

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

February 15, 2014

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Accord may set diabetic standard for coach drivers

ROSELAND, N.J. — In a potentially far-reaching action, Coach USA announced it has agreed to a new medical protocol for employing drivers with diabetes.

The protocol will ensure public safety and protect disability rights, say those involved in the arrangement, which includes the company, the AARP Foundation Litigation and the American Diabetes Association.

The agreement also is designed “to resolve certain legal challenges” related to the company’s previous diabetes policies.

Coach USA has been wrestling with the issue of diabetic drivers for more than a decade.

In 2009, three diabetic Coach USA drivers sued the company, claiming it discriminated against them with unwarranted suspensions — without pay — if their urine tested positive for high glucose levels. The drivers claimed Coach USA’s action violated New Jersey disability discrimination law.

At the time, Coach USA said it allowed diabetics — who are not dependent on insulin — to work as drivers, provided the company deems the disease is controlled with oral medication, diet and medical supervision.

Without those controls, drivers run risks, including losing consciousness on the road from hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia, a company spokeswoman told USA Today in 2011.

The drivers said in their suit that those symptoms occur for some insulin-dependent diabetics but are extremely rare among those who do not use insulin.

The drivers also said they were type 2 diabetics who didn’t require insulin.

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UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

## MOTORCOACH EXPO 2014



**Motorcoaching to L.A.** UMA Motorcoach Expo at Travel Exchange lands in the Los Angeles Convention Center on Feb. 16. Late show and exhibitor news can be found beginning on Page 14.

## New ‘toolbox’ promises results

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## ‘Smart solutions’ battle weather

States across the U.S. have increased their use of technology and “smart solutions” to battle the affects of severe winter weather.

Tech solutions like GPS guidance systems and low-tech products like potato juice are helping states to remove snow and ice from roadways while keeping costs in check, improving efficiency, and minimizing environmental impacts.

“New technologies are being tested and implemented by state DOTs every day,” says Mike Han-

cock, president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

Here are examples of ways states are keeping vehicles moving this winter.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities uses a variety of advanced technologies to combat extreme winter weather. This year, ADOT&PF became one of the first agencies in the

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## FMCSA powers expanded again with latest rule

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration can shut down a motorcoach operation if the company or a company officer has shown “egregious disregard” for safety and committed a pattern of unsafe practices, a rule published last month states.

The rule, “Patterns of Safety Violations,” empowers the FMCSA to yank the operating authority of reincarnated companies and other high-risk carriers that endanger travelers by attempting to conceal a history of flaunting safety regulations, according to the FMCSA.

“The new rule complements a rule adopted by the agency in 2012 to apply out-of-service orders to reincarnated or chameleon carriers and to consolidate their enforcement histories. (It) goes one step further by authorizing a complete revocation of the motor carrier’s authority to operate,” according to an FMCSA statement.

FMCSA officials say the agency recognizes the severity of the penalty, and foresees imposing it in a limited number of cases each year. It estimates the rule would have been applied a half-dozen times last year.

The final rule cites a fatal bus crash in August 2008 in Sherman, Texas, that killed 17 passengers and injured the driver and 38 other people.

Investigations by the FMCSA, the National Transportation Safety Board and others “revealed that the motor carrier was operating without authority, was a reincarnation of another bus company that had been recently placed out of service for safety violations, and that both companies were under the control of the same person,” the rule states.

“FMCSA determined that the companies’ flagrant disregard for safety under this person’s control demonstrated a hazard to the safety of the motoring public,” it states.

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# Over-zealous cop suffers setbacks in California, but...

LOS ANGELES — California motorcoach operators have scored back-to-back victories in court against a Culver City, Calif., police officer who is notorious for enforcing a state law that bans buses over 40-feet-long from operating on all but certain routes.

The decisions handed down in a Los Angeles-area traffic court in December and January were important wins for operators, says Jim Seal, a Santa Monica, Calif.-based consultant for the California Bus Association.

However, he said, the cases left

open to question interpretations of the law, CVC Section 35400(a), which allows 45-foot buses to operate on interstates and other federally funded highways, and grants them reasonable access to the highways.

What's still unclear, Seal said, is what constitutes "reasonable access" and whether the law extends to the national highway system, which includes federal highways and some 20,000 extra miles of state highways.

Nonetheless, Seal said the cases were the first known defeats

for the zealous officer with the Culver City Police Department, who has handed out at least two-dozen citations to bus drivers from five different companies.

The aggressive officer encourages other commercial police officers to copy his hard-line tactics, and had by last summer enlisted support from at least 12 other officers throughout the Los Angeles region, according to one California operator.

"Nobody is interpreting this as strictly as he is, but he's trying to expand his influence to other com-

mercial officers. But he's lost two of the last two bus cases," Seal said.

In the first case, a driver for Bauer's Transportation was on a regularly scheduled airport FlyAway-service run from Los Angeles International Airport to the San Fernando Valley.

The driver bypassed the I-405 freeway because of traffic congestion, and was traveling on a main thoroughfare within a mile from the freeway in Culver City when the officer stopped the bus and issued a ticket.

Los Angeles Superior Court

Judge James K. Hahn, former mayor of Los Angeles, ruled in the driver's favor and dismissed the \$190 fine.

"We won that case. Now, why we won it is somewhat unclear," said Seal.

"Clearly (Hahn) understood that this was a regularly scheduled service, there was the question of the congestion on the 405, the interstate, and the driver was keeping to a schedule," he said.

"And this was a contract service to the city of Los Angeles, of

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# South Carolina operators oppose school bus privatization

COLUMBIA, S.C. — State lawmakers here probably won't make a second run at trying to privatize the state's school bus operations this year.

And that appears to be just fine with most of the charter-and-tour bus companies operating in the only state in the country that does not allow full private outsourcing of school transportation.

While some in the motorcoach industry outside of South Carolina might find that a bit odd, South

Carolina operators suggest that turning over student transportation services to private businesses actually could be disastrous for many of them.

"We could favor it — if it was done the right way, but we don't see that happening at this time," said Buddy Young, president of the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina and owner of Capitol Bus Lines in West Columbia.

He points to legislative action three years ago that allowed priva-

tizing of school bus operations in three of the most heavily populated counties in the state, Charleston, Dorchester and Beaufort.

"Since that began, eight private motorcoach carriers in those counties have gone out of business," he said. "Eight of them."

While a litany of other reasons likely contributed to their demise, Young suggests that privatizing played a key role.

He contends that when the state developed the outsourcing

program for the three counties, it did it in a way that not only squeezed out operators in the state from getting any of the school transportation work, but also caused them to lose most of the field trips, sports team transportation and other after-school charter jobs they had been doing in the area.

Young said the problems began at the outset with state officials setting up the program on a countywide basis, which made the

coverage areas so massive — one was 1,000 square miles — it was impossible for any of the more than 90 small bus companies in the state to become involved.

"Most of the bus operators in our state are very small, many of them just mom and pop businesses that would not be able to get financing to run such large school operations," he said.

"If they had created smaller regions, rather than entire counties,

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# THE DOCKET

## Senators seek end to traffic jams at Canada-U.S. border

WASHINGTON — The nominee to head the nation's border protection agency was pressed at his confirmation hearing last month to get vehicles flowing faster at traffic-clogged Canada-U.S. checkpoints.

Gil Kerlikowske faced only a few questions about border secu-

rity during the Senate hearing into his appointment to lead the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency.

The questions he did face about the U.S. northern border were about bolstering trade by speeding-up traffic, not about adding new layers of security.

"There's a pent-up demand on both sides," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, arguing that more checkpoints be staffed and kept open at the border in his own state, Montana.

Kerlikowske, a former police officer and ex-drug czar in the Obama administration replied:

"I'm very much aware, having been to Montana several months ago. That was made very apparent to me."

Kerlikowske offered a similar answer when pressed by New York Sen. Charles Schumer about the jammed Peace Bridge at Buffalo.

Schumer expressed frustration

that wait times at that crossing rose sharply last year for both commercial and private vehicles. Peak wait times can be close to a half hour.

He pushed the nominee to allocate resources from a new budget deal to the Peace Bridge, along with New York City's JFK airport.

"Toronto is booming," Schumer said.

"There are hours and hours and hours of waiting. That's clearly unacceptable. A lot of Canadians come shopping in Buffalo because of the exchange rates. (This) is a deterrent."

Businesses in both Canada and the U.S. are pushing for what they call an "intelligent" border, which could speed traffic by streamlining crossing procedures and reducing red tape.

John Manley, head of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, has said security worries have managed to slow down traffic without nabbing more terrorists than could fit in a phone booth.

If the security-conscious U.S. has been fixated on the dangers of its borders since 9/11, those fears were secondary to trade concerns at the Senate hearing.

Kerlikowske was asked two questions about the Canadian border, both about facilitating the flow of traffic.

By contrast he was asked two others about the Mexican border and both of those dealt with security.

He was also questioned about counterfeit goods, privacy rights, the use of new technology, and racial profiling.

When Kerlikowske listed four of his priorities for the job, they tilted toward commerce.

He dropped references to security threats and illegal drugs that had been included in his prepared remarks.

In those written remarks, which he condensed in his actual presentation, the first item on the priority list was traffic: "Time is money, not only for cargo but also for international travellers who wish to visit the United States.

These visitors create tremendous economic growth and support jobs."

His confirmation is a near certainty.

## Bus executives favor tests for new entrants

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Bus and motorcoach operators told Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration officials at a listening session here they endorse knowledge testing for new industry entrants.

The operators also said they want any new testing rule to be uncomplicated and they want the

tests to be targeted to specific types of companies.

FMCSA officials collected industry input last month during a meeting of the American Bus Association.

It was the first of three sessions that are part of the rulemaking process for creating tests for new bus and truck companies,

gauging their knowledge of federal regulations.

The tests were required by Congress in the MAP-21 highway and public transportation law that was adopted in June 2012.

"I can easily envision multiple tests," Bill Quade, FMCSA associate administrator, said in response to audience statements. Quade

chaired the listening session.

As an array of companies must be tested, Quade said the agency could either develop one test for all companies or tailor tests.

He said the testing could be similar to the commercial driver license system where there is a basic test and then endorsements for different specialties.

## Drug, alcohol clearinghouse proposal imminent, Ferro says

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is close to releasing a proposal that would establish a clearinghouse of positive drug and alcohol tests for bus and truck drivers, Administrator Anne Ferro said.

Congress called for the clearinghouse in the highway and public transportation law, MAP-21, it

adopted in mid-2012.

However, the FMCSA has been working on the idea for years, Ferro said during a session last month at the Transportation Research Board's annual meeting.

The clearinghouse rule would establish a national database of all positive drug or alcohol tests of truck and bus drivers, as well as

drivers' refusals to take tests.

Bus operators and truckers would then be required to query the database before hiring drivers.

That will be a very helpful system that will accompany the rule, but first we've got to get through the proposal phase, Ferro said.

In addition to that rule and a number of others, MAP-21 called

for FMCSA to complete several research projects, including an evaluation of the current insurance requirement for bus and truck companies.

That study is complete and under review at FMCSA and should be released soon, Ferro said.

There has been considerable speculation the requirement will be boosted.



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# Ferro responds to critics of 'zero truck fatality' goal

WASHINGTON — Is the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's goal of zero truck-related fatalities an ideology or an appropriate aspiration?

Rep. Richard Hanna, R-N.Y., says it's an ideology that leads to poor regulation.

Accidents are inevitable and there is no point in trying to drive the truck-related fatality rate down to zero, he says.

"If the goal is to reduce all deaths to zero, then we would close all our highways and park all our trucks."

Hanna's comment came during a November hearing on the 34-hour restart provision of the hours-of-service rule for truck drivers.

"(Zero deaths is) an unrealistic, impractical goal that burdens the industry and is philosophically based, not reality based," he said.

FMCSA Administrator Anne Ferro has a different take.

"Zero is the right goal," she said last month in response to a question at a forum on FMCSA research projects. The forum was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board here.

"At the end of the day, I wouldn't call it ideology. I think it's appropriate to call it a stretch goal, an aspirational goal, because we really shouldn't suggest that we can explain and justify the fatalities and serious injury crashes that happen today."

Ferro added that the agency should strive to eliminate crashes because drivers want to get home safely and employers want their employees to be safe and successful.

"So, it is absolute that we need to continue to strive towards crash-free environment and absolutely zero fatalities."

Aviation achieves this goal, and it is within reach for the bus industry, she said. And trucking can strive for significant improvements even if zero fatalities is not on the near horizon.

"To do otherwise is to question each other's motives and incentives," Ferro said.

"Aspirational? Absolutely. Ideological? Not at all," she said, drawing applause from many in the audience at the forum.

In practical terms, and by law, regulations have to meet cost-benefit standards.

"We have to find a balance," observed Ron Knipling, a noted truck safety scientist and author of a seminal book on the issue, *Safety for the Long Haul*.

It's also important to recognize the limitations of FMCSA's reach, noted Rob Abbott, vice president of safety policy at the American Trucking Associations.

For instance, the majority of car-truck crashes begin with a mistake by the car driver, he said.

"We have to evaluate if it's... within (the agency's) capability to impact every truck-related crash, knowing that 70 percent to 75 percent of crashes are the other motorist's fault," he said.

It is true that truck drivers cannot account for what other drivers

will do, Knipling observes in his book. But that's not the end of the matter, he adds.

"Motor carriers can do relatively little to prevent foolish and irresponsible acts by the public, but they can educate, monitor and control most aspects of their own safe-

ty operations. Truck drivers are professionals, driving amidst amateurs."

Reprinted from Trucking-Info.com.



Anne Ferro

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## Warning: Highway fund running out

WASHINGTON — Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, in a plea to Congress to produce a long-term transportation funding plan, said the crisis is so severe the Highway Trust Fund may run out of money by August.

Earlier public announcements had the fund coming up empty next year.

To raise awareness of how dire the situation is becoming, Foxx said he is posting the fund's shrinking monthly balance online.

"This is a number we share with Congress," he told the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board here last month.

"But the American people need to know it too because they are the ones who use America's transportation system — and they are the ones who will travel slower and less safely if it isn't funded."

Congress, likewise, focused on transportation funding when the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last month convened this year's first hearing on a new transportation bill.

Committee Chairman Bill Shuster, R-Pa., said he wants to produce a bill by August.

"We hope to take committee action in the late spring or early

summer with the goal to be on the House floor before the August recess," Shuster said. "This way, there will be time to conference our bill with the Senate's bill."

The current reauthorization funding law expires Sept. 30.

Known as MAP-21, it took Congress three years to write.

However, it failed to address a funding crisis a decade in the making as Americans began driving less and buying more fuel-efficient vehicles that reduce fuel-tax revenue.

To shore up the trust fund, Congress has been transferring billions of dollars annually from the general fund, including \$10 billion for fiscal 2014.

Witnesses at the hearing pointed out that MAP-21 was only a two-year funding authorization, which they said prevents long-term planning and creates uncertainty for the economy.

"America needs a multiyear surface-transportation reauthorization so that we can begin to rebuild our infrastructure and get back on the road to competitiveness," said Stu Levenick, group president for Caterpillar Inc.'s customer and dealer support.

Others at the hearing stressed

the need for federal dollars and long-term planning.

"We need the stability of a long-term bill," said Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, speaking for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Without that stability, local governments can't make decisions on where to invest their transportation resources, he added.

He also urged Congress to avoid "simply flat lining" existing federal funding levels, which he said would shift the burden to states and cities.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin said the job of maintaining the nation's transportation network cannot be left only to the states.

"A continued federal investment is necessary to leverage our improvement efforts and create a cohesive transportation system across the nation," she said.

Committee members didn't reveal their preferred methods for funding transportation, nor did Foxx put forth any specifics on funding.

In his speech to TRB, he said President Obama has suggested transportation be funded "with the proceeds from corporate tax reform, and it's a good idea because it could secure a source of funding

## Synthetic marijuana is being classified as controlled drug

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration announced its intent last month to classify four versions of synthetic marijuana as a Schedule 1 drug and therefore regulated under the Controlled Substances Act.

That would mean that bus and truck drivers who use synthetic marijuana and fail a drug test will be disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle.

According to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, "no driver shall be on duty and possess, be under the influence of, or use" Schedule 1 substances, or they will no longer be a qualified operator."

Marijuana is still prohibited for bus and truck drivers, despite some state measures to legalize the drug.

for multiple years."

The secretary did not to endorse the idea, advanced by some lawmakers two years ago and again at the House hearing, that funding for public transit be separated from the reauthorization bill that funds highways.

"It is critically important... that there be sustainability, pre-

In a *Federal Register* entry, the DEA said that "synthetic cannabinoids" are "an imminent hazard to the public safety," and there are no medical uses for the synthetic strains.

Synthetic marijuana, according to the DEA, is "functionally similar" to the active ingredient in natural marijuana — THC.

The cannabinoids are not organic, though, and are created in a laboratory.

Moreover, "the vast majority of cannabinoids are manufactured in Asia by individuals who are not bound by any manufacturing requirements or quality control standards."

The drug is generally smoked, according to the DEA.

It is sold under hundreds of brand names.

dictability and stability built into our system, and I think that idea could have a destabilizing impact on transit," Foxx said.

Isolating transit from reauthorization, he said, might take the nation in the opposite direction from where it needs to go — toward a comprehensive transportation plan.

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## Tough rule

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

(See Sept. 1, 2008; Nov. 15, 2008; Nov. 15, 2009, and July 15, 2013 issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The new rule sets a two-part framework: (1) FMCSA determines whether a motor carrier has failed to comply with safety regulations or has attempted to conceal such noncompliance, and (2) the agency evaluates the motor carrier's conduct to determine whether the carrier has engaged in a pattern or practice of safety violations or is using other entities under common control to avoid compliance or mask the noncompliance.

The rule also details the steps for motor carriers to request an administrative review of an order of suspension or revocation of operating authority, but those reviews would be limited to challenging errors of fact and/or law.

The rule takes effect on Feb. 21. The maximum civil penalties are \$11,000 per violation. The criminal penalties for knowingly and willfully violating it include up to one year in prison and a fine of up to \$25,000.

### UMA, others comment

The FMCSA published a notice in November 2012, saying it planned to issue the rule, and received 24 comments in response from the

United Motorcoach Association, the American Trucking Association, FedEx Corporation and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, among other associations, entities and individuals. The American Bus Association did not submit comments on the proposed rule.

In its 13-page comment, UMA conveyed satisfaction that the FMCSA had taken steps to impede or eliminate reincarnations of unsafe operations. However, UMA expressed concern that the rule "goes too far in many aspects, fails to serve the traveling public, exceeds the intent of (federal) legislation, and may have unintended consequences."

Here are some of the UMA comments, as characterized by the FMCSA, and the agency responses:

**Comment:** UMA said that when a motor carrier that is placed out of service makes arrangements to fulfill its contractual obligations, that carrier should not automatically be considered to be reincarnating, or masking or avoiding a negative compliance history. UMA further commented that it would be better for FMCSA to monitor the continued operations of an out-of-service carrier while that carrier seeks reinstatement, citing financial obligations such as payroll and lease payments.

**Response:** The fact that a motor carrier contracts with another com-

pany after being placed out of service does not necessarily establish reincarnation. The agency's orders may permit carriers to contract with other entities or to resume operations after receiving an out-of-service order under certain circumstances. ...

**Comment:** Carriers must work with the appropriate enforcement personnel to ensure that they remain in compliance with all regulatory requirements. ... Although FMCSA regulations require a passenger carrier to make arrangements to transport stranded passengers to the next destination in the event a vehicle or driver is placed out-of-service, that carrier would not normally be permitted to resume regular operations through the use of a third party.

**Comment:** UMA, the American Trucking Associations and FedEx Corp. all commented that the agency's interpretation of the statutory definition of "officer" is overly expansive and should not include contractors and consultants. ...

**Response:** Including contractors and consultants in the definition of "officer" is consistent with Congress' intent. The statutory definition specifically includes "any person, however designated, exercising controlling influence over the operations of a motor carrier." Nothing indicates that Congress intended to limit the concept of "any person" to something less than the plain meaning of

the words "any person." To the contrary, all evidence suggests that Congress sought to target bad actors based on their conduct and the influence they wield over motor carrier operations, regardless of their position, title or employment status.

**Comment:** UMA commented that a motor carrier should be placed out of service only to protect the public and not as punishment; fines and criminal prosecution should be the only penalties for violations.

**Response:** Underlying UMA's comment is the premise that out-of-service orders and civil or criminal penalties address different conduct; FMCSA rejects this distinction. ... While civil and criminal penalties may have a deterrent effect, they do not in and of themselves ensure public safety. Shutting down a motor carrier that refuses to comply with safety requirements or follow FMCSA orders does.

**Comment:** UMA commented that there is no formal mechanism for carriers to disclose hiring decisions. UMA went on to suggest that FMCSA is creating an informal blacklist, the contents of which carriers would have to guess. UMA commented that this would bar certain people from the industry without due process and would be shifting responsibility for regulating to motor carriers.

**Response:** Motor carriers are

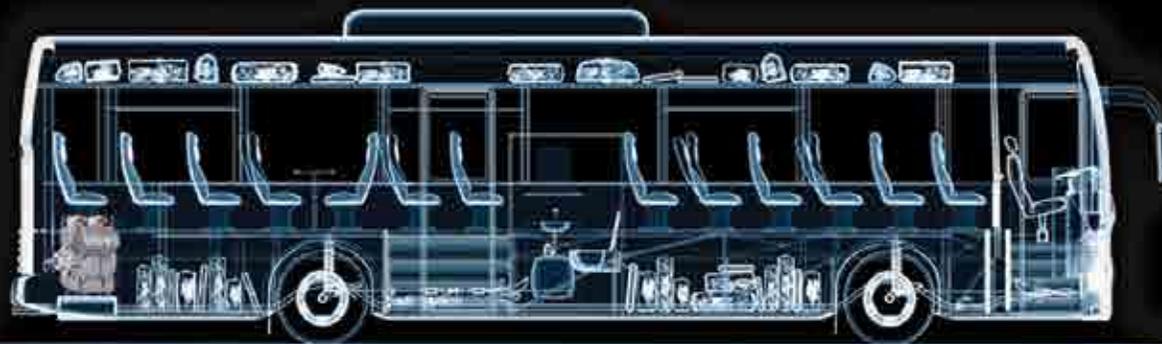
responsible for the people they hire to act on their behalf. This concept is not unique; motor carriers, like all other employers, conduct due diligence to avoid negligent hiring claims under existing law. ... The agency finds it difficult to believe that any responsible motor carrier would engage someone to exert controlling influence over its operations without engaging in a level of due diligence sufficient to understand the person's qualifications and prior work experience in the industry. ...

That said, the agency acknowledges that there are limitations to what an employer can discover and that applicants can misrepresent their work experiences. But as the agency stated in the (*Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*), this rule targets only the worst motor carriers. The agency must present evidence demonstrating willful conduct before it may issue an order to suspend or revoke operating authority registration. ... FMCSA could only suspend or revoke the registration on competent evidence that (a) person exercised controlling influence and was personally involved, either by act or omission, in a pattern or practice of avoiding compliance, or masking or otherwise concealing noncompliance.

The complete texts of the final rule and comments are available on the FMCSA website at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov).

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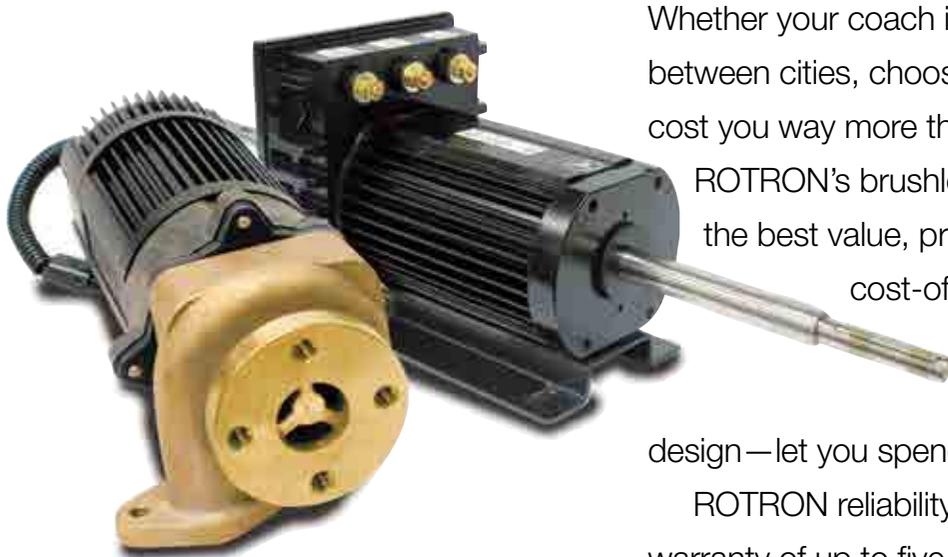
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## Service animal fraud

### 'Don't let unethical behavior interfere with your responsibility'

By Laurel Van Horn

While articles about service animal fraud have been all over the news in recent months (see Jan. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*), this should not deter businesses from providing the best possible service to their customers with disabilities who rely on service animals for their safety and independence.

It is these individuals who are being hurt the most by this fraud, and it would be a shame if the motorcoach industry were to become part of the backlash.

I have had the pleasure during the past few years of providing training on the Americans with Disabilities Act to hundreds of motorcoach companies all over the country.

At Open Doors Organization, we teach compliance with this very important civil rights law, but we also emphasize the human element and how important your service is to these individuals who perhaps can't drive because of vision loss or can no longer climb steps and need a wheelchair coach to go to the casino with their friends.

Without the public transportation services you provide, many

would simply be sitting at home.

Remaining active and independent is important to people, no matter at what age they develop a disability. Whether we are age two and lisping "Do it myself," or age 80 and snapping "I don't need your help," human beings like to be self-reliant.

#### Independence, safety

For an increasing number of those with disabilities, service animals now play a key role in their daily lives, not just providing independence but also safety.

One of my fellow trainers at Open Doors Organization lives in busy New York City and could not get around safely without her guide dog, Mozart. He enables her to walk quickly and confidently, knowing he will lead her around obstacles and stop at steps and crosswalks or if a car is approaching.

Mozart also makes it possible for her to travel the country on her own, conducting disability awareness training and earning an income. But I have been with her countless times when she is refused admission to restaurants or grilled needlessly about what ser-

vices the dog performs.

It should be obvious — she's blind and he's wearing a harness from The Seeing Eye, the oldest guide dog school in the world. No question should be asked other than "Where would you like to sit?"

#### Service animals serve

Service animals these days perform many types of services, from pulling wheelchairs and opening doors to alerting people with epilepsy to imminent seizures or people with hearing loss to various sounds.

They are also helping Wounded Warriors recover from post-traumatic stress disorder.

One of my colleagues relies on her dog to keep her balance and help her get up from the floor if she does fall. Another, who is deaf, now feels safe again to travel thanks to her hearing dog, Ginger.

She previously had been left in her hotel room during a fire when staff failed to alert her. With Ginger by her side, she knows she'll never be left behind again or miss a phone call or someone knocking at the door.

These animals, for the most part dogs, come in all sizes and

breeds and may or may not be trained by an agency as guide dogs are. There is no requirement to have professional training or written documentation because the federal government did not want to impose yet another burden on individuals with disabilities.

Ginger is a small dog and trained by her owner. She might at first glance look like a pampered pet but when you look more closely, you can see how well behaved she is and how focused on her handler's needs.

As soon as you try to communicate, the owner's disability also becomes obvious. So once again, no further questions are needed.

#### When to ask questions

When is it appropriate, as a bus operator, to ask questions?

Only if the individual's disability or the animal's function is not obvious or if it is not behaving properly and under the handler's control. Then you can ask: "What tasks or functions does the animal perform for you?" or "How does it assist you with your disability?"

The person's credible verbal assurance is more important than any vest or ID the person may

show you.

Of course, you never have to accept an animal that is not behaving properly, cannot quickly be brought back under control, or poses a threat to other passengers or their service animals.

As you can imagine, the disability community and its organizations, such as Canine Companions for Independence, are now actively working to combat service animal fraud.

Some states like California and New Jersey already have statutes making such fraud a misdemeanor and punishable by fine.

You can help by continuing to welcome your passengers with disabilities, including those with service animals, and by applying common sense.

Are there abuses?

Yes, but don't let the unethical behavior of a few interfere with your responsibility to meet the needs of the rest. Those service animals under the seats will often be the best behaved passengers on your coach.

*Laurel Van Horn is director of programs at Open Doors Organization in Chicago.*

## San Francisco tech commuter bus program is approved

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority has given final approval to a controversial pilot program that will see some 200 area public transit bus stops made available to private commuter buses that carry corporate tech workers to business campuses, most of which are outside the city.

See Feb. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.

Despite impassioned, and what one observer called "occasionally coherent" commentary from opponents, the final deliberation by the agency board was quick and to the point: Yes.

The shuttles, often referred to as "Google buses," have become frontline in an increasingly bitter argument between the younger, newer and wealthier technology workers that call San Francisco

home, and long-time residents concerned about the balkanization of the city's less well off.

Toss in a still weak job market for most sectors of the economy, spiraling rent costs, and tax incentives to wealthy tech firms to stay local, and an unwholesome atmosphere has been roiling for weeks.

As was pointed out by proponents, shuttling employees instead of forcing them to commute in autos

has significant ecological benefits: Fewer cars means less congestion and a lowered carbon footprint.

But for private companies to use public bus stops in violation of the law had many up in arms. The meeting was packed.

Also, the one-dollar-per-stop fee that Google and the other private bus operators will pay is viewed by many critics as little more than a perfunctory donation.

Some observers say the dispute has cleaved San Francisco into two camps — those who think Google and the other high-tech companies that operate the shuttles are public benefactors, and those that see them and their buses as a nuisance. Not a healthy state of affairs.

Whatever the case, the shuttles are running and the pilot is proceeding. The plan is to be reviewed around mid-year.

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# Ever helpful: What to do with seatbelt-less motorcoaches

By Dave Millhouser

It was brutally cold in Breckenridge as we loaded skiers for the trip home.

The GM PD-4104 barely started and wouldn't rev. The throttle cable was frozen.

The only way to get home was over Hoosier Pass, and you actually needed throttle to climb it.

We sent a kid to Sears to get 50 feet of clothesline.

Tying one end to the yoke on the governor, we ran it up the left side of the bus and fed the end through the driver's ticket window. Voila...a hand throttle.

Off we went over the mountain.

Nothing's more fun than using things in ways different than the designers intended.

In late November, when the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced that, starting in 2016, all new motorcoaches needed to have seatbelts, no one was surprised.

Many — if not most — operators had been buying belts as an option in recent years.

It's still uncertain how dramatically the new rule is going to im-

pact the value of older coaches that don't have belts.

Retrofitting is possible, but it only makes sense on some makes and models.

The market has already spoken, and certain types of groups can't (or won't) charter a non-belted bus.

Looming over the landscape like a vulture is the specter of accidents involving older coaches. The fact that a coach was built before belts were even available is not reliable protection for an operator from catastrophic lawsuits (even if the customer knowingly rented the beltless bus).

So, what do we do with our older buses?

We can sell some to churches and schools, and turn a bunch into motorhomes.

But, over the years, you've come to expect more innovation and creativity from this column. So, I've come up with a list of 10 possible uses for beltless buses.

You do understand, of course, I am not that bright. Every one of these things has actually been done. As usual, I'm stealing other people's ideas.

So, here are my BOTTOM 10

second careers for motorcoaches:

1. Transport hogs to market. Years ago, a Nebraska farmer bought a surplus Scenicruiser, removed the seats and carried pigs in comfort. If you've ever been stuck in traffic behind a regular hog truck, you'll understand he did the pigs and the public a favor.

2. "Spiro Agnew Mobile Headquarters." When the motor in our old Aerocoach croaked, my boss sold it to Agnew's campaign. They towed it around to different locales, using it as an office. We older folks know how that sorted out. Surely you know some politicians who would like...

3. Bomb Shelter. Shortly after 9/11, an enterprising Long Island operator rented a number of his coaches to a Manhattan bank. They were positioned as barriers to prevent the approach of potential car bombs. Nice work if you can get it. Burns no fuel. No hours-of-service issues. It's uncertain how his insurance company felt about the idea (or if they knew).

4. Interior decorating. A long time "bus guy" took apart a Scenicruiser and re-assembled the front end in his living room. This may not work for married men.

5. Artificial Reef. If they can dump old MTA subway cars in the Atlantic off New Jersey... why not motorcoaches? Instead of shipping them overseas, ship them underseas.

6. Beerliner. 1400miles.com/the-beerliner/. A 45-foot coach could carry a LOT more beverage. 'nuff said.

7. Blimp dock. For years, Goodyear used Flxibles (with anchor masts) for its blimp program. For the record, the Hindenburg was a dirigible, NOT a blimp.

8. Windbreak at a salvage yard. We gave a bunch of old Mack transits to a junkyard on the condition we could come back and take off any parts we needed. Worked out pretty well till I was under one, pulling used bellows off, and kicked the jack over.

9. Forget about them. I was at a Great Big Busline garage years ago when the yard manager did his required daily count. There were supposed to be 73 coaches, so he peeked out the window and said "looks like 73 to me." Just pretend the old ones don't exist (and hope the finance company is OK with it).

10. Deathmobile. Leave it to

the creative Communist Chinese to come up with the bottom of the vehicular barrel.

In an effort to provide quality service to outlying communities that can't afford their own executioner, the ChiComs have developed traveling execution vans. A coach would provide superior quality in an application where seatbelts aren't necessary, and there are few complaints.

I hope this helps, and would really love to hear your ideas.

Remember, though, there may be danger in improvising.

Back in the days when anti-freeze was alcohol based, my buddy Bob was checking the coolant level in his bus. He couldn't see it, and didn't have a flashlight, so he used his cigarette lighter.

In a flash, his eyebrows were burned off, and for years afterward he was known as "Sparky."

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



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## Over-zealous cop

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

which he was once mayor. So, he was very familiar with that service. Even though (the officer) went through his usual recitation of the California vehicle code, and his interpretation of federal law and regulation, Hahn ruled in favor of the driver."

In the second case, also heard by Hahn, a driver with American Star in San Luis Obispo had dropped off passengers at Los Angeles International Airport and was returning north on Sepulveda Boulevard, which runs alongside the 405 freeway.

After bypassing a couple of freeway entrances, the driver was

pulled over and given a ticket by the same officer.

According to Seal, the driver made two arguments to the court: First, the freeway was congested, and, second, she had to return to her base in a timely manner because of hours-of-service rules.

Seal said the judge seemed persuaded by the second argument.

"(T)he judge said, 'Unless the freeway is shut down, Culver City has made a determination that you should not be on Sepulveda Boulevard through the city. However, not guilty.'

"You can infer from that that the argument he was sympathetic to was that she had two conflicting laws that confronted her — the 45-foot bus restriction, and the hours

'The purpose of the stop is to put you in a position to give you a ticket, which he is allowed to do.'

of service and returning to her base in a timely fashion," he said.

Seal said that because of the ambiguity in the rulings, he and CBA officials plan to approach Culver City-based Sony Pictures in hopes of gaining the movie studio's support. Sony is the city's largest employer and hosts thousands of visitors on its studio tours.

## Operator toolbox

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

say council board members.

Gladys Gillis, owner of Starline Luxury Coaches in Seattle and a founding member of the Motorcoach Marketing Council board, sees the toolbox and its components as sparking a bright future.

"This is the beginning of an epidemic of success for the motorcoach industry," Gillis said.

For a monthly fee of \$109, operators get access to 15 campaigns

with all the research and ad copy needed to bring about almost immediate results.

Now, a mandate from the boss to "go get more wedding business," for example, can be an easily executed task for a company's sales team.

They can log into MotorcoachMarketing.org to watch training videos about the wedding industry and learn who to talk with, what to say and how to use the tools.

Then they pick from the more than 60 tools available in that cam-

paigned and, in less than 10 minutes, upload company logos and images into the collateral pieces they choose to use.

What's more, the price is right.

The Motorcoach Marketing Council has negotiated volume discounts on high-quality printing, with costs as low as a third of the usual price, Gillis said. Or, simply send the collateral files to your favorite hometown print shop or print them in your office.

The Operator Toolbox is available at MotorcoachMarketing.org.

Meantime, he advises operators with buses that travel in and around Culver City to take precautions:

- "Drivers should be prepped on what to expect if they exit the 405 in any direction and enter onto Sepulveda Boulevard. They should know that there are very limited reasons for that kind of an exit, such as going to the restroom, picking up or dropping off passengers."

- "All managers should prepare their drivers to navigate the most direct route to and from a Culver City destination, and be prepared to have your log book fully up to date."

- If stopped, drivers should "be prepared to have many questions

thrown your way, and in all circumstances remain calm, show your driver manifest as to where you are going and how you are told to get there. The purpose of the stop is to put you in a position to give you a ticket, which he is allowed to do."

- "Under any circumstances, do not get into any debates with the officer."

- Request that your case be heard at the airport court. "You have the right to make that request. We think you have more legal rights at the airport court."

- "Operators should know that just as interstate truck companies are ticketed, so would interstate bus operators with buses traveling into California."

For UMA Motorcoach Expo attendees, there are two explanatory sessions on the tools at 3:15 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17, and again at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19.

The Motorcoach Marketing Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising consumer awareness about the motorcoach industry in the United States and Canada, resulting in more business for operators.

Last year, the council joined forces with the European Smart Move campaign and developed

video advertisements that are available for operator use as well.

The new marketing materials continue to use the American version of the Smart Move campaign.

The long-term goal of the council is to create a funding model that will support a national radio, television and print advertising campaign similar to the GO RVing campaign.

The council also is conducting an auction on the exhibit hall floor at Motorcoach Expo.

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S.C. school buses

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

then some of our companies might have been able to take part.”

With no locals available, state and school district officials gave the lucrative business to out-of-state national school transportation companies — First Student of Warrenville, Ill., the first year and then Durham Bus Services of Cincinnati, Ohio, in subsequent years.

Those companies took over both the regular daily transportation of students that the state and school districts had been handling and the extra curricular charters the local carriers had been providing.

It was a double blow and it ended up badly hurting the in-state operators, says Young.

State and school officials have long criticized the unique way South Carolina provides school transportation, complaining mostly about the aging of the buses and the cost of maintaining and operating them.

Currently, the operations are shared by the state and the school districts with the state owning and paying for the fuel costs of a fleet of 5,000 school buses and the school districts hiring the drivers and handling the day-to-day operations.

Some lawmakers pushed during the 2012 legislative session to get the state out of the school transportation business by extending privatization to the other 43 counties in the state, but their proposed legislation died in a committee without a vote.

“It ran into some parochial opposition, but I think we advanced the ball a little” noted Rep. James H. Merrill, a Republican from Berkley, S.C., who headed the failed effort.

He said he has no plans to revisit the issue during this year’s six-month session that began in January and he hasn’t heard of any other legislators who might be planning to do so.

“There are some discussions going on but if anything comes out of that, I just don’t know,” he said.

The aging of the buses has become more of a concern among state and school officials each year. About 3,300 of the buses are more than 20 years old, including 90 that are more than 26 years. Only 344 are five years old or less, and they are the only ones still under warranty.

That problem could make it more difficult for the state to generate interest from private carriers if they eventually do decide to out-source school bus service statewide, according to State School Superintendent Mick Zais, who

made note of the issue in January when he presented his agency’s budget to the state House Ways and Means Committee.

“If the General Assembly provides adequate funds over the next few years to update our fleet, it’s possible that school districts or private contractors may be willing to assume responsibility for district transportation,” he told the

committee.

But it is unlikely any district or any vendor will want the burden of operating and maintaining our current aged fleet.”

His budget proposal calls for \$34 million for the new fiscal year to buy replacement buses, as well as \$15 million that was allocated by lawmakers last year, but not yet issued.

Calendar

FEBRUARY 2014

16-20 UMA Motorcoach Expo 2014 at Travel Exchange, Los Angeles Convention Center. Info: [www.motorcoachexpo.com](http://www.motorcoachexpo.com).

16-20 NTA Convention 2014

at Travel Exchange, Los Angeles Convention Center. Info: [www.ntaonline.com](http://www.ntaonline.com).

18 National Association of Motorcoach Operators Semi-Annual Membership Meeting, Los Angeles Convention Center (2-3 p.m., Room 150 A/B/C). Info: [www.namocoaches.org](http://www.namocoaches.org).



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# MOTORCOACH EXPO 2014

## Faith Travel Association launched

LOS ANGELES — Travel Exchange, the co-located trade show of the United Motorcoach Association and the NTA (formerly the National Tour Association), will be the coming out party for a new travel industry group, the Faith Travel Association.

NTA Services Inc., an arm of NTA, formed the association last month in response to the explosive growth of the faith-based travel industry.

The membership organization will serve as a business-building resource for travel professionals,

sites and organizations focused on faith-based travel.

The association also will provide connections, education and support for group and religious leaders and travel agents who are planning trips for individuals or groups brought together by their faith or religious community.

“Faith-based travel is an expansive market with both domestic and international appeal,” said Karla DiNardo, NTA Services Inc. president and interim executive director of the Faith Travel Association.

“Faith-based travel includes di-

verse experiences such as pilgrimages, events, cruises, adventures, mission/volunteer trips, and travel to destinations and attractions that hold special significance to people of various faiths.”

At Travel Exchange, the new organization will have what is called the Faith Travel Pavilion, an exhibit that will provide information about faith-based travel, and where UMA and NTA members can exchange ideas.

During Travel Exchange, a Faith Travel Association membership will be offered at half price.

## Expo travel: To hotels, to the Internet

LOS ANGELES — Here are important travel details for Motorcoach Expo: Getting to the convention hotels, getting from the hotels to the Los Angeles Convention Center (site of Expo), and travel via the Internet.

Internet access will be available at Expo by using computers in the Canadian Cyber Center in the

NTA half of the Exhibit Hall floor.

If you want to go online, using your laptop, individuals can plug in at the Canadian Cyber Center.

While Wi-Fi won't be available in the convention center, attendees and exhibitors who have a data plan for their phone or tablets can get online from the show floor and elsewhere in the convention

center.

Free shuttle service will be provided daily between Travel Exchange hotels and the convention center.

Free airport shuttles will be available Saturday, Feb. 15, and Sunday, Feb. 16, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Return shuttles also will be available.

## Getting out and about at UMA Motorcoach Expo

LOS ANGELES — While most of the activities at UMA Motorcoach Expo are centered at the Los Angeles Convention Center, three key events offer attendees an opportunity to see other parts of the great metropolis.

All three also provide attendees an opportunity to expand their network skills. The trio of activities:

**Welcome Reception** (7:30-10 pm. Sunday, Feb. 16)

The Welcome Reception/Ice-breaker at Universal Studios Hollywood is a two-part affair: The evening begins with a reception in a quiet corner of the park, where UMA and NTA members mingle and sample appetizers.

From there, delegates can explore the full park, which will be open for Travel Exchange attendees only.

**Dine-around in Santa Monica** (6-11 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17)

Travel Exchange attendees can enjoy special dining offers followed by a late-night happy hour with live entertainment at Santa Monica Place.

Complimentary shuttles will be provided for a limited number of participants. Reservations are a must. Go to <http://bit.ly/DineCA>.

**Tourism Rocks** (9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19)

This high-energy event is an important fundraiser for Tourism Cares.

Tickets for suppliers are \$50 in advance (available during registration or at the Tourism Cares booth) and \$60 at the door of the Hard Rock Cafe Hollywood.

All motorcoach and tour operators attending Travel Exchange are invited to attend the event as guests of the sponsors: the Las Vegas CVA, Hard Rock International and Best Western International.

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# Complete schedule for Motorcoach Expo at Travel Exchange

LOS ANGELES — All UMA Motorcoach Expo at Travel Exchange events are at the Los Angeles Convention Center...unless otherwise noted.

NTA educational sessions and Mall are open to all UMA Motorcoach Expo participants at no additional cost.

UMA educational sessions and Expo floor are open to all NTA Convention participants at no additional cost.

Joint events are open to all participants.

## Sunday, Feb. 16

- 11:30 a.m.–5 p.m.:** Registration, South Hall Lobby
- 8 a.m.–Noon:** Sightseeing tours, depart from Convention Center
- 1–5 p.m.:** UMA State Association Summit, Meeting Room 150A/B/C
- 2–3:15 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Meeting Rooms 411, 408A, 408B
- 3:30–4:45 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 411, 408A, 408B
- 7:30–10 p.m.:** Welcome Reception/Icebreaker, Universal Studios Hollywood

## Monday, Feb. 17

- 7:30 a.m.–6:30 p.m.:** Registration, South Hall Lobby
- 7:30 a.m.–6:30 p.m.:** NTA Mall, South Hall J/K
- 8–9:15 a.m.:** Opening Ceremony and Breakfast with keynote speaker Peter Greenberg, West Hall
- 9:30–11:30 a.m.:** NTA Annual Business Meeting and Talk Time, Room 411
- 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.:** UMA Maintenance Interchange, Room 150A/B/C
- 9:30–10 a.m.:** UMA Active Member Meeting, Room 151
- 10–10:45 a.m.:** UMA Legislative & Regulatory Update, Room 151
- 11 a.m.–Noon:** UMA Concurrent Solution Sessions
  - Making the Right Hiring Decisions as Demand Picks Up (Operations), Room 402A/B
  - Buying Media (Marketing), Room 403A
  - Public/Private Partnerships (Finance), Room 403B
  - Travel Itineraries vs. Hours of Service – Making it ALL Work Together (Travel Exchange), Room 404A/B

**11 a.m.–Noon:** UMA Associate/Travel Partner Membership Meeting, Expo Show Floor, UMA Booth No. 923

### NOT TO BE MISSED!

- 12:15–1:45 p.m.:** Broadway Luncheon / Broadway Across America, West Hall
- 2–3 p.m.:** UMA Concurrent Solution Sessions
  - FMCSA Safety Management Cycle – Part I (Operations), Room 402A/B
  - Converting Price Shoppers to Value Buyers (Marketing), Room 403A
  - The Performance Puzzle: Strategies of Successful Operators with a Focus on Managing Maintenance and Costs – Part I (Finance), Room 403B
  - Developing a Tour Operation (Travel Exchange), Room 404A/B
- 2–4:30 p.m.:** Distinctive Systems User Group (by invitation only), Room 405
- 2–4:30 p.m.:** NTA Pavilion Appointments, South Hall J/K
- 2–3 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Room 408B, NTA Stage

### NEW EVENT!

- 3–4 p.m.:** NTA Destination Pavilion Open House & Ice Cream Social, South Hall J/K
- 3:15–4:15 p.m.:** UMA Concurrent Solution Sessions
  - Understanding the Affordable Care Act (Operations), Room 402A/B
  - Website Optimization: Increasing Your Site's Traffic – Part I (Marketing), Room 403A
  - The Performance Puzzle: Strategies of Successful Operators with a Focus on Managing Maintenance and Costs – Part II (Finance), Room 403B
  - Motorcoach Marketing Council Operator Tool Box, Room 404A/B
- 3:15–4:30 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Room 408B
- 4:15–4:30 p.m.:** Ribbon Cutting for Sneak Preview, South Hall J/K in NTA Exhibit Hall near Refreshment Lounge
- 4:30–6:30 p.m.:** Sneak Preview – UMA Expo Floor Open/NTA Mall Open, South Hall
- 4:30–6:30 p.m.:** Motorcoach Marketing Council Silent Auction, Expo Show Floor, Booth No. 1524
- 5:30 p.m.:** UMA Expo 30th Anniversary Celebration, Expo Show Floor, UMA Booth No. 923

**6–11 p.m.:** Dine-around in Santa Monica

## Tuesday, Feb. 18

- 6:15 a.m.:** Fun(d) Run, Silver Lake Reservoir
- 7:30–11 a.m.:** UMA Maintenance Competition, Pacific Coachways Trailways
- 8 a.m.–5 p.m.:** Registration, South Hall Lobby
- 8–9:30 a.m.:** Grab-and-Go Breakfast in the Exhibit Hall, South Hall
- 8 a.m.–5 p.m.:** NTA Mall, South Hall J/K
- 8:15 a.m.–Noon:** NTA Pavilion Appointments, South Hall J/K
- 9–10 a.m.:** UMA Education, Room 404A/B
  - Vehicle and Driver Certification that Improves Company Profitability and Visibility by Reducing Fuel Consumption, Reducing Environmental Impact and Increasing Public Awareness (presented by the Certification for Sustainable Transportation; sponsored by Toyo Motorcoach Tire Sales), Room 404A/B
- 9–10 a.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408A, 408B, NTA Stage
- 10 a.m.–5 p.m.:** UMA Expo Floor Open, South Hall G/H
- 10 a.m.–5 p.m.:** Motorcoach Marketing Council Silent Auction, Expo Show Floor, Booth No. 1524
- 10:15–11:15 a.m.:** UMA Education in the Exhibit Hall
  - Tires, Tires, Tires: UMA Demo Area
  - Bus Operators Beware! Plaintiff Attorneys Have You in Their Crosshairs (presented by Lancer Insurance Co.), UMA Education Stage
- 10:30–11:30 a.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408B, 408A
- 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.:** Website Optimization. How to Maximize Your Site's Potential During Development – Part II, UMA Education Stage
- 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.:** Lunch in the Exhibit Hall, South Hall
- Noon:** Motorcoach Marketing Council Live Auction, Expo Show Floor, Booth No. 1524
- 1:15–5 p.m.:** NTA Pavilion Appointments, South Hall J/K
- 1–2 p.m.:** UMA Education in the Exhibit Hall

- Driver Background and the Safety Management Cycle (presented by Amerisearch Background Alliance), UMA Education Stage
- 2–3 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, NTA Stage
- 2–3 p.m.:** NAMO Meeting, Room 150A/B/C
- 2–3 p.m.:** OMCA Coach Operator Council Meeting, Room 405
- 2:15–3:15 p.m.:** UMA Education in the Exhibit Hall
  - Improving Your Odds – Implementing a Continuous Safety Improvement Program (presented by National Interstate Insurance Co.), UMA Education Stage
- 3:30–4:30 p.m.:** UMA Education in the Exhibit Hall
  - Technology and the Motorcoach Experience – Comfort/Safety/Security (presented by REI), UMA Education Stage
- 6:30–11 p.m.:** **UMA & NTA Awards Dinner**
  - 6:30 p.m.: Reception, West Hall Lobby
  - 7:15 p.m.: Awards Dinner, West Hall
  - 9:15 p.m.: Cigars/Cordials and Dancing, West Hall Lobby

## Wednesday, Feb. 19

- 8 a.m.–5:30 p.m.:** Registration, South Hall Lobby
- 8 a.m.–5:30 p.m.:** NTA Mall, South Hall J/K
- 8–9:30 a.m.:** Grab-and-Go Breakfast, South Hall
- 8:15 a.m.–Noon:** NTA Exchange Appointments, South Hall J/K
- 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.:** California Bus Assoc. Board Meeting, Room 405
- 8–9 a.m.:** UMA Education, Room 404A/B
  - Motorcoach Marketing Council Operator Tool Box, Room 404A/B
- 9 a.m.–Noon:** UMA Expo Floor Open, South Hall G/H
- 9–10 a.m.:** Motorcoach Marketing Council Silent Auction, Expo Show Floor, Booth No. 1524
- 9–10 a.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408A, 408B, NTA Stage
- 9:15–10:15 a.m.:** UMA Education, Room 404A/B
  - Brakes, Room 404A/B
- 9:15–10:15 a.m.:** UMA Education in the Exhibit Hall
  - California Here I Come...: UMA Education Stage

- 10:30–11:30 a.m.:** UMA Education in the Exhibit Hall
  - FMCSA Safety Management Cycle – Part II, UMA Education Stage
- 10:30–11:30 a.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408A, 408B
- 12:15–1:30 p.m.:** Luncheon co-sponsored by Norwegian Cruise Line and State of Alaska, West Hall

### BONUS SESSIONS!

- 1:45–2:45 p.m.:** UMA Concurrent Solution Sessions
  - Using Electronic Logs as a Management Tool (Operations), Room 402A/B
  - Smart Ways to Raise Prices (Marketing), Room 403A
  - Managing Fuel Costs (Finance), Room 403B
  - Fuel Efficient Driving 101 – 'Eco Driver' Certification (presented by the Certification for Sustainable Transportation; sponsored by Toyo Motorcoach Tire Sales) Room 404A/B
- 2–3 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408A, 408B
- 2:15–5 p.m.:** NTA Exchange Appointments, South Hall
- 3–4 p.m.:** Reducing Unnecessary Idling – 'Idle Free' Driver Certification (Presented by the Certification for Sustainable Transportation; sponsored by Toyo Motorcoach Tire Sales), Room 404A/B
- 3:30–4:30 p.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Room 408B
- 5–6:15 p.m.:** Reception in Exhibit Hall
- 6:15–9:30 p.m.:** Dine-around, restaurant of your choice
- 9:30 p.m.–12:30 a.m.:** Tourism Rocks, Hard Rock Café Hollywood

## Thursday, Feb. 20

- 8 a.m.–5:15 p.m.:** NTA Registration, South Hall Lobby
- 8 a.m.–5:15 p.m.:** NTA Mall, South Hall J/K
- 8:15–11:45 a.m.:** NTA Exchange Appointments, South Hall J/K
- 9:15–10:15 a.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408A, 408B, NTA Stage
- 10:30–11:30 a.m.:** NTA Educational Sessions, Rooms 408A, 408B
- Noon–1:15 p.m.:** NTA Luncheon
- Noon–6 p.m.:** UMA 10th annual Ray Dupuis Memorial Golf Tournament, Industry Hill Golf Club
- 1:45–5:15 p.m.:** NTA Exchange Appointments, South Hall J/K
- 7–10 p.m.:** NTA Evening Event

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# Tour operators aplenty at 2014 Travel Exchange

LOS ANGELES — If tour operator companies are part of your customer mix, then UMA Motorcoach Expo at Travel Exchange may provide fertile ground for recruiting more of these customers.

Hundreds of tour operators are registered for the NTA (formerly the National Tour Association) half of Travel Exchange, and motorcoach operators will have opportunities to meet and network with these companies throughout Travel Exchange here.

The following tour operator companies are registered for Travel Exchange in Los Angeles:

A Friend in New York  
A.C.T. Tours/Frederick Travel, Inc.  
AAA Signatours  
AAA Sojourns  
Academic Travel Abroad  
ACC America China Connection  
ACFEA Tour Consultants  
Adventure Canada  
Alki Tours  
All Aboard USA

All Americas Inc.  
AlliedTPro  
America by Rail  
America Int'l Travel Services  
American Christian Tours (Students On Tour)  
American Christian Tours  
American Edventures  
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Chinese Host Inc.  
CIE Tours International  
Citi Travel Inc.  
City Escape Holidays  
Club Select Tours  
Coach Tours  
Collette Vacations  
Columbia Crossroads Tours  
Country Heritage Tours  
Country Travel Discoveries  
Creative Tours Florida  
Custom Holidays  
Da Zhen International  
David Tours & Travel

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Earth Bound Tours  
Edgerton's Travel Service  
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Excursions from the Square  
Explorer Tours  
Flathead Travel Service Inc./Montana Tour & Travel  
Free Spirit Vacations  
Friendly Excursions  
G Adventures  
Gary Express Inc.  
Gate 1 Travel  
Getaway Tours, Inc.  
Globetrotters Travel & Tours  
Globus Family of Brands/Globus, Cosmos, Monograms & Avalon  
Go West Tours  
Good Times Travel  
Gray Line San Francisco/San Jose & Monterey/Super Sightseeing  
Great Canadian Holidays  
Group Destination Planners  
Groupize  
GTA North America  
Hanns Ebensten Travel  
Happy Vacations  
Holiday Vacations  
Hospitality Tours  
Islands in the Sun Cruises & Tours

Jaffa Travel & Receptive Services  
JBS Group Inc.  
John Hall's Alaska  
Joy Holiday  
Julian Tours  
Kenley Konnection  
L & L Travel Enterprises  
L&Z International Group  
L.E.A.D. USA  
Landmark Tours  
Last Chance Tours  
Legendary Journeys  
Leisure West Tours and Cruises  
Little Rock Tours  
Lulutrip Inc.  
Main Street Tours  
Majestic Vacations  
Making Memories Tours  
Maryanke Tour & Travel  
Mayflower Tours, Inc.  
McCoy Bus Service and Tours  
Mid-Atlantic Receptive Services  
Misha Tours  
Music Travel Consultants  
Northeast Unlimited Tours  
NuVu Traveler  
Omanson Tour & Travel  
Order Travel  
OregonWest Excursions  
Pacifcoast Commerce & Culture Developing Group  
Paramount Travel Inc.

Patty's Tours  
Pentecost Tours Inc.  
People to People Ambassador Programs  
Premier Alaska Tours  
Premier World Discovery  
Presley Tours  
Priscilla Woman's Tours  
Quadrant Australia  
R.C.G. Tours  
RealTours(RealUkraine)  
Reformation Tours  
Rockport Tours  
Rustad Tours  
Scandinavia Tours  
Select International Tours  
Seniortours  
Shanghai Spring International Travel Service USA  
Significant Living Travel  
Soccer Camps International  
Special Group Tours  
Sports Empire & Authentic California Vacations  
Sports Leisure Vacations  
Sports Travel and Tours  
Sports Traveler  
Star Destinations  
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# Awards event gains new feature: Fashion show

LOS ANGELES — The social high point of UMA Motorcoach Expo is the annual Visions Awards Dinner, followed by dancing and the Cigars and Cordials event.

For the second time, the United Motorcoach Association and NTA are combining the best of their awards' dinner traditions, producing the Awards Reception and Dinner, the Cigars and Cordials event, and late-night dancing.

The cocktail reception kick-off will be followed by a sit-down meal. Then both associations will present awards.

Also that night, as attendees drink and dine, Macy's will present a fashion show and announce a special offer for the following evening.

Finally, enjoy a cordial and a hand-rolled cigar during Cigars



and Cordials. The evening concludes with music and dancing.

During the event, NTA will present its Pioneer Award to U.S. Sen. Mark Begich of Alaska, "a

friend to the travel industry" and a regular at NTA events.

During the past four years, Begich has been a featured speaker at NTA's annual grassroots lobbying

effort in Washington, D.C.

Begich is co-founder of the Senate Travel and Tourism Caucus.

The UMA and NTA event will be at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18.

# UMA partners exhibit at Expo

LOS ANGELES — United Motorcoach Association members can learn more about the association's cost-saving program and services during Motorcoach Expo. The following UMA partners are exhibiting at Expo:

- Amerisearch Background Alliance – Booth No. 511
- Bus & Motorcoach Academy – Booth No. 923
- Bus & Motorcoach News – Booth No. 1017
- BusRates.com – Booth No. 923
- J.J. Keller – Booth No. 1015
- Michelin North America – Booth No. 1000
- Scheig Associates – Booth No. 512
- Spader Business Management – Booth No. 917
- UMA Comp by K F & B – Booth No. 513
- UMA WellCare by Bridgeport Benefits – Booth No. 510

Information about the programs also can be found at the members-only section of [www.uma.org](http://www.uma.org).

pliers, DMOs, associates and educators

- Yellow name insert: Guests and media

# Tips for figuring out Who's Who at Travel Exchange

LOS ANGELES — Picture this: You arrive at UMA Motorcoach Expo at Travel Exchange and you're eager to scout around and start networking.

But with members of both the United Motorcoach Association and the NTA on-site, how do you tell who's who, and who's a pro-

spective business partner?

The answer is right on the badges everyone will be wearing. You just need to know your colors.

UMA Motorcoach Expo attendees will have black "Sardo" badge holders. Beyond that, Expo attendee badges with a:

- White name insert will be

motorcoach operators, spouses, affiliates, staff and non-exhibiting suppliers.

• White name insert with green strip will be motorcoach operators who package tours. (The green strip says: "We assist with planning tours.")

- Pastel blue name insert are

exhibitors.

All NTA attendees will be wearing a blue "Rhode Island" badge holder. Here are the NTA badge identifications:

- White name insert: Tour operators, NTA and Tourism Cares staff
- Green name insert: Tour sup-

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## PEX German Parts showcases brake wear sensors

Niceville, Fla. — PEX German Original Equipment Parts will be exhibiting for the first time at UMA Motorcoach Expo 2014 in Los Angeles and as a new member of the United Motorcoach Association.

It will be showcasing new brake wear sensors for the North American heavy-duty aftermarket.

Since its formation 35 years ago,

PEX Automotive Group says it has rapidly grown to become a world leader in the production of electronic brake wear sensors for both drum and disc brake applications.

With engineering in Germany and manufacturing in Hungary, the company counts such bus builders as MAN, Daimler, Iveco, Volvo, Neoplan and Van Hool as long-term original equipment partners.

In addition, it has a large network of aftermarket distributors.

To assure the production of quality sensors, the PEX production facility in Szigetszentmiklos, Hungary, is regularly subjected to stringent certification processes according to international standards, the company said.

In the U.S., PEX German O.E. Parts maintains a 50,000-square-foot

office and warehouse in Niceville.

PEX said it will be launching additional products for the U.S., Canadian and Mexican bus aftermarket, including brake wear sensors, ABS sensors, ABS sensor extension cables, wire harnesses, speed sensors, and switches, as well as supplying original equipment.

Visit PEX at Expo Booth No. 607. Or, go to [www.pexna.com](http://www.pexna.com).

## Q'Straint debuts newest retractor; '15 standard met

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Q'Straint, a global leader in wheelchair passenger safety, will be at UMA Motorcoach Expo with its new wheelchair retractor tie-down system that meets higher-strength requirements that take effect in December 2015.

At that time, wheelchair tie-down systems must comply with a standard, known as WC18, requiring frontal-impact sled testing of the system with the crash-test dummy restrained by a three-point lap/shoulder belt, and with a lap belt anchored to the 187-pound surrogate wheelchair such that a large percentage of the wheelchair-passenger restraint forces are transmitted to the rear tie-down straps.

Not only does the new Q'Straint QRT-360 meet the WC18 standard, says the company, but it also offers a shortened retractor footprint, allowing more flexibility in vehicle anchor-point locations to better accommodate large wheelchairs.

"The revolutionary new product is therefore compatible with the widest variety of wheelchairs and is an acceptable solution to wheelchair securement in all types of motor vehicles," the company says.

In addition, the QRT-360 is the first four-point, heavy-duty, fully automatic retractable tie-down system designed, engineered and built to perform successfully in a 30-mph frontal crash when the user of a powered wheelchair is traveling in a motor vehicle while using a commercially available crashworthy lap belt of the type that must be used in the frontal-impact tests conducted of wheelchairs under industry standards.

Q'Straint says the QRT-360 design utilizes energy management features and material technologies to deliver the system's full strength for maximum load capacity. It features an energy-absorbing steel frame, new high-strength 58-mm wide webbing, and a fine-adjustment, self-tensioning mechanism using 25 high-strength teeth in the retractor locking mechanism.

"The geometry of the teeth and an innovative new locking bar ensure perpendicular alignment for maximum strength in all tie-down situations. A re-engineered positive-locking interface in the retractor mechanism contributes to the system's ability to resist extremely high dynamic loads," says the company.

The QRT-360 is covered by a five-year warranty.

Other features of the QRT-360 can be seen at Q'Straint's UMA Motorcoach Expo Booth No. 1014. Or, go to [www.QStraint.com](http://www.QStraint.com).

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## Mini-Hybrid Thermal Kit: At Expo

CITY OF INDUSTRY, Calif. — There will be a pair of companies at UMA Motorcoach Expo that say the buses in your fleet should be retrofitted with a Mini-Hybrid Thermal Management System.

What?

A “Mini-Hybrid Thermal Management System” is essentially an “advanced electric fan cooling system” that replaces the hydraulically driven fan in motorcoaches and other buses.

And what does a Mini-Hybrid Thermal Management System do?

It eliminates hydraulic fires, increases fuel economy, reduces engine overheating, and cuts maintenance costs, say the companies that build and distribute the system.

Valley Power Systems and Engineered Machined Products are the outfits that will be introducing the system at UMA Motorcoach



Expo.

EMP developed the system and came up with the “cost-effective retrofit” for motorcoaches.

Valley Power Systems is the California distributor and will be showcasing the Mini-Hybrid at

Expo Booth No. 422.

Valley said “demo pricing” will be available for first-time customers.

For more information, visit their booth, or go to [www.emp-corp.com](http://www.emp-corp.com).

## Sardo shows latest designs at Expo

GARDENA, Calif. — Long-time motorcoach industry supplier Sardo Bus & Coach Upholstery promises to have the latest fabrics and seat cover designs at its booth at UMA Motorcoach Expo 2014.

Sardo, which provides bus interior refurbishment to both motorcoach companies and public transit agencies, specializes in restoring panache to worn buses, uti-

lizing quality fabrics and offering a variety of styles, colors and patterns.

“Our quality craftsmanship and unique customer service have made us an industry leader,” says Sardo Vice President of Sales Sandy Follis.

“Behind every stitch, behind each yard of fabric, is a family tradition born of hard work, skilled

craftsmanship and commitment to our customers....Sardo provides an unparalleled service that has kept us the leader in the industry for three generations.”

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Sardo initiating mobile upholstery services, sending crews nationwide to provide customers on-site installation, including seat, sidewall and restroom door recov-

## Hadley to supply interiors for Turtle Top, Ameritrans

GRANDVILLE, Mich. — In separate announcements, Hadley said it has been selected as the primary supplier of interior systems by Ameritrans and Turtle Top, two leading manufacturers of small and midsize buses, including shuttles and specialty vehicles.

All three companies will have booths this month at UMA Motorcoach Expo in Los Angeles.

Hadley is a diverse motorcoach industry supplier, providing mirrors, lighting systems, parcel racks, air horn systems, and height control valves, plus mini-air compressors and vacuum pumps.

“Ameritrans is very pleased to be offering the Hadley Swan systems for our interior parcel rack systems. They are an excellent interior solution for our customers,” said Barry Hines, Ameritrans general manager.

All Hadley interiors are customized to meet Ameritrans’ customer requirements.

“Appealing, durable interiors are essential to bus operations,” noted Timm Bledsoe of TurtleTop.

ering, as well as headliner replacement.

“This service provides our customers with minimal ‘downtime’ and allows for personal attention to every detail,” says Follis.

“We have multiple teams out at a time, so we’re able to schedule

“Our reliance on Hadley’s interior systems reinforces our commitment to satisfy customer expectations of providing the high-end coach experience with every vehicle we build.”

Hadley interiors being installed in Turtle Top buses include the Swan™ Collection with Swan AC, Swan Constellation and Swan Select encompassing three levels of amenities, as well as the Wave™ and mini-OMEGA™ systems.

As with Ameritrans, all Hadley interiors are customized to meet Turtle Top customer requirements. Giorgio Verduzio, director of transit at Hadley, said the company had earned the trust of its customers — like Turtle Top and Ameritrans — by being “a reliable supplier of quality components, specifically the Swan Collection of interior systems.”

Visit Hadley at Booth No. 1323 at Motorcoach Expo, or go to [www.hadleyadvantage.com](http://www.hadleyadvantage.com).

Visit Ameritrans at UMA Expo Booth No. 1043.

See Turtle Top at Expo Booth No. 1411.

installations simultaneously all across the nation. This allows our customers the ability to schedule ahead of time and at their convenience,” she adds.

Learn more about Sardo at UMA Expo Booth No. 1231. Or, go to [www.sardobus.com](http://www.sardobus.com).

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# Industry leader Steve Van Galder dies suddenly

JANESVILLE, Wis. — Steve Van Galder, who was born the same year his parents got into the bus business and became one of the industry's leading lights, died suddenly and unexpectedly here late last month. He was 66.

Mr. Van Galder was president and CEO of Van Galder Bus Co., a Janesville-based motorcoach and school bus operation founded by

his father, Sam, and mother, Phyllis, in 1947, with a single school bus and taxicab.

During his 45 years in the business, Mr. Van Galder became an industry leader, holding a seat on the board of the United Motorcoach Association and serving two years as UMA chairman (2000-01), and actively participating in other industry groups.

Perhaps the strongest testament to Mr. Van Galder's ability as a bus company manager, as well as his skill as a team player, can be gleaned from the following:

In April 1999, nearly 15 years ago, Mr. Van Galder sold his company to Coach USA. Of the 70+ companies acquired by Coach USA during the past two decades, Mr. Galder was one of three for-

mer company owners with the greatest longevity of leading and managing the operations they sold to Coach USA.

The others are Charles Lenzner of Lenzner Coach Lines in Sewickley, Pa., and brothers William "Butch" Kaylor and Robert Kaylor of Butler Motor Transit in Butler, Pa.

"Steve was a mentor and highly respected leader to his fellow col-

leagues within the Coach USA family," noted Dale Moser, president and chief operating officer of Coach USA.

Added Victor Parra, president and CEO of UMA: "Steve was a wonderful human being who enjoyed life, particularly when he was on the golf course. Besides being a past UMA chairman and a great leader, he was a good personal friend. I will miss him tremendously."

By all accounts, buses were what Mr. Van Galder always wanted to do with his life. As a youth, he grew up in Van Galder Bus, and after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, he joined the company full time.

At UW, he was a member of the Warhawk football team, where he played lineman, and president of his fraternity.

Van Galder Bus expanded from its Janesville roots, establishing what became a large school business/motorcoach operation in Rockton, Wis., managed by Mr. Van Galder's older brother, David.

Their father, Sam Van Galder, never officially retired from the company, but his sons eventually became co-owners of the business.

David Van Galder gravitated to the Rockton operation and grew that business while Steve Van Galder built Van Galder Bus. David sold his motorcoach business to Steve in 1996, and sold the remaining school operation a few years later to Laidlaw. He died in 2009.

Today, Van Galder Bus provides a wide variety of services, ranging from shuttles from throughout southern Wisconsin to airports in Chicago, to casino trips, escorted tours, charters and school bus runs. It operates a fleet of 112 vehicles, 50 of which are motorcoaches.

Besides his professional interests, Mr. Van Galder was active in civic affairs in Janesville, serving on boards and commissions.

One of his great passions in life was golf, and it is perhaps appropriate that funeral services and a celebration of his life were held at the Janesville Country Club early this month.

Besides his mother, he is survived by his wife, Sue, whom he had known since high school, and two children, Sam and Sarah.

Memorials in Mr. Van Galder's name have been established with the Heart Association of Wisconsin, UW-Whitewater Athletic Department and the Janesville YMCA.



Steve Van Galder

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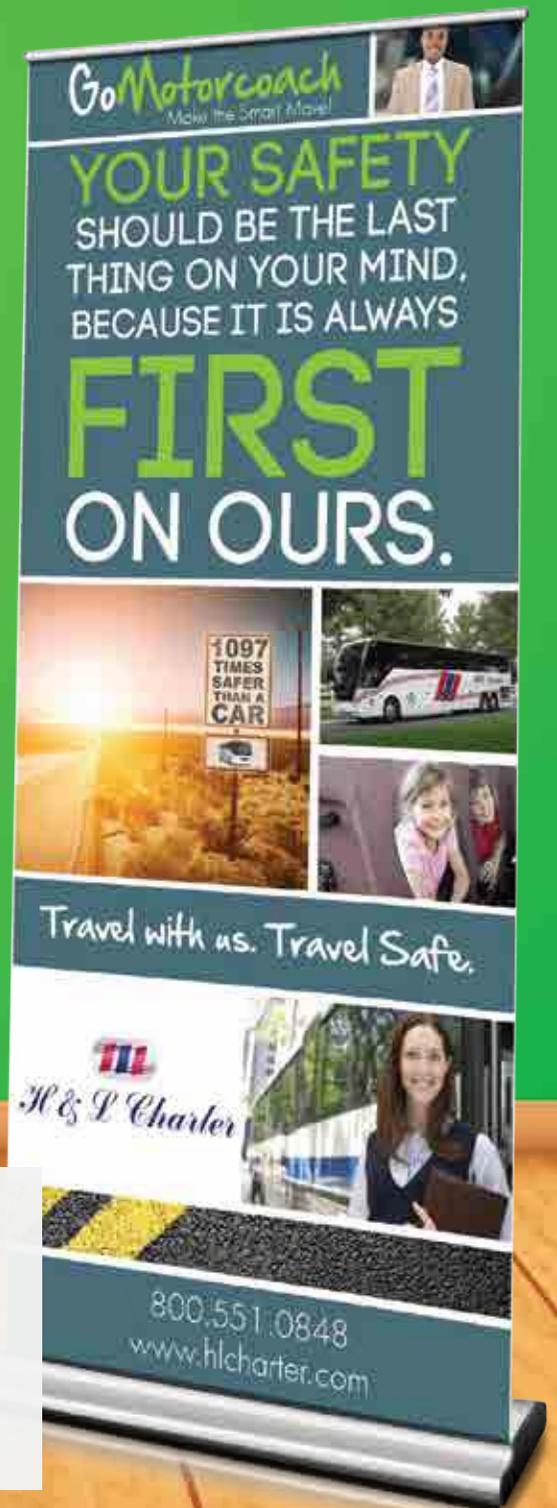
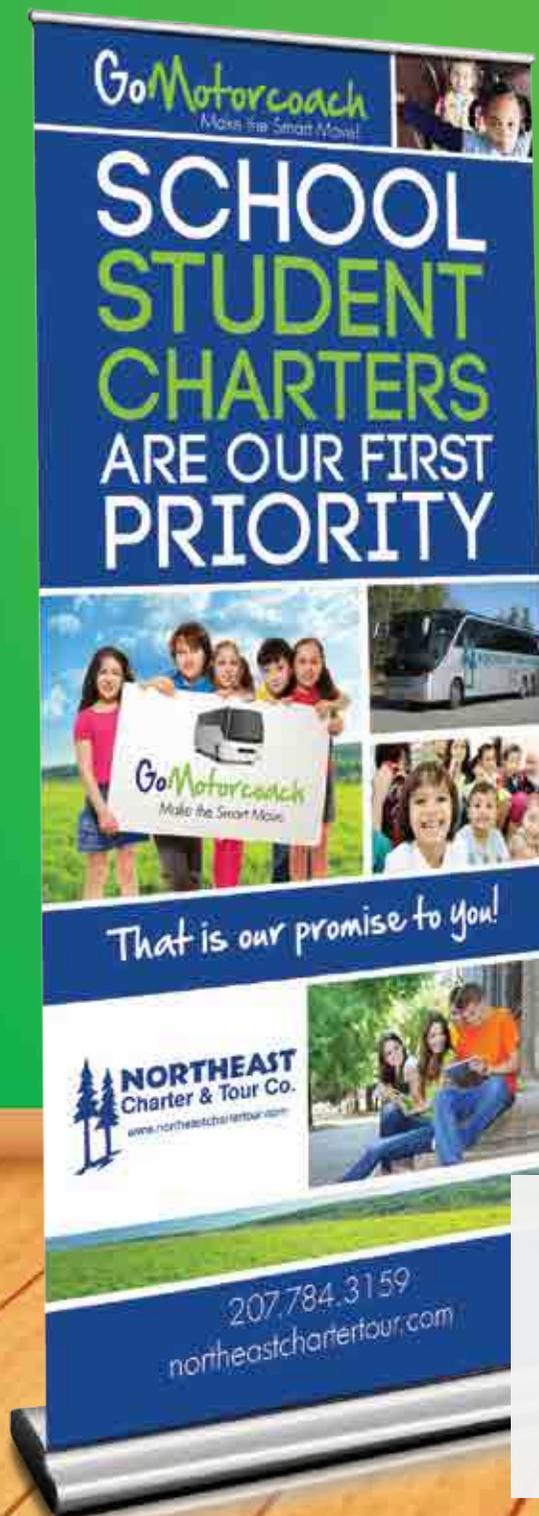
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# megabus, eyeing more growth, expanding North American fleet

PERTH, Scotland — Stagecoach Group announced late last month it is investing \$10.5 million in new double-decker Van Hool coaches for its megabus.com network in North America.

The 15 additional Van Hool TD 925 coaches are expected to enter service within the next six months, as megabus further expands its system that now operates in more than 30 states and two provinces in Canada.

Upwards of 120 destinations are served by megabus.

Stagecoach Group reported in December that revenue from its megabus.com operations in North

America increased by more than 20 percent in the six months ended Oct. 31, and further growth is expected this year. (See Jan. 1 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The 81-seat TD 925 models operated by megabus have free Wi-Fi, are “green certified” and wheelchair accessible.

Commented Dale Moser, president and chief operating officer of megabus: “megabus.com has transformed inter-city bus travel in North America.

“We believe there is a huge opportunity to encourage people to leave their car keys at home and take the bus to get to work, make a

business trip, travel with friends or go on a vacation.

“These new state-of-the-art coaches are part of our exciting expansion plans for 2014 and will help bring safe, high-quality and affordable to travel to more people in North America.”

## Diabetic drivers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Under current Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, drivers with type 2 diabetes may drive provided their condition can be managed by means other than the use of insulin.

Drivers with diabetes managed with insulin may drive only if they can satisfy requirements for inclusion in a federal “diabetes exemption” program.

However, federal regulations do not provide clear guidance in determining whether a driver with diabetes not using insulin is medically qualified to drive.

Under Coach USA’s new “Diabetes Protocol,” drivers will not be disqualified based on results of a single urine or blood glucose test.

However, it requires drivers with diabetes, who have certain test results, to provide additional documentation supporting their

ability to drive safely. According to the AARP, Coach USA’s revised policy shows its commitment to providing drivers with diabetes with equal employment opportunities, while at the same time ensuring public safety.

Don Carmichael, executive vice president and senior vice president safety at Coach USA, said: “We are pleased to have a new approach to assessing our drivers’ diabetes. It is designed to keep healthy drivers on the road, protect our passengers and the public, and make sure that drivers who need medical attention get it.

“This protocol reflects Coach USA’s commitment to the safety of their employees and customers, while delivering high quality service to the traveling public. “We hope the new Diabetes Protocol can be a model for the industry. We feel these medical protocols are the standard that enhances the overall medical

passes or other problem areas. Live streaming video is shared with road users through UDOT’s Commuter Link website and mobile applications. Today, instead of sending a snow plow to investigate a location, supervisors can take a look and decide whether an area needs to be plowed.

“We have saved about \$500,000 using this system over the last three years,” said Lynn Bernhard, UDOT Winter Operations Program Manager.

The Maryland State Highway Administration is expanding its fleet of dual-wingplows. Standard snow plows clear nine feet of roadway at one time.

Dual-wingplows can do the work of three standard plows, clearing up to 24 feet of roadway, or two full highway lanes, in one pass.

The plow was the brainchild of Maryland Highway Administration Shop Chief Steve Henry, who began his career with the agency driving snow plows in 1972. He still works for the agency.

While many snow plows include a “wing” blade on the side in addition to the plow on the front of the truck, Maryland’s plow has two, 12-foot wings — one on each side — and can use one, two, or all three in different combinations.

that bus passengers in the U.S. paid an average of 52 percent less than rail travelers and 79 percent less than those who chose use air travel.

Last month, megabus.com received the American Bus Association 2014 Green Operator Award.

guidance and safety of drivers in our industry,” said Carmichael.

Stuart Cohen, senior vice president, AARP Foundation Litigation, said: “This is a balanced plan to protect worker rights and public safety.”

Coach USA is partnering with the AARP Foundation Litigation and American Diabetes Association to implement the policy.

“Central to the American Diabetes Association’s mission is the fair treatment of people with diabetes in employment. We commend Coach USA for adopting protocols that are based on current diabetes science and medicine,” said John Anderson, MD, president of science and medicine at the American Diabetes Association.

Meanwhile, the lawsuit by the three drivers — Kaleem Muhammad, Anthony James and Walter Kautz — has been quietly “resolved.” Terms of the apparent settlement are being kept confidential.

This winter, the Tennessee Department of Transportation is using a substance called “Magic Salt” to help melt ice and snow during lower temperatures. Magic Salt, made from potato juice, is a biodegradable, non-corrosive, and environmentally friendly substance.

This season, the California Department of Transportation is using a new tow plow on Interstate 80’s rugged Donner Pass. The tow plow swings out from behind a traditional snow plow to clear snow from two lanes of traffic.

It can also apply brine solution to prevent black ice before and after a storm. For California drivers, Caltrans’ new QuickMap app shows up-to-the-minute chain control information. Go to <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov>.

The Idaho Transportation Department has introduced an enhancement to its 511 Traveler Services system, opening the door to two-way communication about winter highway conditions.

Those who register on the IDOT system and choose specific routes of preference now have the ability to report on roadway conditions they encounter during their travel. It’s designed to make IDOT’s 511 road condition reports more timely and accurate.

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## Fighting winter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

country to deploy an icebreaker. The device, which attaches to the front of a maintenance truck, uses a steel drum with spikes to break up ice and expose the asphalt underneath. The device, which can be raised and lowered like a snow plow blade, turns smooth ice on top of roadways into a rough surface that provides better traction for vehicles.

The Nevada Department of Transportation is involved in a multi-state demonstration project that has equipped 20 NDOT plows and trucks to collect weather and vehicle data, essentially creating a mobile weather reporting station that reports current road conditions via radio rather than cell phone signal for more dynamic and reliable road updates and winter operations in rural areas.

The Utah Department of Transportation has expanded its LiveView Technologies road condition monitoring camera network to more than 100 remote locations throughout the state.

The system uses web cameras, high-speed wireless communication and infrared sensors to broadcast video from distant mountain



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