

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

Happy New Year!

January 1, 2017

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Parra retiring from UMA, where he 'found a home'

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Victor S. Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association for nearly 19 years, says he “finally found a home” when he joined the association in 1998 after spending several years in other industries.

Now it is time for him to leave that home.

Parra has announced his retirement from UMA, effective March 31.

“It’s impossible to put into a few sentences how much the almost 19 years at UMA has meant

to me and my family,” Parra said. “After spending so many years running organizations in retailing, cable TV and technology, I finally found a home when I arrived at UMA. It’s been an amazing and rewarding ride, one I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”

Dale Krapf, chairman of UMA’s board of directors, said the association will celebrate Parra’s tenure during UMA Motorcoach Expo in St. Louis from Feb. 26 to March 2.

“During his tenure, Vic helped

grow and stabilize membership through creation of the industry’s communication tool — *Bus & Motorcoach News* — and development of BusRates.com and the Bus and Motorcoach Academy,” Krapf said.

“Further, unlike many other association governing structures, Mr. Parra led the change of the UMA governance structure resulting in an elected geographically diverse board of directors and the addition of Canadian and supplier participation.”

Krapf said UMA’s executive

committee and board are working on a transition program preparing for the appointment of Parra’s replacement. They plan on using a search firm, he said.

Parra, who has no immediate plans once he leaves UMA, said what has made his experience at UMA worthwhile has been working with and for the association’s members.

“I feel so fortunate to have spent all this time supporting some of the most tough, courageous and top-notch business professionals

in any industry,” he said.

“Words cannot describe how much I admire and respect all of them. It has been an honor and a privilege to get to know personally so many amazing people who have not only welcomed me into their businesses, but their families as well. How wonderful! How extraordinary! I am blessed!”



Victor Parra

## Wide range of Temsa coaches leads to CH Bus Sales growth

FARIBAULT, Minn. — A steady economy, healthy operators and successful model launches produced another year of progress for Temsa motorcoaches in North America.

“We continue to expand and grow and our business climate has been steady,” said Robert F. Foley, president and chief executive officer of CH Bus Sales LLC, distributor of the Turkish-built vehicles.

“When interest rates stay where they are and the economy is steady, I don’t think we need a robust economy for our segment to grow,” Foley said.

“Operators, in general, have

done very well in the last few years. We introduced our TS 35E last winter, an enhanced version of the TS 35, and customers really love that coach,” he said. “That has picked up business for us.”

The Temsa 30 and 35 models have filled a void between full-size motorcoaches and body-on-truck-frame cutaway buses, Foley said.

“That market is growing. People call it a niche market but it is a great market segment for us.”

The Temsa 45 model, launched in 2015, also has had design enhancements, and acceptance and sales of the coaches continue to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►



The enhanced Temsa TS 35E was introduced last winter at the UMA Motorcoach Expo in Atlanta. “Customers really love that coach,” said CH Bus Sales President and CEO Robert F. Foley. “That has picked up business for us.”

## UMA officials high on Chao as transportation secretary

WASHINGTON — United Motorcoach Association officials are optimistic about the appointment by President-elect Donald Trump of Elaine Chao to head the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Chao, the wife of Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, is a prominent fixture in

Washington, D.C., having previously served as Secretary of Labor under George W. Bush, Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation, chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission and Deputy Maritime Administrator.

She also has a track record of rolling back regulations and is

known to be pro-business.

“Secretary Chao has a history of exceptional competency, accomplishment and seeking private-sector solutions,” said Victor S. Parra, president and CEO of UMA. “We welcome her nomination and look forward to working with her as she implements President-elect Trump’s

plans to improve our nation’s transportation infrastructure.”

Chao was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States when she was 8 years old, going on to earn an economics degree from Mount Holyoke College and an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

She must be confirmed by the Senate before succeeding current Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

If confirmed, Chao is poised to be Trump’s advocate for his proposed trillion-dollar infrastructure investment plan.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 ►



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# Motorcoach industry pitches in to help Pigeon Forge

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — The motorcoach industry in the South has been pitching in to help this fire-ravaged tourist area by donating funds to help people displaced from their homes.

While Pigeon Forge itself had been spared major damage by the fire as of early December, with nine structures destroyed, several deaths were reported in the nearby town of Gatlinburg, where at least 700 buildings were damaged or destroyed in what is being called the worst wildfire disaster in Tennessee in a century.

Officials said the fire, which started Nov. 23, was likely man caused.

Pigeon Forge, a mountain resort city located five miles from Great Smokey Mountains National Park, is a tourist destination that caters primarily to Southern culture and country music fans.

The city's attractions include Dollywood, the theme park owned by country singer and actress Dolly Parton, as well as numerous gift shops, outlet malls, amusement rides and music theaters.

"It is one of the top four group destinations in the country," said

Linda Morris, who is executive director of six state motorcoach associations in the South.

Morris said she recently sent six checks for \$1,000 each from the associations to the relief fund for Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge.

The Tennessee Motor Coach Association also made a major donation.

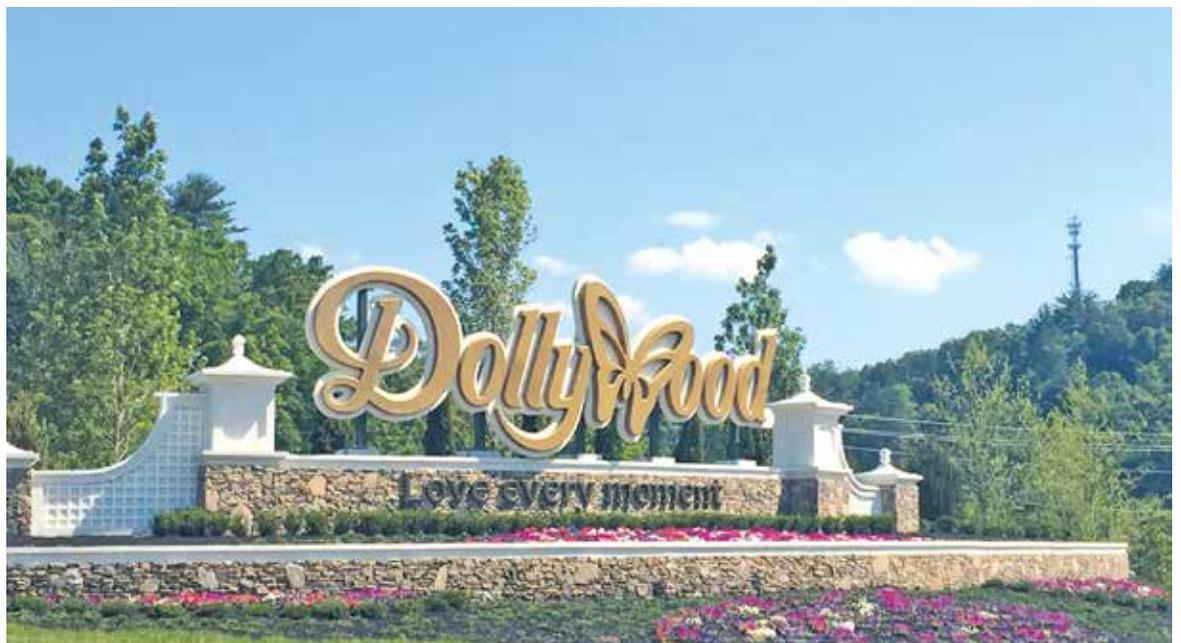
At Dollywood, officials with Great Smoky Mountains National Park evacuated guests from its resort and cabins as flames approached the area. The park was not damaged.

In a statement, Parton said she was heartbroken about the fire damage and had been "praying for all the families affected."

"It is a blessing that my Dollywood theme park, the DreamMore Resort and so many businesses in Pigeon Forge have been spared," she added.

Parton said her Dollywood Foundation would provide \$1,000 a month for six months to families who lost their homes in the fire "so that they can get back on their feet."

Kay Poole, sales manager at the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, said in a news release in



Dollywood, the theme park owned by country singer Dolly Parton, was spared from damage by the forest fire near Pigeon Forge, Tenn., but several people in the area lost their homes and businesses. State motorcoach associations in the region donated thousands of dollars.

early December that the city had opened a distribution and resource center in one of its former retail attractions.

"We have received 'mountains' of cases of water, clothes, food and hygiene items," Poole said. "It is absolutely amazing and the evacuees and those who have lost all are coming in to get the items they

need.

"While Pigeon Forge was spared and our attractions, theaters and museums are open, our sister city of Gatlinburg has not been as fortunate. Please pray for the businesses that have been affected, their employees that currently are not working, and those who have lost homes (and) businesses. Pray for

the families that have suffered even greater losses."

She also asked that tour companies "please continue to bring your groups and guests to our destination in the future as *WE WILL BE BACK!!!* Groups that are here this week and groups coming in the next few weeks will still have a great time at our shows and attractions."



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# THE DOCKET

## Overtime rule on hold pending court or Trump action

WASHINGTON — A federal rule that was scheduled to extend overtime pay to millions of workers last month is in limbo, giving motorcoach operators at least a temporary reprieve from the costly mandate.

The rule backed by President Barack Obama, which was set to take effect Dec. 1, would have doubled to \$47,476 the maximum salary a worker can earn and still be eligible for mandatory overtime pay.

But 21 states and a coalition of business groups that included the U.S. Chamber of Commerce challenged the legality of the rule in court.

A federal judge in Texas agreed and granted them an injunction, which will delay the overtime rule while the case is litigated.

As of December, the rule remained in limbo. The Department of Labor appealed the court ruling but it could drop the appeal after Republican President-elect Donald Trump takes office in January.

In August, Trump called the overtime rule an example of the type of burdensome business regulations he would seek to roll back as president, perhaps by exempting small businesses or delaying

implementation.

Even if the rule survives the legal challenge, it could be upended by legislation passed by Congress or withdrawn by Trump's Labor Department.

The rule focuses primarily on updating the salary and compensation levels needed for executive, administrative and professional workers to be exempt from overtime, according to the Labor Department.

In short, it would double the amount salaried workers must make to be exempt from overtime from the current \$23,660 to \$47,476.

Supporters argue that the current overtime threshold is outdated

and needs to be raised as both employees and employers navigate the changing economy.

The Labor Department last updated the overtime regulations in 2004, when it set the annual salary level at \$23,660.

If the rule is vacated by the court or the Trump administration, it will be good news for motorcoach operators, many of whom were scrambling to implement the new regulations before Dec. 1.

Last summer, after the rule was announced, several motorcoach operators said they expected it to cost them both money and time to implement.

Executive Coach in Lancaster,

Pa., said it was planning on converting three salaried employees to hourly to keep its costs in line.

Otherwise, it would have to issue 15 to 20 percent pay raises to meet the new threshold, said Dale McMichael, general manager and co-owner.

Salaries are conducive to positions like on-call dispatchers who work evenings, for example, where hours can be fluid and people working extra hours can be rewarded with comp time or bonuses.

"We've never worked anybody extremely high overtime," McMichael said. "This (being on salary) keeps it easier to track. Now I'm going to have to move everybody

to tracking every hour, when they're on call, what work did they do and everything," he said of the new bookkeeping headache for the company and employees alike.

He said he also would have to be careful about letting employees access emails from home, which could be counted as work.

"With this new rule I'm going to have to start requiring that we improve our documentation on after-hours calls and how much time was spent on (them) to make sure I'm compliant," McMichael said at the time. "So I'm sure the employees aren't going to like it, as well as it's going to be more of a pain for us doing all that."

## VA docs to issue CMV certificates

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration wants to make it easier for former military personnel to get the medical certification required to operate commercial motor vehicles.

FMCSA is proposing amendments to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations to establish an alternate process for qualified physicians employed in the Department

of Veterans Affairs to be listed on the agency's National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners.

After successful completion of an FMCSA-developed training and testing program, the qualified physicians would become certified VA medical examiners who can perform medical examinations and issue Medical Examiner's Certificates to CMV operators who are

veterans.

As required by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, qualified VA physicians must:

- Be employed in the VA
- Be familiar with FMCSA's standards for, and physical requirements of, a CMV operator requiring medical certification
- Never have "acted fraudulently" with respect to such certification

## IRS forms due earlier

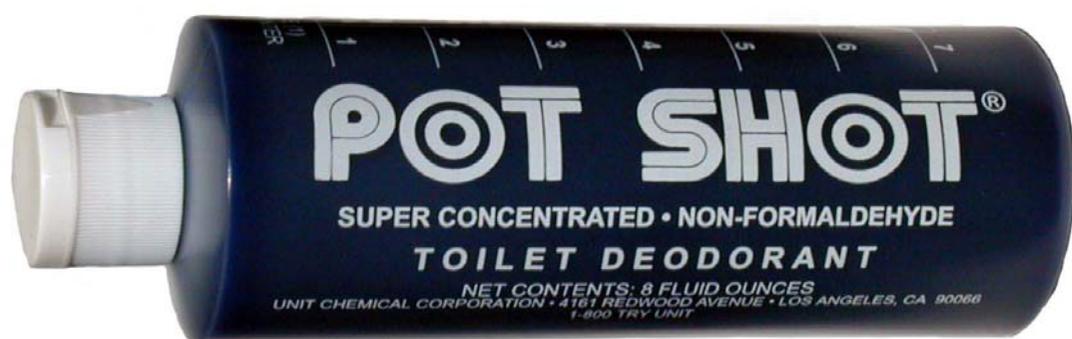
WASHINGTON — The federal Internal Revenue Service has issued a tax reminder pertaining to companies that pay employees and independent contractors.

Businesses that issue W-2 and 1099-MISC forms to such workers now have to file their copies of the forms earlier than in past years.

Under federal legislation enacted late last year as part of the PATH Act, which extended many expiring tax provisions, employers are now required to file the forms used to report payments to employees and independent contractors by Jan. 31, rather than the end of February (or the end of March, if the employer filed electronically).

Although an employer may still request an extension of time to file, IRS will now grant only one 30-day extension, and even that will not be automatic.

The change was made in order to let IRS detect refund fraud more easily.



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# FMCSA issues final drug and alcohol clearinghouse rule

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has issued a final rule establishing a national drug and alcohol clearinghouse for commercial truck and bus drivers.

The clearinghouse database will serve as a central repository containing records of violations of

FMCSA's drug and alcohol testing program by commercial driver's license holders.

"An overwhelming majority of the nation's freight travels by truck, and millions of passengers reach their destinations by bus, so creating a central, comprehensive and searchable database of commercial

motor vehicle drivers who violate federal drug and alcohol testing requirements has been a departmental priority," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

"This system will be a new technological tool that will make our roads safer."

The national drug and alcohol

clearinghouse final rule goes into effect on January 4, with a compliance date of January 2020.

Once the clearinghouse is established, motor carrier employers will be required to check the system for information concerning current or prospective employees who have unresolved violations of

the federal drug and alcohol testing regulations that prohibit them from operating a commercial motor vehicle.

It also requires employers and medical review officers to report drug and alcohol testing program violations.

The final rule's annual net benefits are an estimated \$42 million, with crash reductions resulting from annual and pre-employment queries by FMCSA-regulated motor carriers, the agency said.

"This is a major safety win for the general public and the entire commercial motor vehicle industry," FMCSA Administrator Scott Darling said. "The clearinghouse will allow carriers across the country to identify current and prospective drivers who have tested positive for drugs or alcohol, and employ those who drive drug- and alcohol-free."

"Drivers who test positive for drugs or alcohol will no longer be able to conceal those test results from employers and continue to drive while posing a safety risk to the driving public."

The final rule requires motor carriers, medical review officers, third-party administrators and substance abuse professionals to report information about drivers who:

- Test positive for drugs or alcohol
- Refuse drug and alcohol testing
- Undergo the return-to-duty drug and alcohol rehabilitation process

Motor carriers will be required to annually search the clearinghouse for current employees, and during the pre-employment process for prospective employees, to determine whether a driver violated drug or alcohol testing requirements with a different employer that would prohibit them from operating a CMV.

Federal safety regulations require employers to conduct pre-employment drug testing and random drug and alcohol testing. Motor carriers are prohibited from allowing employees to perform safety-sensitive functions, which include operating a CMV, if the employee tests positive on a DOT drug or alcohol test.

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, a driver must grant consent before an employer can request access to that driver's clearinghouse record and before FMCSA can release the driver's clearinghouse record to an employer. After registering with the clearinghouse a driver can review his or her information at no cost.

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# Long Island bus riders 'welcome' to use porta potties

DIX HILLS, N.Y. — Travelers along the Long Island Expressway near here now can take a break at a new 15,200-square-foot welcome center.

Unless they are traveling by bus or semi-truck.

That's because officials have decided, at the request of local residents, to ban bus and truck parking at the new facility, which boasts a spacious, LEED-certified visitor's center with numerous amenities for travelers.

"In response to community concerns, there will be no tractor

trailer or bus parking allowed at the Welcome Center," New York officials said. "These vehicles will also not be allowed on the service road that supports the facility. However, accommodations for trucks and buses have been provided on the LIE."

Those accommodations include portable restrooms at two different locations.

State officials said eastbound trucks and buses would be redirected to a recently renovated truck inspection site at Exit 66 of the expressway, while westbound

trucks and buses will be steered to a maintenance facility at Exit 56 that has been renovated.

"Improved lighting and portable restroom facilities will be provided at both renovated truck and bus locations," the state said.

Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations and COO of the United Motorcoach Association, said such "accommodations" constitute a slap in the face to bus travelers.

"Clearly, New York did not consider the thousands of visitors (and the millions they spend) that buses bring to Long Island," Presley said.

"Portable restroom facilities?"

Thanks, but no thanks. Thousands of visitors that travel by bus will get the message."

For the record, here is what bus travelers will miss at the new "welcome" center:

- Taste NY Market, which puts the spotlight on Long Island farms and encouraging agritourism throughout the region. The market will feature a selection of fresh-made breakfast and lunch items, including soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts using Long Island-sourced ingredients. It will feature grab-and-go snacks and specialty local items for sale.
- Community Room, which

includes a Department of Motor Vehicles kiosk and travel features from "I Love New York" that highlight Long Island's diverse tourist attractions. The room can also double as a safe refuge for travelers and residents in the event of a storm or a catastrophic event.

- Five I Love New York touch-screen kiosks will provide travelers information and suggested destinations about Long Island's tourism region.

- Enhanced Security will feature fully operational New York State Police and the Suffolk County Police satellite offices at the welcome center.

## Ohio forms partnership to test traffic innovations

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The state of Ohio is investing \$15 million to install advanced highway technology along its "Smart Mobility Corridor" — a 35-mile stretch of U.S. 33 northwest of Columbus.

The state is partnering with leading automotive research centers and local governments in the region to create an ideal proving ground to safely test innovative technologies that will change the way people and

products are transported in Ohio and across the world.

The state plans to test smart transportation technologies on the highway, which carries up to 50,000 vehicles a day through rural and urban settings in a range of weather conditions.

The data will provide more frequent and accurate traffic counts, weather and surface condition monitoring, and incident management improvements.

## AZ to test work-zone technology

PHOENIX — The Arizona Department of Transportation will use federal funding this year to begin testing technology to improve commercial transportation safety and efficiency.

Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks grants from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration totaling \$581,000 will go toward a work-zone notification system and sharing of information between state

and federal inspectors at the Mexican border.

"It's another way ADOT is making our highways key commerce corridors that improve the quality of life in Arizona by moving products and people," said ADOT Director John Halikowskir.

The work-zone notification system will use vehicle communication technologies to alert drivers that they are approaching construction or incidents on the free-

way. It will also make them aware of variable speed limits, traffic congestion and lane closures.

The notification system is designed to reduce accidents and injuries as well as to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion in work zones.

One work zone will be on Maricopa County 85, which connects with State Route 85 west of Phoenix. Route 85 is a popular road taken by tourists heading to Mexico and San Diego.

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Elaine Chao

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She also would take over a regulatory agenda that has been a thorn in the side of the bus and trucking industries.

Officials of those industries view Chao's time at the Department of Labor as a positive because of her stance against runaway regulation.

When she left the department in 2009, she faced a deluge of criticism, with many critics complaining that she favored employers over workers and was lax with regulation, not only on enforcement but on worker safety.

Chao has asserted her critics, often labor unions, were unfair and "partisan." She characterized her approach to her work at the agency as "compliance assistance," a strategy that involved close cooperation with the private sector.

"We have many rules and regulations that can be sometimes confusing and complicated," Chao told *The New York Times* in January 2009. "By reaching out to the employer community and educating them on what their responsibilities and obligations are to their workforce, that, along, with strong enforcement, is the best way to protect workers."

That pro-business approach could be a big win for the motor carriers who have faced a laundry list of new regulations under the Obama administration that, while aimed at increasing driver safety, threaten to force small operators out of business.

Industry analysts are hoping that under more conservative leadership, there is a chance that some elements of the regulatory wave hitting motor carriers will be avoided.

Chao's ties to the business community — and Congress — may also put some momentum behind the incoming administration's big infrastructure push.

The president-elect's \$1 trillion

Foxx lawsuit to continue

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A lawsuit alleging U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx performed little to no work for defunct Charlotte bus maker DesignLine will continue to move forward after an effort to settle the case failed.

The trustee liquidating DesignLine is seeking the return of the pay Foxx, a former Charlotte mayor, received as the company's deputy general counsel from 2009 to 2013.

infrastructure investment plan is reliant on public-private partnerships. Though the details are still sketchy, under Trump, the government would avoid direct spending and instead subsidize private development with significant tax credits.

Developers would own the infrastructure and benefit directly from the collection of tolls and fees.

When the plan was announced in the days immediately after Trump's election, Democrats and

Republicans alike said they were encouraged by the much-needed funding boost.

Since then, however, some Democrats have called the work program, reminiscent of Democratic New Deal programs in the 1930s, a "Trojan horse."

"There's danger in the details, danger that these projects will be a Trojan horse for tax breaks and giveaways to investors who simply get credits to do projects we're already doing," Sen. Richard Blu-

mental, D-Conn., said recently.

AFL-CIO officials counter that view by calling massive federal investment in new transportation projects "one of the best policy strategies for improving our economy, boosting American competitiveness and putting millions to work."

But that depends on the private sector agreeing to fund infrastructure projects, something developers have shown little interest in doing in the past. Even Congress has

been slow to embrace infrastructure development, with McConnell, Chao's own husband and Senate leader, saying infrastructure would not be a top priority for the new Congress in 2017.

If Chao is confirmed by the Senate next year, she will become the 18th U.S. Secretary of Transportation.



Elaine Chao

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## Temsa

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increase, Foley added.

By the end of December CH Bus will have sold more than 300 new and used coaches for the year.

“That’s a significant improvement over last year,” Foley said.

Temsa began selling coaches in the U.S. market in 2010 and has since captured approximately a 10 percent market share.

Temsa and CH Bus Sales present the widest product range to the market, with three fully-integral coaches ranging from 30 to 56 seats (TS 30, TS 35 and TS 45). There are 800 Temsa models on the road in the U.S. run by about 200 operators.

The TS 35 that introduced Temsa to the North American market can seat 40 passengers while equipped with a restroom. With a restroom and wheelchair lift seating capacity drops to 36. More than 500 have been sold in North America.

The enhanced TS 35E was introduced last winter at the UMA Motorcoach Expo in Atlanta.

“We kept the structure and powertrain but upgraded the look,” Foley said. “The enhanced model gets a facelift and a strategic focus on serviceability and access. We also upgraded some of the options.”

The TS 35E has improved service accessibility with three-piece front and rear bumpers, improved driver ergonomics and enhanced curb appeal. Its features include an updated and modern look to the front face and rear door; new styling in the entryway with added LED tread lighting on the steps; new overhead reading lights; and enclosed parcel racks.

The TS 35 is powered by a 345-horsepower Cummins ISL 8.9 directed through an Allison B500 transmission.

Within the model plan for 2017-2018 is an upgraded version of the 34-passenger, 30-foot model.

“We are looking to enhance the TS 30 as we did the TS 35,” Foley said.

The downsized motorcoach, which includes a restroom, is expected to be a prime source of growth for Temsa, he said.

“There has been pent-up demand for years in that segment, whether it is for employee shuttles or the tour side of the industry. In the past, when operators were considering monocoque-design vehicles versus cutaways, I think they were looking for a more robust vehicle.

“That demand has been growing for 10 or 15 years. For the last several years some have been available. That segment will continue to grow as more marketing and awareness get out there.”

The TS 30 carries a 250-horsepower Cummins ISB 6.7 engine and Allison B300 transmission.

The full-size TS 45 is configured for 56 passengers and a restroom. The power train consists of the 425-horsepower Cummins ISX12 and Gen 5 Allison B500.

“One of our strengths is our manufacturer,” Foley said. “Temsa has a diverse portfolio of products. Turkey is one of the world’s top five countries for commercial vehicle production and they have a number of quality suppliers that are very versatile. Temsa is owned by the Sabanci Group, which is a solid and very diversified holding company.

“Temsa has a fabulous research and development department. When it comes to leading-edge technology, they are on the forefront.”

Among Temsa’s research and development projects are electric motorcoaches. The MD9 electri-



Among Temsa’s research and development projects are electric motorcoaches. The MD9 electriCITY was unveiled in June and has been operating on the streets of Adana, Turkey, the company’s home. It eventually will arrive in North America.

CITY was unveiled in June and has been operating on the streets of Adana, Turkey, the company’s home.

This model will not be coming to North America in 2017 but is on the agenda for coming years, Foley said. “They are testing them now.”

The electriCITY is 9.5 meters (31 feet) long and can seat 26 along with a wheelchair passenger. Its batteries can provide a driving range of 230 kilometers (143 miles) as well as heat and air conditioning.

Temsa’s marketing materials state that the electriCITY’s direct traction system “virtually eliminates the need to use a transmission between the axle and the motor, thus increasing productivity.” The motor is rated for 100 kilowatts, the equivalent of 134

horsepower.

As for refueling, Temsa said, “The battery system can be charged within two hours with a 130kWh (kilowatt-hour) DC charger. It can be charged for six hours with a 50kWh DC charger at night to make use of cheap electricity.”

“We believe there is a need in the U.S. for electric vehicles, especially for campus and employee shuttles,” Foley said. “There is a demand and we plan to be able to supply products for that niche.”

CH Bus Sales opened sales and service facilities in San Francisco and in Pine Brook, N.J., this year, joining its shops in Orlando, Fla., and Fort Worth, Texas. Service is one of the company’s strengths, Foley said.

“Our organization has great integrity and great customer service

follow-up. Our operators understand that. We also have added the availability of online parts ordering for our customers.”

CH Bus expects the economy to continue chugging along this year as the Trump administration moves into the White House.

“We think the economy will be steady with the transition,” Foley said. “In some cases the climate on regulations certainly might take a different tone going forward, which I think will help business.”

As Temsa enters its seventh year in the market, “Our business will continue to grow,” he said. “We will continue to expand our parts and service footprint across the country. As every model we have gets more exposure, we gain more interest. That is what we are looking for.”

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# Leasing rule could mean more drive-through restaurants

By Dave Millhouser

The Eagle soared over the summit of Colorado's 11,500-foot Hoosier Pass and started a predatory dive down the other side.

Sadly, this was an "01" Eagle, and its prey was a restaurant at the bottom of the pass.

It was 1971 and we had rented an extra bus and its driver for a ski trip from a leasing company in Maryland, and apparently neither had ever seen an actual mountain before.

Watching them crest the pass at high speed, roar around a bend and fade from sight, I thought that either this guy was a terrific driver or we were gonna have some excitement.

Being a weenie, I crept down in low gear, and as we came around the last sharp turn I spotted the Eagle in Denny's.

Actually IN Denny's. Between fried brakes and the curve, the coach had given new meaning to "drive-through."

This was before the industry was deregulated and the leasing company was one of a variety of quasi-legal methods used to get around barriers to entry in the bus business.

You didn't "charter" from them, you leased the coach, and golly gee whiz, they had a driver you could "hire," too.

Churches and non-profits had buses they sometimes "rented" in an effort to keep them moving and make a bit of spare change. There was a bus counterculture built around bypassing regulations designed to protect existing carriers.

Established companies called them gypsies, and there was a wide range of quality. Some were shabby, and since they operated under the radar anyway, they skimmed on all sorts of things (sometimes including insurance).

Others did a fine job and went rogue because it was the only way they could enter a tightly regulated business.

Many emerged from the shadows as soon as deregulation allowed and, without naming names, have become pillars of the industry. One of my heroes is a bus mechanic who started with a single stealthy 4106 and, following deregulation, became the largest and most respected carrier in his region — a motorcoach Cinderella.

De jure barriers to entry have

largely disappeared, and regulatory efforts have shifted towards improving safety. There's an ongoing discussion regarding whether the burden of some new rules constitutes de facto regulation by creating a difficult environment for small, startup and minority-owned companies.

No one advocates abandoning reasonable oversight of the industry. The debate is over what is reasonable.

One thing that bureaucrats, most of whom have never had operational responsibility in the industry they oversee, seem to miss is the creativity of those who feel the rules are unreasonable (or who just don't give a darn).

Reasonable people follow reasonable rules. When a large portion of the public (or an industry) believes regulation is silly, all bets are off.

Enforcing unpopular laws generates a population that uses its ingenuity to confound authority. This creates a sympathetic criminal class, because to some degree, virtually everyone is a lawbreaker. The rascals consistently outsmart the "good" guys.

Gee whiz, remember Prohibition?

Before 1982 there was an underground charter industry that had virtually no supervision. Because they were forced to find a way around economic regulation, there was no incentive to follow ANY rules, and gypsies dedicated their considerable cleverness to avoiding them.

We're meandering towards discussing the new lease rule — you know, the one that is in effect, but not being enforced.

The one that says if you farm a job that you, not the actual operator, are responsible for compliance with even the most obscure regulations.

If you take a job and farm it, you've already put your reputation on the line and you have civil liability if things go wrong. There are major incentives for being careful about who you work with.

Bearing in mind the enormous capacity human beings have for thumbing their nose at government, is this regulation opening new doors for mischief? One executive called it a road map for avoiding oversight.

Its stated purpose is to make it easier to catch pop-up repeat offenders. Isn't there anyone in the

bureaucracy creative and diligent enough to use existing law, rather than instituting a new rule that hobbles the industry? Are there really that many miscreants?

One consequence may be a new layer of leasing companies that own buses but are immune to any sort of oversight. The bad guys will come up with tons of creative ways around this goofy rule, while good guys stumble through, trying to comply.

Nobody with a rudimentary understanding of the motorcoach business thinks this is a good idea, except for large companies who see it as hamstringing smaller competitors.

We were silly to lease "flatlander's" buses for a ski trip, and we (and Denny's) paid a price. There are good reasons to choose carefully when you farm, without adding this ugly layer of regulation.

Dave Millhouser is a bus industry marketing consultant and freelance writer. Contact him by email at [Davemillhouser@gmail.com](mailto:Davemillhouser@gmail.com).



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# Marketing Council to auction MCI J4500 during Expo

ST. LOUIS — The Motorcoach Marketing Council's seventh annual live and silent auctions — to be held during UMA Motorcoach Expo 2017 in St. Louis from Feb. 26 to March 2 — will feature a new MCI J4500.

The council also will host its third-annual Glow Motorcoach

fundraising party during Expo.

The live auction, which benefits GoMotorcoach, an operator-supported marketing coalition working to advance motorcoach travel, will be held at 1 p.m. on Feb. 27 at booth No. 101.

The 2017 MCI J4500 will be the first 45-foot coach ever offered

during the annual auction.

"We are thrilled that MCI has partnered with us on this year's auction," said Christian Riddell, executive director of the Motorcoach Marketing Council. "MCI has always been a leader in the coach manufacturing business, and we couldn't be more excited to

offer UMA members the chance to bid on a J4500, MCI's flagship, in our upcoming auction."

Brent Maitland, MCI's vice president of marketing and product planning and a member of the marketing council's steering committee, said MCI has been a supporter of the council since its inception.

"The council has tools and services many operators in the industry are using to win new business," Maitland said. "We are proud to once again offer our support by making an MCI J4500 available for this important fundraising event. The MCI J4500 is the industry leader and a vehicle any winner would be proud to have in their fleet."

The council's silent auction during Expo will feature donated items such as trip packages, hotel stays, technology items, purses, clothing, parts credits and advertising discounts.

This year's Glow Motorcoach fundraising party will be held Feb. 27. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased at [www.motorcoachmarketing.org/glow](http://www.motorcoachmarketing.org/glow).

Riddell said the council relies on the fundraiser and auctions — especially the live motorcoach auction — for its annual operating budget.

"We work very hard to make our budget go as far as we possibly can," he said. "Our mission to help coach operators sell more charters, to more people, for more money is a big task. When the industry partners with us on our auction, it goes a long way in helping us accomplish such a big undertaking."

## Green Highway Award entries

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The United Motorcoach Association is seeking nominations for its Green Highway Award, which is presented annually to a coach operator during UMA Motorcoach Expo.

The award, which is sponsored by Motor Coach Industries, was introduced at Expo in 2008.

It recognizes motorcoach travel as a viable solution for reducing carbon emissions and encourages industry leadership on environmental issues.

The award will be presented to an operator that has demonstrated the greatest commitment to "green stewardship" in the areas of internal corporate initiative, external corporate stewardship, or community and industrywide green leadership.

Three aspects of a company's operation will be considered: administrative, maintenance and equipment, and facility.

Nominations are due by Jan. 18. Please fax nominations to 703-838-2950 or email Carrington Blake at [cblake@uma.org](mailto:cblake@uma.org). Nomination forms can be found at <http://motorcoachexpo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2017-Green-Highway-Award-Nomination-Final.pdf>.

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# UMA MOTORCOACH EXPO 2017

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# Electric buses ran through St. Louis in the early 1900s

ST. LOUIS — The Palace of Transportation, the largest exhibition hall at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904, was filled with hundreds of railroad vehicles, reflecting the peak of personal comfort and luxury.

Automobiles from Europe and the U.S., along with a few airships, foretold exciting developments to come in the 20th Century.

The World's Fair's most popular wheeled attractions, however, were circulating outside — a fleet of 50 open-top electric buses carrying passengers around the enormous fairgrounds and shuttling them between the fair and downtown hotels eight miles away.

“In our trip through the grounds we were struck with the unusual number of electric observation automobiles in use on the thoroughfares and the crowded appearance of each,” wrote Percy F. Megargel, who covered the fair for *The Automobile* magazine.

“Twenty-five cents is charged for a trip about the grounds, and as each building or place of interest is passed the operator stands up in his seat and cries out the name of the structure, adding any information he may have on that subject. People from the rural districts who have never before ridden in an automobile cling to their seats in the observation cars the greater part of the day.”

That fare would be about \$7 in current dollars.

The buses were built by the Auto-Car Equipment Co. of Buffalo, N.Y. The company founder, George Atterbury, grew up northeast of St. Louis in Litchfield, Ill., and earned an engineering degree from McKendree College in Lebanon, Ill.

He spent the 1890s working on electric vehicles and powerhouses in Chicago for General Electric, American Electric Vehicle Co. and Westinghouse.

## Forward progress

“The importance of transportation as a factor in the progress of civilization has been recognized by the Exposition by making the Palace of Transportation the most expensive of all temporary buildings and by giving it a prominent central location,” stated the *Official Catalogue of Exhibitors*.

“The Transportation Palace covers nearly 16 acres of ground, and is architecturally appropriate and impressive. Harking back to the earliest history of railway development, and then coming down

to the wonderful equipment of today, there is a special historical exhibit which is illustrative in so broad a scope as to take in interesting contributions from all parts of the world.”

The Auto-Car fleet connected the exposition to downtown hotels, likely traversing Washington Avenue and other streets that will be traveled by visitors to UMA Motorcoach Expo 2017, to be held in St. Louis from Feb. 26 to March 2.

A correspondent for *The Cosmopolitan* magazine found his ride almost too exhilarating. (The era's electric buses topped out at about 12 miles per hour.)

“The fair is notable not merely for its exhibit of the highest construction of automobiles, but for the practical use of the vehicle itself. Sixteen-passenger vehicles traverse the ground in every direction, and also carry passengers from the city out to the Exposition,” he wrote.

“I went home in one of them one night and had an opportunity to learn something of the speed of the great vehicle. Turning off into the asphalted streets of St. Louis — it was eleven o'clock and the streets were deserted — the chauffeur put his vehicle in the center, applied all speed and carried his 18 passengers along with a rush that I confess made me uncomfortable, fearing that something might come unexpectedly out of one of the side avenues.

## Speed and comfort

“We turned into a number of streets and delivered passengers, and then finally reached the Planters' Hotel in a time that would have been impossible for the streetcar. There was thorough ventilation, there were upholstered seats, there was comfort, there was quick delivery, and finally there was delivery directly to one's own doorstep.

“The substitution of this latest means of travel for streetcars would be instantaneous were it not that it would interfere with some two thousand millions of capital invested in existing systems of street transportation,” he concluded.

Published specifications for the 1906 Auto-Car “Passenger Electric Car” state that it was based on a frame of “seasoned oak armored with steel.”

It carried two Westinghouse motors connected to the wheels by chain drives. The solid rubber tires were 36 inches tall. The 24 seats offered that year were squeezed



Electric buses built by the Vehicle Equipment Co. of Long Island were carrying tourists around New York City in 1904. Tour companies also were operating in Washington, D.C., and in St. Louis, site of UMA Motorcoach Expo 2017 Feb. 26-March 2.

onto a body (open sides with a canopy top) that was 4 feet wide and 16 feet, 4 inches long.

Electric buses built by the Vehicle Equipment Co. of Long Island were carrying tourists around New York City in 1904. Tour companies also were operating in Washington, D.C., reported *Motor Age* magazine.

“Washington, the capital city of the nation, stands today as one of the handsomest and most interesting cities in the world. In view of this fact, and for the purpose of facilitating sightseeing, two companies have been organized to cater to the needs of the thousands who weekly visit Washington. They have established automobile trips to all the points of interest, which afford an ideal way of seeing the city of magnificent distances.”

The buses used in New York City and by one of the Washington lines looked similar to the Auto-Car vehicles deployed in St. Louis.

“A more enjoyable and more thoroughly satisfactory way of seeing the capital city cannot be imagined,” the magazine stated.

## Less noise, odor

Electricity held many advantages over gasoline and steam vehicle engines at the dawn of the 20th Century — greater reliability and less noise, vibration and odor.

Bus lines were appearing in Europe, too.

“In some cases results netted no profit, in other cases there was

such a small profit that it was thought hardly worth attempting such enterprise,” *Motor Age* magazine reported in 1904.

“There were, however, a few instances, especially in France and England, where it was shown that after the first six or 12 months the transportation companies began to make a fair profit and that the country people, after having been educated in the matter of automobile transportation and shown conclusively that they would profit greatly by such enterprises, helped the lines and made it possible for the latter to improve the service for the benefit of all concerned.”

A successful French carrier fielded buses that carried 12 to 14 passengers and 1,100 pounds of freight at up to 12.5 miles per hour.

*Motor Age* wrote that an English company realized a 260-percent rate of return in its first year of operating a \$4,000 electric coach.

## Location, location, location

The key to success, of course,

was location, *Motor Age* stated.

“Some of the unsuccessful companies in investigating the cause for failure discovered that one of the principal reasons is that an automobile transportation company must not only be run in a section of a country where there are good roads, but in thickly populated districts and through large numbers of localities,” it said.

Auto-Car Equipment Co. changed its name in 1909 because an automobile manufacturer in Pennsylvania also was becoming well known using the name Autocar.

Renamed the Atterbury Motor Car Co., the Buffalo factory specialized in trucks, ambulances, fire trucks and sightseeing vehicles. It also produced “trackless trolleys,” buses powered by overhead electrical lines.

Like many automobile and truck manufacturers, the Atterbury company fell victim to the Great Depression and ended production in 1935.

## Calendar

### January 2017

**8-10 Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators Coalition**, Montgomery, Ala. Info: [www.tnmca.net](http://www.tnmca.net).

**8-11 2017 Tennessee Motor Coach Association Convention & Marketplace**, Montgomery, Ala. Info: [www.tnmca.net](http://www.tnmca.net).

**14-17 American Bus Association Marketplace**, Cleveland, Ohio. Info: [www.buses.org/events](http://www.buses.org/events).

**15-16 Bus Industry Safety Council Winter Meeting**, Cleveland, Ohio. Info: [www.buses.org/events](http://www.buses.org/events).

### February 2017

**26-March 2 UMA Motorcoach Expo 2017**, St. Louis, Mo. Info: [www.motorcoachexpo.com](http://www.motorcoachexpo.com).

# Jonathan Berzas elected chairman of Trailways system

FAIRFAX, Va. — Jonathan T. Berzas, president and CEO of Fullington Trailways in Clearfield, Pa., takes over Jan. 1 as chairman of Trailways Transportation System Inc.

Berzas, a member of the Trailways board of directors since 2012, was elected chairman during the board's October meeting in Ft. Worth, Texas.

He succeeds Ron R. Moore, president of Burlington Trailways in West Burlington, Iowa.

"This is the perfect time for Jonathan, also a member of the Executive Committee, to become Trailways' next chairman," Moore said. "We've selected a very

strong, as well as visionary, leader at a time when Trailways is in a very strong position.

"However, we are nearing a pivotal time in our organization's 80-year history," he said. "It's a time when we will be exploring and embracing exciting changes to secure continued growth and financial success for the brand and all those affiliated with our organization. Our next chairman must lead our organization through a highly dynamic, swiftly changing and challenging environment.

"Jonathan's leadership strengths and talents parallel those requirements."

Moore assumes the position of

immediate past chairman and will preside over the board's nominating and leadership succession process.

Berzas, whose three-year term as chairman runs through Dec. 31, 2019, said he would focus on creating expanded and heightened value for Trailways' stakeholders. "I am very excited about Trailways' future," he said. "We have a solid business strategy. Most important, we possess the best brand name in the industry worldwide.

"Additionally, Trailways offers a vast base of value-trusted services and products," Berzas said. "We are encouraged by the positive outlook and the improving business

environment in the markets where we currently operate and in those new markets that we've targeted strategically."

Berzas, who has more than 25 years of experience in the motorcoach, travel and tourism industries, joined Fullington Trailways in 2011. Before that he spent five years with American Airlines, 10 years with Greyhound Lines in various management positions, and 10 years as owner and operator of A Great Way to Charter, Tour and Travel, a motorcoach charter services and tour company.

Trailways President and CEO Eva M. Hotard called Berzas "a champion of the Trailways cul-

ture" and said he has "an incredible ability to inspire, to energize and to connect with employees, stakeholders, industry partners and customers."

"Jonathan's vision, strategy and ability to execute plans are exactly what Trailways needs as we enter our next chapter, which I am confident will be impactful and exciting," Hotard said. "I am truly looking forward to working with him and the entire board of directors."



Jonathan Berzas

## IMG makes funding commitment to youth travel group

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — The International Motorcoach Group has agreed to a five-year funding commitment to the SYTA Youth Foundation, which offers travel experiences and scholarships to students and youth.

The foundation is the philanthropic division of the Student & Youth Travel Association.

"We have watched with admira-

tion the work and continued efforts of the SYTA Youth Foundation for many years," IMG President Bronwyn Wilson said. "IMG member companies wanted to expand their outreach to the student community and it felt right to contribute financially to the foundation.

"Our commitment is long term, as we join the Chairman's Circle of contributors, and that simply re-

flects our confidence in SYTA and the foundation," Wilson said.

IMG made the donation on Giving Tuesday, which is celebrated annually on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving and kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

Carlyann Assante, executive director of SYTA and the foundation,

said IMG was the first association and allied member to pledge at the Chairman's Circle level.

"IMG's commitment over the next five years will truly change the lives of deserving youth through travel," Assante said. "In addition to their pledge of financial support, individual IMG members also provide transportation and in-kind support for SYF edu-

cation programs. The foundation could not exist without the support of organizations like IMG."

IMG members operate more than 7,000 vehicles and provide services to more than 21 million charter and tour customers in the U.S. and Canada each year. Member companies must adhere to strict standards and qualifications for invitation-only membership.

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### People

OMAHA, Neb. — Alex Busskohl is taking over the marketing responsibilities for **Arrow Stage Lines, Arrow Entertainer and Arrow Nationwide Ground Logistics.**

Busskohl, a fourth-generation family member and Arrow Stage Lines' corporate operations specialist, also will oversee the relaunch of Arrow Bus Sales in conjunction with the new Arrow Parts Sales.

The new endeavor provides industry partners with a large online offering of both used buses and a variety of part options.

"I am excited to be a part of so many areas here at Arrow," Busskohl said. "After helping a little bit in the marketing department for a couple of years, I realized how much I enjoyed marketing for Arrow. I am fortunate to be working off of such a strong platform already built here and I am excited

to join at such a fun time."

Arrow Stage Lines' COO **Luke Busskohl** said having a strong marketing department is crucial in today's business world.

"We strive to be a leader in every aspect of our business, and marketing, innovation and creativity are all crucial to our success going forward," he said. "We are excited to continue to build on the strong foundation we have developed at Arrow."

WASHINGTON — The Bus Industry Safety Council has elected new members to its Executive Committee. They are:

- Secretary — **Jeff Shanker, RMA Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation**
- Government Affairs Committee Chairman — **Dave Bolen, Academy Express**
- Human Performance Com-



Alex Busskohl

mittee Chairman — **Rick Vaillancourt, Cyr Bus Lines**

- Security Committee Chairman — **Lynette McMillian, Coach USA**

• Vehicle Technical & Operations Committee — **Andy Byars, All Aboard America Holdings**

• Workplace Health & Environmental Safety Committee Chairman — **Pam Martinez, DATCO**

• Bus Manufacturer Representative — **Louis Hotard, ABC Companies**

• Supplier Representative — **Mike McDonald, Saucun Technologies**

• Insurance Representative — **Bob Crescenzo, Lancer Insurance**

The committee members join new BISC Chairman **Alan Smith of Greyhound Lines**, Vice Chairman **Mike Ferianc of Butler Motor Transit/Coach USA**, and Past Chairman **Stephen Evans of Pacific Western Transportation** to form the 2017-2018 BISC Executive Committee.

## Albert C. Fleming of Trolley Inc. dies at age 73

GORDONVILLE, Pa. — Albert C. Fleming, a longtime friend of and cohort in the bus industry, died just before Thanksgiving. He was 73.

Fleming passed away on Nov. 23 at home with his companion of 40

years, Barbara Whitney, by his side.

Fleming was a longtime employee of Trolley Inc. in Forked River, N.J. He also participated in the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance and the Bus Industry Safety Council.

Plans are being made for two memorial services sometime this month, one in the Lancaster, Pa., area, where Fleming and Whitney have lived for the past few years, and one on the Jersey shore, where they lived for several years.

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