inc., that portion of Trailways that operated between Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York City, and later became the longest serving president of the Trailways association, now known as the Trailways Transportation System.

Mr. Walsh was born near Fergu-

son, N.C., in 1906, the oldest of 11 children. Three brothers and two sisters survive him.

Mr. Walsh began his industry career in 1925, hiring on as a 19-year-old mechanic with a bus company in Roanoke, Va. A decade and a few jobs later, he was in Chicago at the forming of Trailways. An early member of the system was Safeway Trailways and, in 1937, Mr. Walsh became that company's general superintendent of maintenance and operations.

Five years later, at the age of 36, he was named chief executive of Safeway Trailways. He held that job until 1965, when Safeway merged with Trans-Continental, forming Continental Trailways, which operated in 43 states. Mr. Walsh managed Continental Trailways' 16-

state northeast territory until he retired in 1976.

Four years after retiring, Mr. Walsh was hired as president of the national Trailways association, serving in that job for 12 years before retiring a second time.

Five years ago, at the tender age of 96, Mr. Walsh recounted his life in the form of a 110-page hardcover book entitled: My Story – The Scenic Route. (See July 15, 2003 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

In addition to his brothers and sisters, Mr. Walsh is survived by his wife, Helen; and daughter, Betty Washington of Lake Lure, N.C.

A memorial has been established in Mr. Walsh's name with Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care, 902 Kirkwood St. NW, Lenoir NC 28645.

Coach America names president; Bergstrom leaves

DALLAS, Texas — Coach America, the largest tour-and-charter bus operator and the second-largest motorcoach services provider in the U.S., has named George Maney its president.

Maney had been Coach America's executive vice president and chief financial officer. He remains

CFO while the company searches for a replacement.

Coach America also announced that Bill Bergstrom, chief operating officer, has left the company "to pursue other opportunities." A search also is under way for his replacement.

Maney joined Coach America

two years ago, coming to the Dallas-based operator from Independent Stationers, a 300-member cooperative based in Indianapolis, where he was vice president of operations. Earlier in his career, he held finance and managerial positions at Daisytek International, and American Airlines.

FTA charter rule expert will be featured at Expo

ORLANDO — Linda Lasley, an attorney with the Federal Transit Administration and a key figure during implementation of the federal charter bus rule, will speak at UMA Motorcoach Expo 2009 here in January.

"We are especially pleased to have Linda Lasley address our members at the industry's most important and well-attended event, UMA Motorcoach Expo," said Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at UMA. "She will be our featured speaker Thursday morning (Jan. 22) during the Legislative & Regulatory Update."

Lasley served as the FTA's lead attorney for the negotiated rule-making that produced the charter service regulation, as well as serving as the primary drafter of the rule and expert on the topic.

She has traveled throughout

He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and has an MBA from The University of Texas at Austin.

"It is exciting and satisfying to promote such a capable individual from within our organization," said Mike Haley, chairman of

the U.S. since April 30, when the rule went into effect, assisting UMA and its industry partners to introduce the revised rule to operators.

"When it comes to implementing the balance of public need, private operators, and federally funded transit, Ms. Lasley has proved exceptionally skilled at adjudicating the charter service rule," said Presley.

Lasley's formal title is assistant chief counsel for the legislation and regulations division in the FTA chief counsel's office. During her tenure at FTA, Lasley also has served as senior advisor to the FTA administrator.

Prior to taking her current position in 2005, Lasley was a senior attorney in the Office of Regulation and Enforcement, USDOT Office of the General Counsel.

Coach America and a member of Fenway Partners Resources, which bought Coach America 18 months ago.

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Court upholds '99 crash rulings

NEW ORLEANS — The Louisiana Supreme Court has upheld two lower court decisions that the Louisiana highway department was as much to blame for the horrible Mother's Day 1999 bus crash near here as the sick, drug-taking driver who lost control of the coach.

The high court refused to review rulings by the lower courts.

With the refusal, the plaintiffs' lead attorney said he had sent letters demanding the state pay its \$5 million self-insured limit, plus interest and costs, and the state's insurers pay what he said is their \$70 million limit.

The money would pay settlements of 38 pending lawsuits.

The state had appealed July's 3-2 ruling by a panel of state 4th Circuit Court of Appeal judges that upheld an earlier ruling by

Civil Court Judge Rosemary Ledet. Last year, Ledet assigned the state and coach driver Frank Bedell 50 percent shares of blame for the grisly May 9, 1999, crash. (See Aug. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Bedell, 46, a drug user in chronically poor health, died of a heart-related ailment three months after the crash.

The accident happened when the bus Bedell was driving veered off Interstate 610, smashed through a wooden guardrail and went airborne before landing in a ravine. Attorneys for the plaintiffs in the case argued, and the courts agreed, the road was hazardous.

"We find that the negligence of Mr. Bedell in losing control of the bus, combined with DOTD's failure to design, install and properly maintain a safety system capable of redirecting the bus, equally

caused the harm to the passengers on the bus," said the majority 4th Circuit opinion. Two appeals court judges dissented, saying the state deserved less liability.

The 4th Circuit sent the case back to Ledet to decide how much money to award the plaintiffs in each of pending suits. Ledet has tried several of the individual suits but reserved her rulings while the issue of liability was pending at the state Supreme Court.

Survivors of the bus crash and the families of those killed have long since settled with other defendants, in addition to the coach operator, Custom Bus Charters, including MCI; Casino Magic, which paid part of the cost of the bus trip, and a Tenet Health Systems internist who cleared Bedell to continue driving even though he was suffering from congestive heart failure.

Driver gets probation in roadway death

BENTON, Ill. — The driver of a Greyhound bus that struck and killed a firefighter has been sentenced to two years of probation and fined \$2,000 in a plea arrangement with prosecutors.

Sammie Rogers Jr., 42, of Chicago was sentenced on charges of misdemeanor reckless driving after entering a plea in which he didn't admit guilt but acknowledged prosecutors had sufficient evidence for a conviction.

County prosecutors dropped a reckless homicide charge.

Rogers' bus hit volunteer Sesser, Ill., firefighter James 'Shib' Miller on Interstate 57 in July of last year. Miller, 43, had just helped douse a tractor-trailer fire along the highway and was helping to clear the scene when the bus traveled through traffic cones, hit the left rear side of a fire truck, then struck Miller.

The emergency trucks' flashing lights were in use at the time, investigators said.

The incident received a lot of publicity and led to passage of a

law — called Shib's Law — that allows Illinois fire fighters and other emergency workers to close roadways to protect individuals helping at an accident scene.

The plea arrangement with Rogers, called an Alford plea, is considered a conviction. It is rare but sometimes used when a defendant has a civil case pending. Prosecutors agreed to the deal at the request of Miller's widow, who has a wrongful-death lawsuit pending against Rogers and Greyhound.

Highway safety plan is pushed by truckers

NEW ORLEANS — Leaders of the American Trucking Association have endorsed a sweeping, 18-point plan to improve highway safety as part of the federation's strategy for next year's highway and public transportation reauthorization legislation.

Many of the safety policies the ATA plans to advocate would impact bus operators, including a call for more red-light cameras and automated speed enforcement, a national clearing house for positive drug test results, and efforts to cut driver distractions.

"We have always talked about how committed we were to safety, but we thought it was time to really put our arms around the sum total of all the things we're willing to publicly step out in favor of," said ATA President Bill Graves.

A major feature of the ATA policy statement supports governing big trucks at no more than 65 miles per hour, retroactive to 1992 models.

ATA had previously endorsed a national speed limit of 65 mph, and petitioned for setting speed governors on new trucks at 68 mph. The task force report modifies the earlier ATA policy by seeking retroactive governor use and cutting the speed setting.

The ATA also is supporting state laws requiring noncommercial drivers who have certain serious traffic offenses to have their

speed governed.

"We recognize that speed-governing every car in America is not possible, but if we target high-risk drivers, we can improve safety by changing high-risk driver behavior," said one ATA official.

Other policy shifts include requiring new commercial vehicle operators to take a course in compliance and safety management before operating.

The safety report also calls for expansion of the so-called Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks, or TACT, program, which targets all types of drivers for driving unsafely around large vehicles.

Currently a handful of states, notably Washington, employ a program of TACT enforcement.

Additionally, the report calls for a national clearinghouse for drug and alcohol test results. Other key policies on the ATA wish list are:

- Reducing driver distraction by such devices as cell phones and navigation units.
- Support for uniform commercial driver license testing standards.
- Support for a CDL graduated licensing study.
- More stringent laws to reduce drinking and driving.
- Support for a national employer notification system.
- A national registry of certified medical examiners.

Visitor Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

most-visited buildings in the world.

The center has been controversial because of its cost — boosted mainly by security concerns and congressional add-ons — and delays. Many security worries stemmed from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and from a 1998

incident in which a deranged man burst into the Capitol with a revolver and killed two Capitol Police officers.

The center ended up costing \$621 million, nearly triple its original estimated price tag. What U.S. taxpayers got for all of that money is a 580,000-square-foot complex, dug three levels underground beside the east front of the Capitol. The facility is all polished sand-

stone, bronze and wood paneling.

The center's maroon-and-white floors shine under the hall's 18 chandeliers and two 30-by-70-foot skylights, through which the sky and the Capitol dome can be seen looming above.

The dimly lit exhibition hall features displays of famous — and seldom-seen — artifacts of U.S. history. The most haunting is the black-shrouded pine catafalque, or

platform, on which once lay the body of Abraham Lincoln and the bodies of other famous Americans, including President Gerald Ford after his death in 2006. It sits behind a sliding bronze grate because it will probably be used again.

There are other objects: President John Quincy Adams' metal-tipped ivory walking stick. The tiny ceremonial trowel George Washington used to set the Capitol cor-

nerstone in 1793.

At the center of the center's great Emancipation Hall is the 19-foot statue of Freedom, her hand resting on the hilt of her sword, and her hair falling in ringlets from beneath her eagle's head helmet. The 1856 statue was the model for the one on the Capitol dome.

More information about the center can be found on its website, www.visitthecapitol.gov.

Buses to D.C.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

human onslaught.

D.C. Police plan to have an extra 1,000 out-of-town officers on duty, beyond the 4,000 they usually borrow for big events. Plus, there will be 5,000 military service members on duty, including 1,800 along the parade route.

Officials say the crowd could easily surpass the 1.2 million who attended President Lyndon Johnson's inauguration in 1965, with some predicting as many as 1.5 or 1.6 million. A crowd anywhere close to that magnitude would pro-

duce enormous traffic jams and packed-to-the-gills Washington Metrorail cars as some people attempt to avoid the traffic by catching the Metro at suburban stations in Virginia and Maryland.

Members of Congress, who distribute tickets for the inauguration ceremony, have been swamped with requests, meaning most people coming to Washington will have to settle for watching the inauguration on giant TV screens and the parade along a very crowded route.

No website or other ticket outlet has inaugural swearing-in tickets to sell, regardless of what they

may claim. Tickets will not be distributed to Congressional offices until the week before the inauguration and will require in-person pick-up.

There have been reports that virtually all of the area's 95,000 hotel rooms are sold out.

That is not stopping coach operators from virtually every section of the U.S., including the Far West, from scheduling coaches to bring people to Washington. For example, several black leadership groups in North Carolina are planning to bring 1,800 people on 34 coaches.

The event also is expected to be

a windfall for BoltBus, megabus.com, DC2NY, Apex and the half-dozen other curbside operators that offer line-run service to Washington, along with Greyhound, Trailways and other operators that provide conventional intercity service in and out of Washington.

Operators chartering coaches for the inauguration need to make sure they buy a District of Columbia trip permit for each bus they send to Washington — if they expect their coaches will actually drive in or through D.C. The fine for not having a permit can be up to \$500 and if an operator misuses a permit — like switching it to a dif-

ferent coach — the fine can run to \$1,000.

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation motorcoach guide can be found at www.ddot.dc.gov.

There is good nuts-and-bolts inauguration information available on various websites, including www.barackobama.com and www.my.barackobama.com. Check the "events," "community" and "community blog" pages. Weather, walking, dressing, the long hours of standing, food availability, restrooms, and other expectations and issues are addressed on the websites.

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State officials urge Congress to increase transport funding

HARTFORD, Conn. — The national association that represents state transportation officials is calling on Congress to increase transportation spending by 91 percent over the next half-dozen years.

The American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials says federal transportation spending should be increased from the 2005 level of \$286 billion to \$545 billion in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill.

AASHTO issued its recommendation on the premise that current funding levels will not come close to meeting transportation and infrastructure needs during the next five or six years.

Top AASHTO officials, meeting here last month, suggested a variety of funding options for Congress to choose from, totaling \$1.3 trillion. Their suggestions included

a fuel-tax increase of 1 cent per gallon; a 1 percent federal sales tax on motor fuels; a \$10 fee on every intermodal container received at a U.S. port; a national vehicle sales tax of 1 percent; \$50 billion in transportation bonds; and the introduction of fees assessed on vehicle miles traveled, also known as a VMT fee or tax.

AASHTO officials said a VMT tax of 1 cent per mile traveled by passenger vehicles would raise \$32.4 billion. VMT taxes for commercial vehicles would be based on weight and miles and could raise \$42.8 billion per year, the officials said.

The U.S. House and Senate will begin drafting the next surface transportation funding reauthorization bill next year. The current law, known as SAFETEA-LU, expires in September.

Steel City Flyer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

one way on a 50-seat luxury coach.

The competition consists of a once-daily Amtrak train, a Greyhound bus route with seven departures that takes from four to seven hours, and driving an auto along the Pennsylvania Turnpike. A one-way Amtrak ticket costs \$36 and a round-trip on Greyhound is \$70.

The Steel City Flyer will collect customers at three Pittsburgh-area stops, North Hills, downtown and Monroeville, and head nonstop to Harrisburg where it will stop at the state Capitol, a downtown hotel and Harrisburg's Transportation Center, where it will connect with Amtrak. Posner and Pietandrea expect to establish joint fares with Amtrak to complement a joint timetable.

An online reservation system is expected to be set up on the company website, www.steelcityflyer.com.

Limoliner cuts fare

BOSTON — Limoliner, the luxury coach service operating between New York City and Boston, is offering a special \$49 one-way fare through the end of January.

The fare cut comes as Limoliner faces new competition from BoltBus and megabus.com, the curbside services that began operating in the northeast corridor this past summer.

Limoliner's standard fare is \$89. The reduced fare requires a two-week advanced reservation and is available Monday-Thursday and Saturday.

Limoliner marked its fifth anniversary in October.

States' financial woes growing

With the national economic downturn and financial crisis posing the biggest threat to states' fiscal health in 25 years, motorcoach operators and other private businesses need to step up their monitoring of state legislatures and brace for possible tax increases.

Reports for the first three months of the budget year that began July 1 — for all but four states — are grim, and officials expect further declines in tax revenue because of the housing slump, rising unemployment and the slowdown in consumer spending.

Pennsylvania's revenue collections fell about 5 percent below estimates made in July, producing the state's largest first quarter shortfall in 30 years. A similar lag in Rhode Island has contributed to a record \$67 million deficit with nine months left in the budget year.

South Carolina — slammed by high unemployment — pared its revenue estimate by 6 percent and now faces a \$554 million shortfall.

"The bottom line is that states are facing a very difficult fiscal outlook over the next two to three years," Raymond C. Scheppach, executive director of the National Governors Association, said in a commentary for Stateline.org.

Colorado faces transportation funding shortfall

DENVER — Colorado faces a huge transportation funding shortfall over the next quarter century, according to an independent transportation research group.

The Road Information Program, known as TRIP, calculates the state will come up short by more than \$100 billion unless it in-

creases revenues.

"This economic downturn will likely be longer and more severe than any states have experienced since the downturn of 1982-1983."

The tight credit markets have caused problems for state governments just as they have for private borrowers.

Many state and local governments sell short-term notes or borrow money during periods when their funds are low and they are waiting for tax revenue to come in. The money is spent on such day-to-day operations as paying state employees. Governments also sell long-term bonds to finance expensive building projects on college campuses and on state roads and bridges.

State and federal officials are discussing ways the federal government could guarantee the sale of states' short-term bonds despite Internal Revenue Service restrictions against federal guarantees of tax-exempt financial instruments.

Not every state depends on bond sales to finance its operations and building programs. And some did well in the first three months of the budget year, especially those benefiting from high oil and commodity prices. Montana has a surplus of nearly \$1 billion over the next two years, creat-

ing a very different policy dilemma there: whether to set up a permanent "rainy day" fund just in case things go bad.

Meanwhile, the Rockefeller Institute has issued another of its periodic reports on state government finances. The data it analyzes are primarily from the second quarter of calendar 2008 and the report offers a gloomy picture.

While noting that the 2000-02 economic slow down was especially hard on state finances — the worst, by some measures, in 50 years — the report provides substantial reason to believe the current recession will be much more serious for them.

All the cyclical effects of the economy on income tax revenues will be present — and magnified, and the support that real estate values gave to sales and property tax revenues in the earlier period will be missing — and then some — in the quarters to come.

Two further points to note: State motor fuel tax revenues were already down by the end of June by 3.4 percent over the same time in 2007, and costs for what states purchase were up 6.6 percent.

The Rockefeller report is available at <http://www.rockinst.org/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=15322>.

to make these repairs has increased about 75 percent, just in the past five years."

The head of a blue ribbon panel that is studying transportation funding in Colorado says increases in fuel taxes, sales taxes and severance taxes should all be considered to help solve the problem.

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NOW is the time to think about future engine choices

By Dave Millhouser

On the way to my friend's shop, the cell phone beeped with a text message: "Can you pick up something for me at DD?" Since my friend runs a scuba shop, I couldn't fathom (diving pun intended) what she'd want at Detroit Diesel. Turns out it was coffee — from Dunkin Donuts.

For folks in the coach industry, DD has been synonymous with engine for a bazillion years. Since WW2, there have been few engines that worked well in coaches, but Detroit Diesels did and it dominated the business until recently.

Government regulations and international economic factors are altering the engine landscape in ways that are not yet clearly defined. The only certainty is change.

Western nations are making dramatic demands in terms of reducing engine emissions. The cost of developing power plants that meet the new regulations is huge.

Manufacturers have cleverly figured out that if it costs \$1 million to design an engine — and they sell one million — the cost of designing that engine is \$1 per unit. If the only sell 10, then that cost is \$100,000 per unit.

Engineering expenses don't care how many are sold, so the trick is to sell lots of them.

In this arena, \$1 million is chump change. One engine builder says it spent \$1 billion developing its 2010 engines.

The massive investments required are

changing the face of the industry in a couple of ways. Bear in mind that the average annual market for motorcoaches in the U.S. is generally around 2,000-2,500, while the GBM (Great Big Mother) truck number is above 200,000.

Engine guys can't afford to jump through hoops for us.

Several things are happening. Mergers and strategic alliances are becoming critical. Economies of scale that apply to engines also can apply to the other aspects of vehicle engineering.

School bus manufacturers bond with specific chassis builders (Thomas/Freightliner, Amtran/IHC). Coach builders meld with truck manufacturers that are corporate siblings (Setra/Detroit Diesel/Freightliner, Prevost/Volvo).

In addition to engines, lots of other engineering is shared, with significant savings.

Independent truck and coach manufacturers end up in alliances with independent engine builders. Some may introduce off-shore engines here, as U.S. and European regulations become more compatible.

One unintended consequence of expensive regulation is that some engine builders may bail out, deciding that over-the-road engines aren't worth the investment and risk. One already has done so. Reduced competition in the engine market could cause higher prices.

Simply put, soon your choice of engine will be dictated by the coach you buy — or

vice versa.

Until recently, in school buses, you could buy your brand of body and have it mounted on the chassis of your choice. A wave of consolidations hit the industry, and the effect is that now, if you want a Thomas body, you have to buy a Freightliner chassis. A customer who wants an IC chassis can only get it with an Amtran body.

The results surprised a bunch of folks. Body builders thought customers loved them, regardless of chassis. Chassis manufacturers thought the same thing. Neither was right all the time, and it took time for the schizophrenia to heal.

Coach sellers will have to sort out similar situations. Which matters most — body or engine?

Engine manufacturers are focused on how they'll meet the next round of regulation. The choices they make — or have made — may have minimal impact on truck design, but create headaches for buses. The big stinker is the likelihood of chemical after-treatment for exhaust gases. Some engines will have it, some may not. What about infrastructure and maintenance?

Traditionally, engine maintenance was a small part of the overall cost of coach operation. The new extra stuff all engine builders are hanging on their engines does break sometimes and if your engine breaks, you're in poop. About the time they master one technology it's on to the next wave.

Since all modern engines are good, and none perfect, and since each brand is going to be subject to waves of change, should your choice of coach be dictated by its engine?

I've always felt the best engine was the one with the best dealer. With new technologies rolling in regularly, that may be truer than ever. As you look at future purchases, at least two things are worth considering: How good is the engine's service network? How much effort has the coach builder invested in making sure you will be taken care of?

If you're happy with your current coach brand but anticipate being forced into a new power plant, NOW is the time to check out local service for alternate engines. Ask questions of folks using that brand of motor, and do some research on how the manufacturer intends to deal with future regulation (and how that will fit in coaches).

Remember music on CDs and cassettes? Often a single technology ends up dominating. It may take some effort to figure out which will prevail but that's small potatoes compared to having a glove box full of cassettes. Or, (OMG) eight-tracks.

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Texas hurricane

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that most of them were isolated incidents and they did not reflect the way most of the drivers were treated. (See Oct. 1 and Oct. 15 issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Advice: Be prepared

Some of the problems, he said, were caused by drivers not being properly prepared for the operation, including some who did not bring a change of clothing or personal hygiene items and then expected to be able to do laundry and go shopping.

"They were not on a casino run," he said, adding that the state needed to maintain control of the drivers and buses that were at the staging area so they would be available when they were needed.

Since the problems became public, he said he has received calls and letters from a number of the 140 motorcoach operators who were involved in the evacuation saying that their drivers were treated well and the state did a good job.

"We had a plan and because we followed it, things worked out well," he added. "I believe that, overall, we did do a good job."

Maddy said operators in the future can avoid similar problems by making sure their drivers are well prepared and their coaches are in good running condition.

In addition to the driver issues, about 50 of the 1,000 buses assembled for the rescue were not allowed to take part and were removed from service because of varied problems, including brake, axle, tire and insurance issues.

Each of the buses was inspected by the Texas Department of Public Safety before they were sent out.

Show me the money

Meantime, some operators are expressing concerns about not yet having been paid for the evacuation work.

Pinckney Spencer of Atchison Transportation Services in Spartanburg, S.C., said he's owed more than \$200,000 and no one has been able to tell him when his bill will be paid.

Calendar

DECEMBER 2008

3-4 UMA Safety Management Seminar, NTSB Academy, Ashburn, Va. Info: Call (800) 424-8282 or to to: www.uma.org.

JANUARY 2009

8 ABA Marketplace, Charlotte, N.C. Info: Go to www.buses.org.

19-21 IMG Maintenance & Safety Forum, Hilton Grand Vacations Club at SeaWorld International Center, Orlando, Fla.

Info: Go to www.imgcoach.com.

19-21 Southeastern Regional Meeting of Motorcoach Operators, Orlando, Fla. Info: Call (434) 376-1150.

21 UMA State Association Summit, Peabody Orlando. Info: Go to www.motorcoachexpo.com, or call (800) 424-8282.

21-25 UMA Motorcoach Expo, Orlando, Fla. Info: Go to www.motorcoachexpo.com.

23-28 National School Transportation Association Midwinter

Meeting, Orlando, Fla. Info: Go to www.yellowbuses.org.

FEBRUARY 2009

2-5 Tennessee Motor Coach Association 2009 Convention & Marketplace, Music Road Hotel, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Info: Go to www.tnmca.net, or call (423) 288-8622.

15-18 North Carolina Motorcoach Association Annual Meeting, Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Va. Info: Go to www.ncmotorcoach.org, or call (336) 495-4970.

"The best they can tell me now is it might be before the end of the year," he said. "But we'll see."

Spencer said he was aware the state has been slow to pay for previous evacuations so he asked state officials about the payment schedule before signing on for the Ike emergency and was told they would be paid within 45 days.

"Not only did they treat our drivers in a substandard manner, now we will have to wait for an extended period of time for our payment," he said. "Of course, we have already had to pay our drivers and fuel costs."

State officials from the governor's division of emergency management who are working on the payments said they could not talk about the situation.

However, Spencer said he was told when he called to check on his payment that the agency is processing the invoices as quickly as possible and has recruited people from other sections of the agency to help.

Payment bottlenecks

The work includes putting together extensive packets for each motorcoach company that contains a variety of information, including a detailed invoice, driver logs and other records. All of the information then must be examined by auditors, who can delay the process if they have questions or find that necessary information is missing. Once the packets get an okay from the auditor, they then are processed for payment.

There has been some confusion, however, as to where the approved bills should be sent, which could be contributing to the delays.

The division of emergency management said in an e-mail sent to operators that in some cases, FEMA will be paying the bill in full while in others the federal agency will be paying 75 percent and the state the remaining 25 percent. The difference, according to the e-mail, is because the section of the state damaged by Ike was declared a federal disaster area and

FEMA is responsible for evacuation expenses that occurred after that date.

However, Allison Castle, a spokeswoman for the governor's office said that information is incorrect and FEMA is responsible for paying all of the evacuation bills.

Adding to the confusion is that the state still is processing payments for operators who were involved in a transportation operation for Hurricane Gustav, which threatened the Texas Gulf Coast two weeks ahead of Ike and forced the evacuation of thousands of residents. The storm never made it to Texas and, instead, struck Louisiana and also heavily damaged Arkansas.

Texas officials said operators that are waiting payment for either Ike or Gustav work may check to see if their packets have been completed. Call (512)424-7482, or send e-mail to fanny.milan@txdps.state.tx.us for Gustav information, or (512) 424-7105, or aj.mounce@txdps.state.tx.us for Ike.

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Diesel fuel prices

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cant price gap between diesel fuel and gasoline is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and could even widen.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration, for example, expects domestic demand for diesel fuel to grow about four times faster than that of gasoline through 2015. Looking further out, toward 2030, diesel demand is expected to increase about 14 times faster than that of gasoline.

Indeed, by 2030, the USEIA expects U.S. diesel consumption to rise by 51 percent over 2006 consumption levels while gasoline use will increase by just 3.6 percent.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency says that distillates — jet fuel, kerosene, diesel — have become, and will remain, the main growth drivers of world oil de-

mand. Between 2007 and 2013, the IEA expects distillate demand to increase nearly double while global gasoline demand will grow only slightly.

The continuing strong demand for diesel is due in large part to the ongoing "dieselization" of the European automobile market, as well as the expected long-term demand growth in Asia, India and the United States.

The demand for diesel, combined with a global lack of refineries that can produce the type of low-sulfur diesel that is now mandated in the United States and Europe, means diesel will continue selling at a premium relative to gasoline.

And get this: Healthy diesel demand (and the increasing value of diesel fuel) means U.S. refineries are buying more foreign crude, not less. That's a bitter fact given that cutting dependence on foreign oil

has become such a cause celebre and is cited time and again as the main justification for the biofuels boom — notably ethanol production — in the U.S. What has resulted is a phenomenon that is not helpful to the motorcoach industry and demonstrates the complexity of the fuels market.

As one executive at a large domestic oil refiner explained: "Ethanol is making diesel more expensive relative to gasoline because it's expanding the pool of gasoline. But to make diesel, we have to process more crude," which in turn increases demand for crude oil.

In other words, ethanol is doing absolutely nothing to reduce overall U.S. oil consumption or imports because refiners have to buy the same amount of crude (or more) to meet the demand for products other than gasoline — that is, jet fuel, diesel fuel, fuel oil, asphalt and other products.

Debate: What should a driver do when a front tire blows?

Conventional wisdom says the one thing a motorcoach driver should never do when a front tire blows is slam on the brakes.

Now, there's a school of thought that recommends slightly accelerating immediately after a front tire blows to help maintain vehicle control.

Motorcoach safety experts, however, aren't ready to subscribe to the acceleration theory — yet.

A debate — if there is one — over what to do when the front tire on a motorcoach suddenly fails has surfaced in the wake of a number of motorcoach crashes, including the fatal one in Sherman, Texas, that killed 17 (see Sept. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*).

Matt Daecher of Daecher Consulting Group in Camp Hill, Pa., goes with the conventional recommendation of having the driver keep his or her foot off the brakes when a front-wheel blowout occurs.

"What happens when you have a tire blowout is you have an increased drag on that side," says Daecher. "Brakes can accelerate that."

Daecher recommends against attempting any type of emergency braking, which he acknowledges is difficult for a driver to refrain from doing.

"Unfortunately, it's natural for a driver to want to stop," he said. "It's a shock to them when a tire blows out. What we recommend is getting to the side of the road before you hit the brakes so you can come to a controlled stop. Once you hit the brakes, it's tough to know how a vehicle will react."

If a tire disintegrates, Daecher said, it would be even more difficult to control a motorcoach, but it's still best to stay off the brakes initially.

Daecher said he has heard about the theory — supposedly backed by testing — that it actually helps to speed up a little when a front-wheel blowout occurs, lessening the drag caused by the blowout and strengthening the vehicle's straight-ahead momentum. He chuckled a bit and said: "I have no first-hand knowledge of trying that on a bus."

A website geared to police safe driving practices (www.policedriving.com/blowouts.htm) affirms that

following a front-tire blowout, vehicles have a tendency to pull toward the side of the deflated tire.

"If the driver reacts by jerking the steering wheel or pressing the brakes to compensate, the loss of control could be disastrous," states an article featured on the *Police-Driving.com* website.

"The proper action following a blowout is to slightly accelerate. This will keep the vehicle momentum constant and will compensate for the pulling of the vehicle towards the flat tire," the article states.

The website also says the steering wheel should be held straight and firm. Only then, and once the vehicle is away from traffic, should the brakes be applied slightly.

Chris Crean, vice president of safety and security for Peter Pan Bus Lines in Springfield, Mass., and a former chairman of the Bus Industry Safety Council, says the correct protocol in the bus industry is to allow the vehicle to slow down and pull over while holding the steering wheel steady.

"Try not to let the steering wheel go haywire," said Crean. "That's easier said than done because it (a blowout) just pops up on you. It will try to pull to the left or right, depending on which wheel blows. You'll have to put some oomph into it."

"The most important thing is to slow the coach gradually. Don't slam on the brakes. Brake slightly. Some drivers get nervous when that happens."

Mike McDonal, director of transportation for Eyre Bus Lines in Glenelg, Md., explained why he believes braking is not recommended.

"All of the weight is going to shift to that side," McDonal said, "and you'll lose control of the vehicle if you hit the brakes."

Daecher, recommends inspecting tires before starting a trip and, if the driver stops en route, check the tires again.

"If they feel excessive heat on any of the tires, they have an idea they might have an issue that could cause disintegration of a tire," Daecher said.

Like other operators, Michael A. Kraft of Kraftours Corporation

in Tulsa, Okla., was deeply upset by the reports that a recapped tire was being used on the front axle by the operator of the coach that crashed in Sherman, Texas.

"Operating a coach with re-

capped tires on the steer axle with passengers is inexcusable under any circumstances, but I'm not convinced that part of the issue in the crash in Sherman isn't driver training," said Kraft.

"Front-wheel blowouts aren't an inevitable cause of crashes, although they can be the catalyzing event. The end result, as in many coach-related problems, is the skill and experience of the driver."



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Huskey Bus in Missouri joins Trailways

FAIRFAX, Va. — Huskey Bus & Transportation Services of Festus, Mo., has joined the Trailways Transportation System and adopted the name Huskey Trailways.

Company President Kent Huskey said the Trailways affiliation will lift his company's marketing profile and enable it to better serve existing and new customers.

Huskey Trailways operates 18 motorcoaches, serving a variety of charter customers, including military units, universities and sports teams. It also offers packaged casino trips.

The company has been family owned since Huskey's father began the business 13 years ago with two school buses and a motorcoach.

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