

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## New at MOTORCOACH EXPO 2016



### Spanish Flair

Spanish coach maker Irizar made its first appearance at Expo as an exhibitor, unveiling its 45-foot i6 motorcoach model that will be sold in North America. The high-end coach comes in two versions, both with Cummins 131 engines and Allison automatic transmissions. Inside are 15 pages of descriptions and photos of the wide array of buses, products and services at Expo 2016.



## UMA asks members to contact representatives to register their opposition to leasing, safety rules

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — When members of the United Motorcoach Association travel to Washington in April to meet with members of Congress, they will focus on two major issues: a new rule regulating bus leasing and efforts by regulators to finalize a new rule on the Safety Fitness Determination.

UMA is seeking language to be included in the fiscal 2017 Department of Transportation appropriations bill to stop the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration from

finalizing a new rule for the Safety Fitness Determination (SFD) for motor carriers until congressionally mandated reforms to the Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) and Safety Measurement System (SMS) programs are completed.

UMA, in a recent alert to members, said it has long supported the goal of creating a simple and understandable rating system allowing customers to compare the safety performance of carriers.

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## 2015 was a transition year for Alliance; 2016 looking better

COLLEGE PARK, Ga. — A “year in transition” brought Alliance Bus Group \$100 million in sales for 2015 as it continued to build its customer- and product-support network for its distribution of CAIO motorcoaches.

“We brought a lot of new customers on but we are a little disappointed in our overall new-coach sales results,” said Doug Dunn, chairman and chief executive officer of Alliance, which operates from eight locations in seven states.

The company sold about 2,000 vehicles last year, Dunn said.

“For us, 2015 was a year in transition,” he said.

Alliance sells new and used school buses, transit buses, cut-aways and, since 2011, it has been the U.S. distributor for CAIO motorcoaches. Last year Alliance added two “S” series CIAO models to its product line.

“We introduced the new S last

year at the UMA convention in New Orleans and we still have the G model,” Dunn said.

CAIO motorcoaches are built in Sao Paulo, Brazil, by Caio Induscar. The S3436 is based on the Freightliner XB-R chassis. It is 37 feet long and seats 38 passengers when fitted with a lavatory. It is powered by a Cummins 280-horsepower 660 FPT ISB engine and an Allison B300 transmission.

The 45-foot S3645 is built on the Freightliner XB-P chassis and seats 56 with a lavatory. Its engine is a Detroit 450-horsepower 1550 FPT DD13 that is connected to an Allison B500 transmission. Amaya seats are standard on both models.

“The S has about 42 different and nicer things than our G

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ►



Doug Dunn

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## NJ Transit plans to buy 332 more MCI commuter coaches

DES PLAINES, Ill. — The board of directors of New Jersey Transit has approved an option to purchase an additional 332 45-foot commuter coaches from Motor Coach Industries for an estimated \$166 million.

Last July, NJ Transit agreed to buy 772 new MCI commuter coaches for \$395 million over six years. The agency now is on track to buy a total of 1,104 coaches over the next six years for \$561 million.

MCI is in the process of delivering three pilot buses to NJ Transit, and following a successful in-

service evaluation and funding approval a purchase order is expected for the first-year production.

The new 57-seat coaches will be Wi-Fi ready, seatbelt-equipped, compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and deliver reduced exhaust emissions as required by the latest Clean Air Act amendment.

“The MCI commuter coach provides a high level of reliability and enhanced passenger riding comfort for NJ Transit, and we’re proud the agency has once again called on us to assist with rejuvenating their fleet,” said Patrick Scully, MCI executive vice president of sales and marketing. “As passenger demographics continue to change and passengers look for an upscale ridership experience, MCI will be there to supply the latest safety technology with enhanced in-cabin amenities that draw ridership.”

MCI, North America’s leading motorcoach supplier, has far and away been the dominant supplier of commuter coaches to NJ Transit. MCI won its first contract with the agency for 700 MC-9 cruiser

buses in 1982, with the agency purchasing an additional 415 in 1987. In 2000, the agency awarded MCI the largest public transit order in North American bus-industry history with a 1,400-vehicle contract intended to improve service to outlying city and expanding suburban areas throughout the state.

NJ Transit also was the first U.S. public transit agency to purchase new-model CNG-powered MCI commuter coaches, starting with a 50-coach order as part of a 1999 pilot program and adding 27 more units the following year. It

replaced those models with 177 MCI CNG-powered coaches delivered in 2014 and 2015.

NJ Transit is the third-largest provider of bus, rail and light rail transit in the United States (behind New York City and Los Angeles), linking major points in New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia. The agency operates a fleet of more than 2,000 buses covering 257 routes.

With its full complement of buses, trains and light rail vehicles, NJ Transit completes over 272 million passenger trips each year.

## New system lowers cost of seatbelt retrofits on buses

AMHERST, Mass. — Researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst have designed a retrofit seatbelt system that makes it possible to install the safety devices on an estimated 30,000 motorcoaches and intercity buses nationwide at a reduced cost.

The retrofit system will allow owners of buses and motorcoaches to install the seatbelts for about one-third to one-half of the current cost on existing seats, UMass researchers said.

The new devices are expected to become commercially available within the next year.

To help commercialize the seatbelt system, the National Science Foundation Innovation Corps has awarded \$50,000 to a research team led by Sundar Krishnamurthy of the school’s College of Engineering.

The team also includes John Collura from the UMass Transportation Center, Douglas Eddy from the school’s Center for e-Design,

and Charles and Anne Schewe of Sarah’s Wish Foundation, which was created by the Schewes after their daughter was killed in an overseas bus crash 20 years ago.

The Schewes have been working with Krishnamurthy on the concept for more than a decade. Anne Schewe is a co-inventor of the device. Charles Schewe is an emeritus professor of marketing at UMass Amherst’s Isenberg School of Management.

A market for the seatbelts al-

ready exists. All new motorcoaches will be required to have seatbelts beginning later this year, but only 20 percent of existing buses have the safety devices. Federal safety officials say seatbelts with lap and shoulder straps in motorcoaches could reduce the risk of fatal injuries by 77 percent in roll-over crashes, primarily by preventing occupant ejection on impact.

Motorcoach companies aren’t required by law to install safety belts in their existing buses in

large part because of high costs. Estimates are that it costs about \$40,000 to \$50,000 per motorcoach to add lap and shoulder belts to all seats.

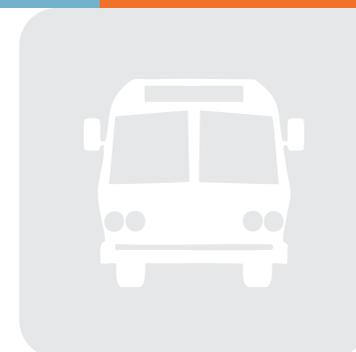
Krishnamurthy’s team estimates that implementing the new retrofit system should cost less than \$15,000 per motorcoach.

“This design is affordable because it is the only known way to add seatbelts to existing motorcoaches without replacement of all the seats,” Krishnamurthy said.

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# THE DOCKET

## S.F. operators seek more inspections of tour companies

SAN FRANCISCO — Recent bus-pedestrian accidents prompted local tour bus operators to hold a summit meeting with city and state officials to discuss the safety of circulating “hop on-hop off” buses.

Providers of the popular service range from established carriers operating new or reconditioned full-size “open-top” motorcoaches to providers with older equipment or chopped school buses that appeal to customers with limited budgets.

“The first topic of concern is the inspection of vehicles and bus

safety,” said Ray Sargoni, president and chief executive officer of Gray Line of San Francisco and Super Sightseeing.

“At present there are only 20 California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) inspectors for the entire state of California,” Sargoni said.

“There are 260 inspectors for the California Highway Patrol for the entire state of California and they are responsible for inspecting all commercial vehicles, including motorcoaches,” he said. “Because

of limited resources and limited manpower approximately only 20 percent of any tour company’s fleet is inspected for safety and maintenance in a year.”

San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee has called for 100 percent of tour company buses to be inspected annually.



Ray Sargoni

Sargoni said he agrees. “We have a Public Service Commission license. Anybody can get those licenses and buy an old double-decker bus and retrofit it. Some operators have cut the tops off of school buses.”

He said many such operators charge lower fares than bigger operators but ignore safety and maintenance regulations.

“We have enough regulations and laws that apply to us. If they enforce the laws, half of those operators will not be here.”

While others in the bus industry agree that existing regulations need to be enforced, they fear the establishment of new regulations in California, which many motorcoach operators have dubbed “bus hell” because of its history of over-regulation.

Anything that opens the door to more regulations is only going to hurt small operators and result in consumers paying higher prices.

“I would agree that we don’t need more regulations,” said Tom Giddens of Pacific Coachways Charter Services in Garden Grove, Calif. “There already are plenty that could be used or enforced.

“I definitely don’t agree with having local regulations. The state and feds have enough to already use against the few companies that don’t want to follow the rules. They aren’t going to follow new regulations anymore than they follow the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ►

## FMCSA’s Darling says industry is ‘doing a great job’

ATLANTA — Scott Darling, acting administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, told *Bus & Motorcoach News* during Motorcoach Expo 2016 that the bus industry has made positive strides in operating safely.

“As I say to everybody, I say safe bus operations move our loved ones,” Darling said in a brief interview after a two-hour listening session on the Beyond Compliance program.

“It’s becoming a really major transportation mode for folks to get

around and they’re doing a great job and I want to make sure that they continue to do that, safely.”

Darling, who was nominated by President Obama to take over as FMCSA administrator, had a confirmation hearing in January before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. The panel was expected to vote on the nomination last week and send it to the full Senate for consideration.

Darling was named acting administrator in August 2014, when

Anne Ferro resigned after nearly five years to become president of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. (See Sept. 15, 2014, *Bus & Motorcoach News*)

Darling previously served as chief counsel at FMCSA for two years.

He came to FMCSA from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the public transit agency serving greater Boston, where he served as deputy chief of staff and assistant general counsel.

“I’m going to come to work every day and do the best job I can and work with the industry to make sure that we can continue to have a safe industry and they can continue to make money and people will continue to be employed,” Darling said.

“We want to continue to work with the industry and we’re going to do that.”



Scott Darling

## Pa. transportation facing shortfall

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania is facing a \$6 billion shortfall in transportation funding, which could stall several planned projects for more than a decade.

Leslie Richards, head of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, told the state Senate Transportation Committee that former Gov. Tom Corbett’s administration had projected \$34.9 billion in funding over the state’s mandated 12-year plan, but that less than \$29 billion is available.

Richards has to update the plan in August as chairwoman of the 15-member Pennsylvania Transportation Commission.

“The Corbett administration overpromised projects by at least \$6 billion,” Richards testified. “Absent a legislative solution, a number of these projects may not advance in the next 12 years.”

Pennsylvania has the nation’s fifth-largest state-maintained road system at just under 40,000 miles and the third-largest state-maintained bridge system with 25,000. Nearly 4,000 of those bridges are structurally deficient, down from more than 6,000 in 2008.

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# CVSA says federal safety exemptions hamper inspectors

GREENBELT, Md. — The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance contends in a letter to federal regulators that they are issuing too many safety rule exemptions, placing an undue burden on roadside inspectors.

CVSA Executive Director Colin Mooney raised the issue in a letter to Scott Darling, acting director of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Mooney said that in the past year, more than 20 exemption applications or renewal requests were granted that “hinder the roadside inspector while conducting inspections.”

They included final rules exempting vehicle equipment, such as mounting of video devices to windshields, and several affecting drivers, including records of duty status exemptions and exempting certain drivers from having to obtain a commercial driver’s license.

“Due to the amount of exemptions allowed by FMCSA in the past year, an excessive burden is being placed on inspectors to ensure all active exemptions are being followed properly,” Mooney wrote in the letter. “Furthermore, this puts an undue training burden on agencies that must be diligent in informing all inspectors of the

new exemptions and ensuring they understand and apply the exemptions properly.”

Mooney said that with so many exemptions, beyond those within the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, “it is possible that roadside inspectors will no longer accurately enforce the regulations, or may stop enforcing certain regulations all together.”

He added that inspectors “must be able to perform their duties without the apprehension that one of these exemptions will be overlooked, and a driver or vehicle placed out of service notwithstanding an obscure exemption, or

an exemption being given to a driver or vehicle that is not in the exemption group.”

CVSA does not object to the exemptions on an individual basis, he pointed out, but holds that “exemptions complicate the enforcement process, causing confusion and inconsistency, which undermines the very foundation of the

federal commercial motor vehicle enforcement program — uniformity. The regulations are only effective if they are clear and enforceable.”

Mooney also encouraged FMCSA to include state and local inspection and enforcement officials when working on new or updated regulations and exemptions.

## \$3 million in motorcoach security grants available

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is accepting applications for \$3 million in intercity bus security grant funds for 2016.

The grant program is designed to protect critical surface transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism and to increase the resilience of transit infrastructure.

The grants provide funding for security measures such as enhanced planning, facility security upgrades, emergency communication technology and vehicle and driver protection and training.

DHS has awarded nearly \$103 million in motorcoach security

grants since 2003.

Eligible applicants under the 2016 grant program include owners and operators of fixed-route intercity and charter buses that serve urban areas designated by DHS as Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) jurisdictions.

In order to be eligible to receive grant funding, all operators must have completed a vulnerability assessment and developed a security plan as required by Section 1531 of the 9/11 Act.

Applications are due on April 25 for grants under the program. Information and documents are available at [www.fema.gov/preparedness-non-disaster-grants](http://www.fema.gov/preparedness-non-disaster-grants).

## U.S. to delay Niagara Falls shutoff

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — Tourists hoping for a glimpse of a dry Niagara Falls will have to wait until at least 2019, while those who would rather see the cascading water still have time to plan a trip.

Regional New York Parks Chief Mark Thomas said there’s no funding yet for a bridge replacement project that could involve shutting down the water

flowing over one section of the falls by building a temporary structure to redirect it.

Thomas said the project could start in 2019 if federal, state or private funding is found right away.

The plan involves replacing two 115-year-old pedestrian bridges near the brink of the falls. The project could leave the American and Bridal Veil Falls dry for up to nine months while

water from the Niagara River is diverted over the Canadian Horseshoe Falls.

It was done once before, for a 1969 study of erosion.

The result would be a rare look at the rock formations that lie beneath the falls on the U.S. side of the tourist draw, and perhaps an even more robust Canadian Horseshoe Falls, where 85 per cent of the water flows over normally.

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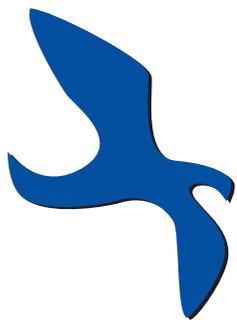
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## S.F. Tours

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

existing ones.”

The call for more inspections stems from some high-profile accidents involving tour buses in San Francisco. In January a double-deck, open-top tour bus struck and killed an 82-year-old man crossing a street. The bus was operated by Hop On, Hop Off Bus Tours.

Witnesses told police the man may have crossed the street against a red light, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. However, the 61-year-old bus driver “was found at fault for the collision and violated a city code prohibiting drivers from narrating during tours.”

Police cited him for misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter.

The city code banning tour narration by drivers was enacted after a 2014 accident. A Classic Cable Car Charters bus struck and killed a 68-year-old woman at a crosswalk in front of city hall. The 65-year-old driver of that bus also was cited for misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter, the *Chronicle* reported.

Calls for increased tour bus inspections gathered steam after a driver lost control of a City Sightseeing San Francisco bus Nov. 13.

According to police, the double-decker apparently suffered a mechanical failure before a careening crash injured 20 people, six critically.

According to police, the open-top bus rolled out of control for two city blocks, striking a bicyclist, two pedestrians and several moving cars before knocking over several stories of scaffolding at a building construction project.

The driver, his attorney told the *San Francisco Examiner*, “was powerless to stop the bus” after its air brakes failed so he attempted to slow it by clipping parked cars and “large construction containers filled with water serving as buffers.”

A City Sightseeing executive told media that the 2000 Orion bus had passed an internal company inspection on Oct. 25. He said the carrier inspected its vehicles at least every 45 days.

City Sightseeing has been operating in San Francisco since 1997 and is the largest sightseeing operator in the city. Its fleet of 20 open-top buses has carried nearly 1.5 million passengers in the past five years.

There are some questions as to whether the accidents were totally the fault of the buses since vehicle-

‘The phenomenon of open-bus sightseeing started in the early 2000s in the U.S....’

pedestrian accidents are a problem in many major cities. But inspections after the fact did reveal some problems.

**Broken buses**

When the California Highway Patrol inspected the City Sightseeing San Francisco fleet and records a week after the November accident it found “a litany of broken buses, failure to inspect buses, and drivers working far more than eight hours a day — for starters,” the *Examiner* reported.

The newspaper obtained a report on the CHP findings and reported that “Three of City Sightseeing’s drivers drove with expired licenses, according to the report ...7 of its drivers were suspended...for not paying the DMV on time.

“Buses were pulled out of service for repair. One had a fuel leak, another had inoperative brake lamps, and others had inoperative emergency exits. The report showed drivers weren’t required to file daily vehicle inspection reports. More than 20 percent of the buses sampled (they did not test all of them) were placed out of service,” according to the *Examiner*.

The *Examiner* also reported that the runaway bus was not registered with the CPUC, as required by law, “and therefore did not undergo a safety inspection by the CHP.”

**Popular tours**

“The phenomenon of open-bus sightseeing started in the early 2000s in the U.S. and became very popular very fast,” said Sargoni, who is secretary of the California Bus Association.

“It is a very convenient way of traveling for tourists. You pay a set amount for a ticket and get on the loop. You can get on and off and use the buses as your transportation to the points of interest. There are tour guides on some of the buses,” he said.

The wide disparities in capital investment produce wide spreads in ticket prices offered by carriers.

“I’m spending \$600,000 on a motorcoach versus the guy who chopped the top off a school bus and painted it red,” Sargoni said. “Our price is \$60 for two days of hop on-hop off. A school bus guy doesn’t have overhead, so he can fill up his bus at \$10 a seat. It is killing operators like us who have overhead, and our overhead last year was over \$10 million.”

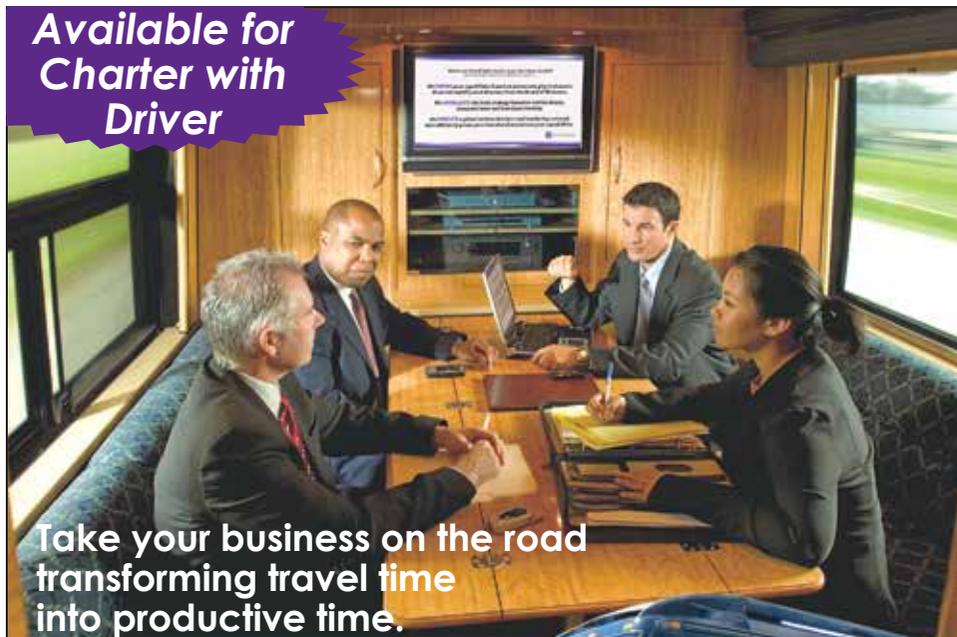
Again, some in the industry say there should be room for operators of all sizes, as long as they operate safely, giving consumers a variety of rate choices. “Don’t they deserve competitive choices?” Giddens asked.

A February meeting called by the mayor was attended by representatives of San Francisco tour companies, the city police department, the state highway patrol and the public utilities commission.

While nothing has been resolved, and the city doesn’t have the authority to enact regulations governing hop on-hop off tour companies, participants agreed that the city’s streets need to be made safer.

“For now, the San Francisco tour companies have agreed to work together to police ourselves for bus safety and maintenance,” Sargoni said.

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# Make your marketing dollars work harder for your business

By Christian Riddell  
Motorcoach Marketing Council

What if I told you that there is a high likelihood that you are getting more than 80 percent of your sales from 20 percent of your marketing budget?

Well, if you are like most companies I have worked with over the past 15 years, the chances are pretty good that you are closer to those numbers than you might want to believe.

The problem is not bad spending, bad opportunities or even bad management. It's actually a visibility problem.

Most advertisers have what I like to call a perpetually growing marketing portfolio, which means that every year there are a handful of things they sign up to do. It may be little things like sponsoring the local high school's sports programs, or big things like making a significant investment in a television campaign.

As an advertiser, you decide what things you're going to do, put them in the budget, work them out and start running the ads.

The problem comes when you get to the end of the contract and it is time to renew, because most companies have little more to go on aside from how they "feel" the campaign went.

This "feeling," overlaid with how well the company is doing, is put together and the decision to renew, change or eliminate the item is made.

The big problem is that this can lead to "reduction paralysis" because you just don't know. The ad salesman will inevitably bang you over the head with statistics about

how many people you are reaching by saying things like, "27,000 people drive by your billboard every day," or, "You have been getting 270,000 impressions a month!"

These are big numbers and it's easy to see them as a major potential contributor to your success, but these numbers leave out the most important part of the equation: Did any of these people actually book a coach with you?

This not knowing can lead you to a paralysis that results in a perpetually growing marketing budget that underperforms and does not give you the data you need to really refine the company's spending. You work hard for every dollar you spend on marketing and you should require it to work equally as hard for you.

Here are a few ways to make that happen:

**Ask the question.** If you do nothing else, do this. Have your booking staff ask the question, "How did you hear about us?"

Contrary to what many believe, this is not an imposition, nor will it jeopardize your ability to book business. One of the keys to having this be successful is to have them ask this question early.

I prefer the moment that the person on the phone wants more than just casual information. Sure, you don't want to answer the phone saying, "Thanks for calling ABC Stage Lines, how did you hear about us?"

But you do want to do it before getting a credit card. This information is the most valuable you can gather. This will tell you what you are doing, usually in broad strokes, what is driving dollars to the bottom line.

Marketing Minute  
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## Use unique phone numbers.

The only effective way to refine a budget is to start with data that you can use to make informed decisions. No matter what kind of advertising you are doing (Web, print, TV, radio, coach wraps), this tool will help you understand how much traffic it is actually generating for your sales team.

This technique allows you to place different phone numbers on every ad or avenue you use and then track who called, how long they stayed on the line, and more. Now you can know if that postcard you sent generated any calls. This can be done with the phone company, but I prefer third-party vendors like Kall8 or CallRail. These companies provide great insights and clear, concise reporting.

**Use unique URLs** (Web addresses). Many operators undervalue the use of unique URLs in their companies. These can be powerful tools to not only brand individual aspects of one's business (e.g. using chicagoweddingbus.com to direct traffic to your wedding page), but also provide incredible insights into the effectiveness of campaigns.

Imagine looking at a report that showed you that 250 people went to your website from the URL they saw on the side of your coach this year. Too often, when we focus exclusively on promoting our main Web address, all of our

visitors end up in the same bucket and we don't know if one came from our TV ads and another from our search engine optimization (SEO) efforts.

For less than a couple cups of coffee a year you can buy a domain, point it at a specific page on your site and start tracking if people used it to get to you.

**Landing pages.** This is probably more like number 3.5 than 4, but I will cover it here as a separate item because I don't want people to let it stand in the way of getting started with unique URLs.

Unique landing pages are good not only from a tracking standpoint, but also from a sales standpoint. There has been a great deal of research done around the idea of how modern consumers want to experience the Web when it comes to purchasing a product, and the consensus is clear. People want the data they want quickly, easily and neatly presented, and very little else.

So what does that mean to a motorcoach operator? It means that if you go to a bridal show and meet 150 brides, they don't want to go to your homepage and have to wade through a list of 50 other things you do and find bridal services on a list somewhere on a services page.

They want to open a page that speaks uniquely to their needs and nothing else. They want to book business with a company that cares about what they need. Period.

Landing pages are a great way to do this. Simply have a page on your site that speaks to the top services you offer, or want to offer. Purchase unique URLs and send buyers that are interested in those

services directly to those corresponding pages. Then, as you look to refine your budget, you can see how many people are coming to that page and how long they are staying.

Additionally, if you put a unique phone number on it, you'll also be able to track how many people are calling your sales team as a result. Then, if your team is asking how the callers heard about you, you can tell how many of those people are actually booking business.

This data gives you the power to refine your budget and have a truly integrated marketing campaign. This power is very important for companies that want to spend less to generate more buzz, or for those companies that want to spend the same amount but want it to work better for them.

It is inevitable that those who sell advertising will always have numbers to woo or wow you when it comes time to sign or renew. These simple tools, however, will give you the ability to know, without a doubt, if you should renew.

Imagine telling the billboard salesman: "I agree that having 27,000 people drive by my billboard is nice. But over the last quarter, we have only seen 50 calls from that effort and booked just \$2,000 worth of business, which simply doesn't pay for that effort. I need to cancel my contract."

With knowledge comes power, the power to make every single dollar work harder for the future of your business.

For more information about the Motorcoach Marketing Council and its programs, go to [www.motorcoachmarketing.org](http://www.motorcoachmarketing.org).

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## Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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# Nuclear-powered Cyclops bus was a bit before its time

By Dave Millhouser

“Shoulders” O’Brien, co-hero of the 1976 classic disaster spoof “The Big Bus,” is one of my childhood heroes.

Well, maybe it was a cult film, and maybe I was 30 when it first turned up. Shoulders seemed larger than life, my idol because we were somewhat similar. His nickname referred not to his physique, but to a tendency to drive on the shoulder.

We are simpatico.

The Big Bus, dubbed Cyclops, was an atomic powered articulated behemoth that sported all the latest technology and amenities, including a swimming pool and bowling alley.

Shoulders is co-driver to Dan Torrance, who was described as this way: “Once a promising driver, Torrance was disgraced after he crashed his bus atop Mount Diablo, and was accused of saving his own life by eating all of his passengers. (Torrance blamed his co-driver for cannibalism, insisting that he himself survived by eating the seats and the luggage, and only ate part of a passenger’s foot by accident.)”

Nuclear power, bowling alleys

and swimming pools may seem over the top for the coach industry, but we’ve had a few ideas that have come and gone (and some have come back).

What could go wrong?

Without passing judgment (sometimes good ideas fall short commercially because of timing or luck), there are a number of technologies and features that have had their five minutes of fame in the coach business.

For a number of years the bus Holy Grail was the million-mile engine — and two major operators tried gas turbines. You couldn’t govern those jewels to less than light speed and they guzzled fuel, so the experiment ended. In the early 1990s, modern four-stroke engines were approaching the million-mile mark, until the EPA strangled them.

Sleeper coaches were popular in the 1930s but have largely fallen victim to airlines. With a few notable exceptions, we rarely see attendants or snack service, and galleys are rare.

They are all victims of cost cutting and the desire to maximize capacity.

In the 1960s, 35-foot coaches began fading in favor of 40 footers, and by the late 70s were nearly extinct — until their recent remarkable return.

In the late 1960s, two manufacturers decided that wider buses were the future, and they were right (but not for another 15 years or so).

A number of 102-inch-wide buses were built when the law allowed only 96 inches on most roads. The Great Big Bus Lines assumed they could force their acceptance on regulators.

Wrong. The wide bodies were banished to a few legal roads, with millions of dollars blown. It wasn’t until the 1980s that the rules changed.

Those same two stalwarts decided that three axles on a 40-foot bus were too many. Extra axles were expensive to buy and operate, so why not leave one off? In fact, one Eagle operator simply unbolted his bogies, plated over the gap, and ran what we called a pseudo-suburban.

Well golly, without three axles, 40-foot coaches could not meet most highway weight restrictions and they were banished to a few

legal roads.

In the 80s, CB antennas were a popular option and some operators installed galleys and even vending machines. When turbochargers became troublesome a product that offered better lubrication came on the market.

For a couple of years built-in vacuums were offered (about the time that carpeted floors were popular). Not long ago there was a campaign to fill tires with pure nitrogen (as opposed to the 80 percent mix that comprises compressed air). None of these are bad things, but you just don’t see much of them anymore.

It is important, when buying equipment, to carefully consider what is a real long-term benefit versus a fad. There are at least two major considerations.

The obvious one is the cost to buy and maintain a feature. Will it pay for itself in safety, reduced cost or improved sales? Don’t forget the long-term expense of maintaining some equipment and the fact that it might improve — or diminish — resale value.

Which brings us to timing. You don’t want a technology before it

is ready (or legal, as in 102-inch-wide or 40-foot, two-axle buses). Banished buses are expensive mistakes.

Sometimes regulators create conundrums. If you bought seatbelts for ethical or marketing reasons before standards were finalized, there are some what-ifs.

At the peak of my career (when I was a bus sweeper) we had a gundous drive-up vacuum cleaner that fit over the entrance door and sucked the coach clean. I stood in the cabin and flicked stuff like Harry Potter with a compressed air wand, and it jetted down the aisle and out the door.

Coke cans often bounced back in like shrapnel. I haven’t seen one since, presumably because of that pesky shrapnel thing, but that’s one fad I wish had survived. It almost made cleaning buses fun.

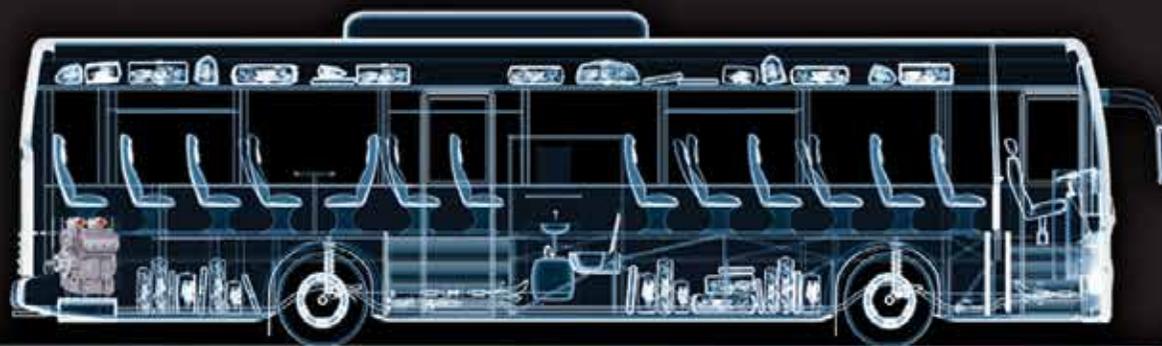
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# New at MOTORCOACH EXPO 2016

## New exhibitors, products, services travel road to Atlanta

ATLANTA — It was said that “All roads lead to Atlanta” for Motorcoach Expo 2016, and many of those roads originated at supplier bases around the globe, bringing first-time exhibitors and new products and services.

Here is a rundown on some of those exhibitors and their products and services:

### Alternative fuel

A propane conversion system for gasoline and diesel engines was introduced by Alliance AutoGas of Swannanoa, N.C. The company is a subsidiary of Blossman Gas Inc., the largest privately owned propane company in the U.S.

Alliance AutoGas has performed propane conversions for 460 fleets and last year obtained U.S. EPA certification for its diesel displacement system, said Yvon Boisclair, manager of diesel displacement technology. “We introduced the diesel conversion in Canada five years ago and today more than 250 motorcoaches are running on this technology.”

Last year the company announced U.S. EPA certification for diesel engines.

“We have the first EPA-certified diesel-propane application in the U.S.A. We have the Detroit Diesel and Volvo engines certified and we are working on the Cummins engine,” Boisclair said. “It is very expensive to do an EPA certification — more than \$400,000 on one engine.”

The AutoGas system sends the engine a fuel blend that averages 30-percent propane and 70-percent diesel, according to the company’s technical specifications. Alliance estimates the blend will save fleets five to seven cents per mile in fuel costs and reduce emissions.

“To convert a bus costs about \$9,500,” Boisclair said. “We reduce fuel consumption by about 30 percent. Normally the return on investment is 12 to 16 months at the same time you reduce your emissions footprint. Propane today is 100-percent supplied from the U.S. so that makes it very good as far as the stability of the fuel supply.”

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

### Aroma therapy

Has anyone ever said your bus smells great? J&J Bus Sanitation Products of Crawford, Ga., could make that possible with its line of lavatory deodorants and cabin fragrances.

“We make over 30 different fragrances. We call it aroma therapy for buses,” said Todd Brooks, customer service manager. “They help your passengers stay relaxed. That is what we are selling here.”

The company has offered waste treatment and cleaning products for 47 years, he said. “We have designed a specialty line of products just for motorcoaches.”

Lavatory deodorizers are sold in packets, tablets or liquid packages of one, seven or 55 gallons.

“We have a line of six fragrances we make in the portion-control forms. In the liquids customers can get all 30 of our fragrances,” Brooks said. “We have some citrusy fragrances and some that are fresh and clean. We have mango, lemon and bubble gum — that is very strong. It kills any odor that’s there.”

J&J’s fragrances are designed by its in-house chemist. “We are a perfuming company. We can make any kind of perfume customers want and turn it into a deodorizer,” he said.

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

### Driver enhancement

GreenRoad of Austin, Texas, offers driver tracking and feedback systems to monitor drivers, alert them to problems and let them know how they are doing.

“We are a leader in fleet performance and driver behavior. We help drivers auto-correct on the fly,” said Hilliary Hughes, marketing director.

“We have a little device that sits on the dashboard and lets them know within seconds of an incident. If they take a corner too fast or they are driving too fast, this device will light up to let them know. It is a non-invasive way to let them know that they need to adjust how they are driving,” she said.

“We monitor five categories of parameters through 150 points of actions so drivers are able to course-correct and reduce fuel



The SmartFloor Hide-A-Way wheelchair securement system, is a fully-integrated restraint system that is built into the floor so you don’t have to take the restraints out.

usage by driving in a proper way,” Hughes said. “We also give managers real-time actionable data.”

Hughes added that the system includes a dashboard that the driver can look at on a daily basis for statistics on how he or she did and information about whether adjustments need to be made.

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

### Smart floor

A few aisles away from the smart-driver exhibitor was the

SmartFloor booth staffed by AMF

Bruns of Hudson, Ohio. “We are releasing a new product, our SmartFloor Hide-A-Way wheelchair securement system,” said Steven Kost, operations manager.

“It is a fully-integrated restraint system that is built into the floor so you don’t have to take any of the restraints out or put them in a bag. There is no mess, no fuss. The restraints just latch onto the wheelchair. When done, the restraints pull off with a foot-operated release

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ►

## Passenger-recovery and job-exchange service launched

ATLANTA — Distinctive Systems Inc. launched a free cloud-based passenger-recovery and job-exchange service during UMA Motorcoach Expo 2016.

Coach Hire Exchange (CHX) is available to all FMCSA-authorized and insured operators.

Since the service’s North American launch at Expo, operators have been quick to adopt it, with more than 30 coach and minibus operators joining within the first few days.

CHX is designed to help operators find immediate assistance in the event of a breakdown or any other situation where passengers need to be picked up and transported as soon as possible. It is

also designed to make it easy for operators to find another operator to cover a planned job they need to contract out or post available vehicles for charter.

CHX is an entirely free-of-charge service. There is no sign-up fee and there are no membership or commission charges.

Although it is integrated with Distinctive Systems Coach Manager, CHX is a standalone service and can be used by any coach or minibus operator, whether or not they have a booking management system.

The CHX integration works in conjunction with the established Distinctive Systems Coach Manager Connect service, which allows

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ►



**Free Bus Wrap.** Esther Morissette (left) and Pier Veilleux (right) of Turbo Images congratulate Bill Meehan of Polynesian Adventure Tours, LLC, who won Turbo’s \$5,000 bus wrap prize at Expo.

## Businesses with a 'noble purpose' outperform ones focused on profit

ATLANTA — Companies focused on improving their customers' lives or creating a memorable experience outperform those focused only on making money, a leadership consultant and author told attendees at UMA Motorcoach Expo.

There are two ways to look at the motorcoach business, Lisa Earle McLeod, author of *Selling with Noble Purpose* and three other books, said during her luncheon keynote address at the Georgia World Congress Center.

One way is to look at it as a logistical business, McLeod said.

"It's a business designed to make money...and at the end of the day if we do it right, we'll make money."

A second way to look at it, she said, is by adopting the philosophy that "every single day is a chance to create a memorable experience for someone."

"If you look at your business that way, if you keep that story alive and if your employees look at the business that way, you will make more money," McLeod said.

McLeod recounted a blind study she did about eight years ago for a large pharmaceutical company that hired her to find out the difference between its good sales people and its exceptional sales people. The company paired McLeod with selected employees of each group, but she was not told who the exceptional performers were.

The company wanted McLeod to identify behaviors that made exceptional people so exceptional to answer the question, "What is that elusive thing, that magic thing, that makes the top performers top performers?" she said.

She remembers asking one saleswoman what she thought about on sales calls.

The woman told McLeod she remembers an elderly lady who approached her in a doctor's office when she was making a sales call, asking if she represented the drug the patient was taking. She was. The patient emotionally thanked her, saying she had gotten her life back after taking the drug and was now able to travel across the country to visit her grandchildren and play with them on the floor.

The sales rep told McLeod, "I think about her every single day. That is my purpose. That is why I do this job."

McLeod correctly identified all five of the company's top per-

formers. All of them had stories of a higher purpose driving them.

"Sales people who sell with what I now call noble purpose, who truly want to improve their customers' lives, outperform the

sales people who are focused on targets and quotas," she said. "Organizations that want to improve the lives of their customers outperform organizations that are simply focused on hitting the number."



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# ABC Companies delivers four coaches during Expo 2016

ATLANTA — Coach deliveries during Expo used to happen fairly often, but that hasn't been the case in recent years.

That changed during Expo 2016, with at least three companies turning coaches over to buyers.

They were led by ABC Companies, which delivered three new coaches and one used bus to three different customers.

Louisiana Motor Coach accepted the keys to two 2016 Van Hool CX35 40-passenger luxury motorcoaches outside of the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, while Transportation Charter Service, Inc., took delivery of

one new CX35.

DC Trails Inc. took delivery of a refurbished Van Hool TD925 Sky Deck bus.

The CX35 is essentially the CX45 with 10 feet and the tag axle removed. It was introduced late last year.

Since Mary and Louis Sanders, and their sons, Jeffrey Celeste and Ryan Sanders, and daughter, Caitlin, started Louisiana Motor Coach in 2010, the company has grown to 23 coaches serving the New Orleans and southern Louisiana market with charters to 48 states, as well as tours, convention shuttles, airport and cruise ship transfers,

and casino trips.

Between them, Mary, Louis and their sons have more than 30 years of coach operating experience.

"Family is important to us and that's the way ABC and Van Hool treat us," Sanders said. "We're recognized for our ability to deliver outstanding safety and customer service. This is how we'd like to be known."

Louis Sanders said the company's customers have been asking for luxury coaches suited to smaller groups and the CX35 fits that growing niche.

"The ride and amenities rival

our three-axle Van Hools and because the coaches share so many parts, maintenance and training are simplified," he said. "We can better serve our customers and save them money."

Transportation Charter Service, Inc., of California also took delivery of a 2016 CX35 during Expo.

TCS President Terry Fischer said his organization has been eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new coach.

"We are very excited about putting this coach into service," he said. "Our sales team has been building up the excitement with our customers and we have already

pre-booked outings immediately upon the coach's arrival back in California."

TCS plans to utilize the CX35 for smaller bookings, including sports teams and inbound tourists — particularly European visitors who recognize and admire the Van Hool brand.

Fischer said the CX35 will mean minimized parts investment, as well as reduce maintenance and driver training since he already runs Van Hools in his fleet. He added that the CX35 would allow for a more competitive charter pricing structure thanks to its smaller, more economical size.



**Top**, Mary Sanders of Louisiana Motor Coach tries out the driver's seat on one of the two new Van Hool CX35 coaches (in top right photo) the company took delivery of during Expo. **Middle photo**, Transportation Charter Service President Terry Fischer does the same in the CX35 (bottom right photo) his company bought from ABC Companies. **Above**, Bill and Liliana Torres of DC Trails (left and second from right) pose with Ryhan and Roman Cornell of ABC on the Van Hool TD925 Sky Deck they bought.

# FMCSA official addresses controversial leasing rule

ATLANTA — The saga of federal leasing regulations for commercial passenger vehicles illustrates the need for timely, detailed comments on proposed rulemakings, said Loretta G. Bitner, chief of passenger carrier safety in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance at the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The final rule on “Lease and Interchange of Motor Vehicles” was issued in May 2015. Passenger motor carriers would become subject to the rules on Jan. 1, 2017.

The deadline to file petitions for reconsideration was supposed to be June 26, 2015, but a late wave of realization washed over the passenger carrier industry and prompted an unusual post-finality reconsideration by the agency.

Even if a motorcoach is borrowed on short notice, the rules require carriers sharing equipment or drivers to enter a formal agreement specifying responsibility for federal motor carrier safety regulations and insurance coverage. Interchanged vehicles must be marked with DOT identification for the responsible carrier.

One speaker during a question-and-answer period at Motorcoach Expo called the rules “the death knell for the way we do business.”

“Normally there is a certain time period that we accept petitions for reconsideration of the final rule itself,” Bitner said. “In this case, the industry first petitioned us to extend that time period. What we heard back was, ‘We didn’t understand what you were doing. We didn’t understand how broad this rule was going to be and we need a little bit more time to get our thoughts together.’

“So the agency did something I have never seen — we did extend that time period for reconsideration. We got all this feedback and started looking at it,” she said.

When FMCSA issued the notice of proposed rulemaking, “We received 12 responses with some issues, not a lot of detail,” Bitner said. “In the petition for reconsideration we received around 40 responses. We have details, we have specifics, we have real information. The time I wish we would have gotten that was in response to the notice of proposed rulemaking, not after there was a final rule.

“I know you are tired of hearing me talk about this, but please, please pay attention to a notice of proposed rulemaking. These things affect your business. If we don’t receive the information to make sound judgments on whether this is a good idea or a bad idea, we would not be where we are today

with this rule.”

The leasing rules are necessary, Bitner said, “Because our investigators have found that a lot of times companies are exchanging equipment very informally. There is no written documentation, nothing to say who is in control of that vehicle. Who is overseeing that

driver’s working hours? A lot of times we go in and get the carriers pointing to each other. We are looking to identify the motor carrier that is responsible for safety.”

The rules also are intended to prevent unsafe carriers from hiding their identities, she said.

“It is to make sure that the car-

riers that have poor safety performance — and are unwilling or unable to do better — don’t operate under the guise of a carrier that we have already monitored.”

Arrangements can be so loosely defined that a carrier may not know an unsafe company is claiming to operate under its name and

authority, she said.

When FMCSA or state investigators have had suspicions about control of vehicles, “We couldn’t ask them to give us paperwork because they didn’t have to have paperwork,” Bitner said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 ►

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# MCI-New Flyer CEO optimistic about new partnership

ATLANTA — Paul Soubry, the new president and CEO of Motor Coach Industries, said he is optimistic about the future of the company now that it has joined with New Flyer Industries, which Soubry also heads as president and CEO.

New Flyer completed its \$480 million acquisition of MCI late last year, combining MCI's position as the No. 1 maker of motorcoaches with New Flyer's position as the No. 1 manufacturer of heavy-duty transit buses.



Paul Soubry

"There were lots of attempts over the years to bring our businesses together," Soubry told the motorcoach-industry media event at Expo 2016. "Finally we found someone who wants to be in the bus business long-term. Boy are we really excited."

He said the combined companies have 4,950 employees and \$2.3 billion in annual revenue.

MCI will continue serving as the exclusive distributor in North America of Daimler AG's luxury Setra S 417 and S 407 motorcoaches even though Daimler sold its 10 percent stake in MCI when the sale closed.

Still unclear, however, is the future of New Flyer's distributorship agreement with MCI competitor ABC Companies. Since February 2014, ABC has served as the exclusive distributor of New Flyer's MiDi and Xcelsior transit bus models to U.S. private bus and

shuttle operators. ABC markets, sells and provides after-sales service for the New Flyer models.

Soubry said the companies haven't "sorted it out yet" but that they still have contracts in place. "The game is different now. MCI has a private sales channel," which New Flyer didn't have, he said, adding that the issue is "deeply under consideration."

MCI also outlined various strategic moves during Expo. They include:

- Offering free standard shipping on parts orders of all sizes, with no minimum order

- An expanded 5,000 items as part of its Coach Critical Parts Guarantee, which promises listed MCI and Setra parts will ship the next business day or a credit will be issued for 50 percent of the part price up to \$150

- In-stock parts under 150 pounds ordered by 2 p.m. in all time zones except Hawaii will ship the same day

- More parts stocked and shipped at branch warehouses in East Brunswick, N.J., and from MCI's Sales and Service Center in Los Alamitos, Calif.

- A new MCI Companion App that gives coach operators fast access to support, mobile access to publications, drivers' guides, routes to the nearest MCI location, parts promotions and one-touch MCI support calling for technical and ERSA assistance

- Expanded technician and driver training options for 2016

MCI said many of the improvements are the result of feedback from its annual customer survey.



The Setra Top Class S 417 TC is a Daimler luxury coach distributed in North America by MCI.



MCI's popular J4500 features cameras that provide a 360-degree view of the coach's perimeter for greater driver safety.

## Regulations can be a pain, but you need to embrace them

ATLANTA — Are regulations your friend or foe?

You might as well approach them with a positive state of mind because they aren't going anywhere and they will keep your operations safer, said Matt Daecher, president of Daecher Consulting Group in Camp Hill, Pa.

"If you talk to companies that have been around for generations, the first thing they think about regulations is that regulations are nothing but a pain in the butt," Daecher said during an Expo education session.

"There are some nuisance ones out there. We see new regulations coming out, but when was the last time you saw a regulation go away? They don't get rid of them, so you end up with all of these regulations," he said.

However, "If you think in a positive way and look at the underlying reasons behind almost any regulation, it really is a safety reason to help protect the public you serve. Really embrace them and figure out how to incorporate them into your business practice. Because you are a for-hire carrier and a common carrier, you have a higher standard of care that you are obligated to maintain.

"Recognize that all these regulations that we sometimes think of as a pain in the butt are about a higher standard of care. When you don't comply it gets you in trouble from a liability standpoint. The small carrier may not have experienced a serious accident, but at some point you will and that is the kind of stuff that comes into play," Daecher said.

Regulations can provide operational guidance, particularly for a young company that is developing processes and standard operating procedures, he said.

"It is important to understand the regulations. For passenger transportation operations there are 144 acute and critical regulations — these are the ones that are deemed very serious. If you violate them they are going to count against you in the compliance review or investigation. You need to really make sure you are focused on those."

While you're at it, don't forget the regulations from the Americans with Disabilities Act, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Environmental Protection Agency.

"If you start with what is re-

quired in the regulations at the beginning and build everything around that, you are not going to have to worry about whether you did this or that, because it is already incorporated," he said.

The preliminary categories of regulation cover vehicle registration, operating authority and insurance coverage. Once those are handled, "There are the big five areas: drug and alcohol testing, hours of service, driver qualifications, vehicle inspections and vehicle maintenance," he said.

It is important to distinguish trucking and passenger-carrier regulations, he added.

"There is a growing variance between regulations that are applicable to property carriers and passenger carriers. I have been dealing in the last two weeks with a com-

pany that was under the assumption that this regulation applied to them, but it was only for trucking.

"The United Motorcoach Association is a great source of information and your state bus association would have information specific to buses. Even within buses you have to be careful because transit may have some different regulations than for-hire motor carriers," he said.

He also stressed the need to have multiple personnel versed in the regulations.

"If it is all in your head and you haven't shared it with other staff, Lord forbid something happens to you. If you make it the responsibility of your main operations persons and they leave, you don't want the knowledge to leave with them."

## UMA opposition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“However, this proposal does not achieve the goal as envisioned and is built on a flawed foundation,” UMA said in the alert. “This proposal would radically modify the Safety Fitness Determination (SFD) method in which intervention information is disseminated for the enforcement community and the general public.”

“The current SFD system ranks carriers as Satisfactory, Conditional or Unsatisfactory. The proposed new system would remove all ratings with the exception of ‘Unfit,’ leaving customers little guidance to compare the safety performance of the majority of carriers. This does not meet the goals of the original congressional mandate.”

Most troubling, UMA contends, is that the proposed new method utilizes the flawed CSA and SMS data and scores, which, under the recently enacted FAST Act, Congress has directed the agency to overhaul completely.

The new methodology would be based on the carrier’s on-road safety data in relation to five of the agency’s seven Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS), an investigation, or a combination of on-road safety data and investigation information.

## Leasing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

To clarify such control issues, she said, “The rule applies to the lease, interchange or loan of any passenger vehicle between passenger carriers, irrespective of how long it is, whether you are getting any money out of it and whether you are getting a driver with it. It also applies to private passenger carriers.”

In explaining the rule, Bitner said, “A motor carrier may transport passengers in a leased or exchanged vehicle only when there is a written lease. Any time you call your friend down the street and say, ‘Can you give me a bus and/or a driver?’ we are considering that a lease.”

“We are going to hold the lessee responsible for all safety violations committed by the leased vehicle and the driver. When you lease that vehicle, if it goes over hours, if it has bad brakes, whatever it may be, that is going to go accounted for on your record. If the lease is incorrect or the lease is not done, then both companies will receive the violations.”

Bitner said FMCSA is considering the industry comments and “we want to get that decision made before the compliance date of Jan. 1, 2017.”

“The agency has issued (a proposed rulemaking) for SFD that relies on the same flawed program Congress just ordered them to revise,” UMA said. “Therefore, UMA is seeking legislation to require FMCSA to halt advancement of this proposal until all CSA reforms are completed.”

Another high-profile issue that UMA has been concerned about is the Lease/Interchange Rule, which

took effect July 27 but will not be enforced until Jan.1, 2017. The rule will add more regulations and paperwork to leases and farm-outs between coach operators in an effort to shut down illegal carriers.

But UMA maintains it would actually hurt legal operators who depend on providing contract services.

“The idea that you will be required to execute a formal lease

with another carrier and be fully responsible for that company’s insurance and violations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, even though you have no direct oversight or control over their business operations, puts you and your business in an untenable position,” the association said in its member alert.

“The liability exposure you would face in this situation

could preclude the arrangement from ever being practical again, let alone the inconvenience it imposes on your customers.”

UMA has called on its members to write letters or send emails to their representatives stating their opposition to the rules. The issues also will be discussed during 2016 Capitol Hills Days, which will be held April 12-13 in Washington, D.C.

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# Temsa introduces newly enhanced 35-foot motorcoach

ATLANTA — Temsa Global and its U.S. distributor CH Bus Sales introduced the newly enhanced TS 35E mid-sized coach during Expo 2016.

It also delivered the first TS 35E to a customer.

Robert Foley, president and CEO of CH Bus Sales, said the company will be delivering its 500th TS 35 this spring.

Foley said the new model “exemplifies the tremendous success we’ve had with the 35-foot coach and our new E will be able to provide the same advantages it is known for, but with some more modern enhancements and upgrades.”

The vehicle structure and main components remain intact on the new TS 35E version, but it now has improved service accessibility, improved driver ergonomics and enhanced curb appeal.

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

Temsa CEO Dincer Celik attributed the company’s success in the U.S. market to its “capability of showing the required flexibility, together with the technological developments towards the needs of the customers.”

In response to industry trends, Temsa and CH Bus Sales are able to present the widest product range to the market with three different size coaches ranging from 30 to 56 seats (TS 30, TS 35 and TS 45). There are 700 Temsa models in the USA run by about 200 operators.

The TS 35E’s upgraded 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.

Driver ergonomics are improved with an enlarged driver area (increased by 4 inches), updated ergonomic buttons and an updated dashboard cover. Improving the serviceability of the coach was a large factor in the vehicle enhancement and is accomplished with a three-piece front bumper, three-piece rear engine door, stacked alternators and 315 size tires.

Shannon Kaser, owner and president of Royal Excursions of Mishawaka, Ind., took delivery of the first TS 35E coach at Expo. Royal Excursion offers a variety of transportation services including wedding parties, sports events travel, school field trips and corporate events.

The company was named among the 2013 Indiana Companies to Watch and has been operating as a locally owned and operated transportation company since 1998.

Kaser said he chose the TS 35E based on “the success we’ve had with the other TS 35 and TS 45 Temsa models and the great support from CH Bus Sales on the after-sales side.”

Royal Excursions now has five Temsa vehicles in its fleet, including three TS 35 mid-size coaches and TS 45 full-size coaches.

“The TS 35E is classier looking outside and there is more room for the driver,” Kaser said. “I’m happy with my two TS 35s, but this one is classier.”



The enhanced Temsa TS 35E features an updated and modern look and an enlarged driver area with updated ergonomic buttons and dashboard cover perimeter for greater driver safety.



Shannon Kaser, center, owner of Royal Excursions of Mishawaka, Ind., celebrates his purchase of the first TS 35E coach.



The Temsa TS 30 is the smallest in the family but still offers quality construction, interior and power train.



Temsa’s TS 45 is the big brother of the TS 35E, offering stainless steel construction with an integral monocoque design that ensure strength and stability.

# Business 101: You need lawyers, accountants, bankers

ATLANTA — The professional advice and financial strategies needed to keep coaches on the road were outlined during the “Business 101” sessions at Motorcoach Expo 2016.

The keys to business management are your LAB, said Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations and COO for the United Motorcoach Association.

“That’s your lawyer, accountant and banker,” Presley said. “That is Business 101. These are the guys who are going to keep you out of the ditch. I always think of them as an informal board of directors. They want to see you be successful. They want your business.”

A motorcoach carrier is a complex business that needs a lawyer on retainer. “Nearly 90 percent of all businesses are involved in litigation at any given time. You need someone who knows your business from a legal perspective,” he said.

“When you purchase a motorcoach you are signing a note for a half a million dollars. Don’t sign that note without a lawyer looking at it. They should look at the papers when you open your checking account or sign a lease — anything that requires your signature.”

Legal advice is critical in payment disputes and employment law, he said. “You need an attorney to guide you through compensation and terminations, maybe just one time to tell you how you are going to do it.”

Carriers often overlook the need to have their attorney monitor insurance claims.

“If you have a crash you have the insurance company attorney, but they are defending their \$5-million limit and may not always have your best interests at heart,” Presley said.

Your attorney also should know about your regulatory authorities, Presley said. “Violations can be in dispute and there can be loss of operating authority if you mess up. Some people suggest that you have legal representation at least at the onset of a compliance review and the exit review.”

Accountants prepare tax returns, of course, but they also can establish efficient financial systems, suggest software applications and advise on business strategy, investments and pensions.

“Accountants can help you guide your business. A lot of operators don’t use them in this way,”

Presley said. “Ask them if the math works on buying this bus, hiring this person or expanding my facilities. If the math doesn’t work, I have seen it drag companies way, way down.”

Good banking relationships facilitate all sorts of business activities.

“In the bus business, guys who have had bank relationships were able to seize really great opportunities on pre-owned equipment. From time to time there are really, really great deals. If you have a banker behind you to seize that, you can write a check for that bus that day,” Presley said.

“Sometimes we have strains on cash flow. We need the ability to keep that bank account flowing and keep those payrolls current. If your own bank will vouch for you as a credit-worthy person that means a lot,” he said.

## Cash is King

Speaking of cash flow, the importance of having and planning for cash was discussed by Michael Neustadt, president of Coach Tours in Brookfield, Conn.

“This affects small companies disproportionately. If you don’t have enough cash in the bank you

are going to be worried about expansion plans. We have all said that safety is our first priority, but you know deep in your heart that when cash is short sometimes the parts and maintenance budgets can go down,” he said.

“If you can’t afford advertising and marketing, your business can certainly suffer.

If you miss a payment your source of fuel can be cut off. It can harm your credit rating. Your borrowing can be affected. It helps to reach out to your creditors before you get behind. When you see a problem coming, most will be willing to help you.”

Carriers should discuss payment terms with new customers and suppliers, he said. Equipment breakdowns are an enormous risk for small motorcoach operators, Neustadt said.

“A breakdown can be very expensive not only because of the cost to repair the bus. You may have to hire another bus to finish the trip. You might have to buy the group a meal while they are out on the road and waiting for the replacement bus. The bus may have to be towed. And you might have to give customers money back.



Ken Presley



Michael Neustadt

“There are a lot of reasons you might have to provide a refund and they are not always your fault. A storm or terrorism event may require you to cancel a trip for safety reasons.”

The insurance deductible on a bus collision may cost \$5,000 or \$10,000. “It can turn a minor crash into a cash crisis,” he said.

“You should probably be thinking in advance of sources of ready cash. How much would you need and where you would get it?” Neustadt asked.

Emergency needs depend upon the carrier’s operations, he said. “What are the worst-case scenarios that can befall my company? What is the actual cost of that scenario and how should I plan? Am I doing short runs or long distance, charters or tours? The numbers and levels of risk are entirely different.



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## Alliance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

model,” Dunn said. “The selling points for these coaches overall is styling and fit-and-finish. This isn’t just a bus, it is a better-balance-sheet item, a better way to build a business model for buses.

“We have a nicely valued product, a good, dependable product with a standard, all-American drivetrain. Induscar is a great partner. They build close to 10,000 buses a year in Brazil and have another plant in South Africa that ships buses all over Africa and sends some to Europe.”

Alliance sold about 40 CAIOs in 2015, he said. “We have a little over 100 that are out in service. We’re just trying to step it up a piece at a time.”

The CAIO brand is reaching the age of maturity and acceptance in the U.S., Dunn said.

“When you bring a new coach in, the first thing an operator is scared about is resale value as they work through their initial lives and come back to be resold and redistributed. Without that knowledge people sometimes are hesitant and want to go with a sure thing.”

### Coming back around

CAIO coaches came to the U.S. in 2008. “The first ones that were sold are coming back around. We are at the stage where we are redoing them and sending them back out. We will continue to grow that as we go along. Most new coaches, if you look back, take seven to 10 years to get established in the marketplace,” he said.

Alliance is prepared to support that value as the coaches cycle through life stages. “We sell a tremendous number of used buses and refurbish hundreds of used buses a year. Having us stand behind the product, and more or less underwrite that continuing value, is critical.”

Dunn acknowledged that North America already is served by a number of high-quality motorcoach manufacturers and distributors. So why did Alliance decide there was room for another?

“Sometimes I ask that question myself,” he said. “It is a difficult marketplace with a lot of competition and all of the innovative technologies that are out there now. It is a constant battle to stay on top of them and make sure everyone is trained in-house to participate with it.”

In the motorcoach industry, “These customers are very particular. They know what they know and like what they like and you have to get in there and work with

them and make sure you are meeting their needs,” Dunn said. “Our Freightliner partners have got the best technology out there. It is a matter of coupling it together and training our people and training our customers to implement it.”

### Building relationships

The Alliance marketing slogan is “Along for the whole ride” because the company believes its business is built on the relationships that follow sales.

“When you’re with somebody who is making their living running motorcoaches, it is a whole different relationship,” Dunn said. “You really do become partners. Making sure our organization is ready to be that partner is something we have made strides to do. Last year we really focused on the product support and customer service sides of the business.

“We completely redid our parts inventory and warehousing to get that all online. The parts support we have gotten from Freightliner has helped us make tremendous progress. To do a motorcoach in this industry, against the other competitors and the product offerings that are out there, you have to have your infrastructure in place. We have been doing commercial cutaways for over 30 years. To move into motorcoaches, this calls for a step up in our game internally.”

Alliance’s success in its other market segments prepared it for expansion into motorcoach sales and service, Dunn said.

“We do think there is potential in the market. We sell thousands of buses a year. The majority of our customers are transit operators and we have been very good at that. We are pretty well up to speed on technically-intense coaches and buses.”

Many passenger transportation carriers operate diverse fleets, he noted. “Motorcoaches fit into our wheelhouse and are another product to round out our offerings. Many motorcoach operators have other types of buses, too. A lot of them are looking to expand their own businesses either with some type of contract transportation, shuttle transportation or other things and a motorcoach does not fit the bill.”

### Looking ahead

Dunn said last year was pretty good for the motorcoach industry. “This year there is going to be probably a slight uptick. The continued availability of credit for a lot of our customers is important. We deal with that daily and have gotten better at it. We work with a



CAIO and its U.S. dealer network Alliance Bus Group featured several coaches at Expo, including the S3645 (top), the S3436 (middle) and the Vicinity Climb Aboard. The S models were first unveiled at Expo 2015.

lot of financial partners on that, much as the way our competitors do.”

The transit bus business also should be good this year, he said. “We sell so many transit buses and lots of it is determined by federal funding levels, which are up. I think this year is going to be a

growth year for us.”

Dunn also believes the CAIO line is poised for growth. “I think it will be a good year for us, especially in the motorcoach side. We have taken our lumps, gotten our act together in-house and are ready to support the product.”

Alliance operates two facilities

in Georgia at College Park and Forest Park. Other shops are in Lewisville, Texas; Orlando, Fla.; Carlstadt, N.J.; Slidell, La.; Hudson, N.H.; and Jackson, Miss.

“We want to continue to grow,” Dunn said. “We are constantly looking at new areas to expand and operate.”

# Lower fleet utilization, higher prices equal profits

ATLANTA — It may seem counterintuitive, but higher utilization of a fleet may not necessarily translate to higher profits, motorcoach operators told colleagues at a UMA Motorcoach Expo seminar.

Jimmy Cantrell of Daniel's Charters in Lula, Ga., said the utilization sweet spot for his 35 coaches is about 62 to 65 percent averaged over a year, which is the most cost-effective and profitable range for his operation. He was at about 58 percent last year.

"I can make more money at 62 to 65 percent utilization with 35 buses than I could if I had 45 buses and trying to run 'em more," Cantrell said, putting his business at about 15 percent contract and the rest charters and schools.

Gross revenue would increase with more buses, but he looks at net profit, he said at the seminar, titled "Operations: Maximizing Equipment Utilization."

"If you got 100 percent utilization, you're doing something wrong with your pricing because you can make more money, more profit...increasing your costs," Cantrell said.

Other operators said they had done that.

Generally, the more one charges, the lower the utilization; the less one charges, the higher the utilization. The trick is finding the right utilization for the most profit.

Dennis Streif of Vandalia Bus Lines Inc. in Caseyville, Ill., has 60 vehicles and said his utilization runs about 50 to 55 percent, all charter business. The business is seasonal, with less travel in winter and midsummer, and while 65 percent would be a good number, drivers need to rest after the busy seasons, he said.

## Buses don't sleep

"It's not utilization of equipment because...the equipment doesn't need to sleep, it's my drivers," Streif said. "We overtax them for probably about seven months and then we underwork them for about four or five months. Overall, if we balance it out, we get to that 50, 55 percent. I'm pretty comfortable where we're at. A little bit more would be OK. Again, it's not the equipment so much as the drivers."

Dennis King of King Ward Coach Lines in Chicopee, Mass., runs about 64 percent with his roughly two-dozen vehicles. He said he used to run very high utilization before he joined a Spader business group with fellow operators, but his profitability was low-

est in the group. Over time, he raised prices and improved his bottom line. His business is all charter.

Jeff Rogers of First Class Tours Inc. in Houston put his utilization at about 75 percent for his 46 coaches, a higher rate he attributed to a large amount of five-day contract work.

Callen Hotard of Hotard Coaches in New Orleans, who moderated the panel, measures utilization differently for charters and contract business, about 63 and 90 percent, respectively, with 10 percent excess fleet for maintenance and down time.

On high-utilization days, panelists said they try to get peak rates.

## Tiered pricing

Asked if the operators had prices for equipment they wouldn't go below even in low season, King said he had four tiers and minimum prices for each tier.

Rogers also said there were certain rates he wouldn't go below.

Cantrell, citing a day trip as an example, looks at whichever is greater, the day price or mileage for the day.

Streif said weekend rates are higher no matter the time of year and that there are discounts during slow periods. If there are any concessions, a sales manager must OK them.

One questioner asked the panel if they keep spare equipment on busy weekends or if they book all their units.

Cantrell said he doesn't keep a spare on a regular basis.

"But you cannot book everything out for seven solid days because you're going to have incidents; but if it's a one-day situation or a two-day situation, we'll book everything we've got out," he said.

King echoed that, adding he doesn't want a customer riding with a competitor and running the risk that customer won't return, yet he won't necessarily keep a spare bus back on a busy weekend.

"I have a saying in my office, 'Don't worry, we'll figure it out,'" he said, getting laughs from the audience. He'll look at the schedule and rearrange things if necessary.

Rogers also won't hold back equipment on a regular basis, saying spares are a "game-time decision."

"The question for us is in the



Callen Hotard

event of a problem, what's our fallback position and how quickly can we recover and knowing where we're going to go in the event of an issue — and sometimes that is holding back a piece of equipment," he said, adding that it's rare.

Streif also doesn't hold back equipment. But that also means being flexible for loyal clients, such as a football team in contention for the playoffs that might need a bus to a post-season game. In that case, Streif wants to be able

to serve the team if it needs transportation rather than sub it to someone else. To do that means having someone on staff who is involved in the community and follows the teams to help with planning.

That's part of knowing one's customers, which is important, Cantrell said. For example, if large coaches are fully utilized, operators need to know if a customer would accept two smaller ones instead and be just as happy.

## All hands on deck

Asked how they overcome driver availability issues to maintain utilization, Streif, who has a CDL, says he'll get behind the wheel in a pinch and so will others.

"We have people that will multitask," he said.

King also will drive if necessary and his four mechanics have CDLs, as do his dispatchers and one of his sales people.

"We don't turn work down," he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ►

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**VDO**

# NTSB outlines 2016 priorities for making highways safer

ATLANTA — Fatigue-related accidents, occupant protection, substance impairment and event data recorders are among the top priorities in 2016 for the National Transportation Safety Board, investigators said during a presentation at Motorcoach Expo 2016.

“Every year we evaluate what we have learned in crash investigations and issue what we call a ‘most wanted list,’” said Robert Accetta, a senior highway engineer and investigator-in-charge in the board’s Office of Highway Safety. “The 2016 list is our road map to making transportation even safer this coming year. The list includes many issues that appeared in previous years because these still need additional work.”

Seven of the 10 topics on the list are involved in motorcoach safety: reducing fatigue-related accidents, promoting collision-avoidance technologies in highway vehicles, strengthening occupation protection, disconnecting from deadly operator distractions, ending substance impairment, requiring medical fitness for duty, and expanded use of event recorders to enhance transportation safety.

Accetta and Michael LaPonte, a

highway accident investigator, presented animations and discussions of four recent crashes involving motorcoaches and a passenger van.

Driver fatigue was identified as a main factor in one of those crashes. Comedian Tracy Morgan was seriously injured and another passenger killed when a tractor-trailer rig operated by Wal-Mart struck the back of a limo van that had slowed for a construction zone.

“One of the things that has come out in several accidents we have investigated lately is driver fatigue,” LaPonte said. “Even a com-

pany the size of Wal-Mart did not have a fatigue management program at the time. It is something we are advocating and something carriers should be looking into.”

Occupant protection and abuse of a substance — synthetic cannabinoids — were identified as the factors in a fatal collision between a tractor-trailer rig and a medium-sized bus carrying a college softball team near Davis, Okla.

A smoking pipe containing the drug was found on the floor of the truck following the crash, which occurred when the truck crossed a

median and struck the bus.

Four bus passengers were ejected and killed. None of the passengers was wearing a seat belt. The NTSB noted in its findings that synthetic cannabinoids are not covered in current driver drug-testing programs, largely because they consist of ever-evolving chemical formulas designed to evade detection.

“The motor carrier was very compliant,” LaPonte said. “They did all of the due diligence you do when you hire a driver. They had programs in place to monitor the

driver’s actions. The driver was not over his hours of service. The vehicle was inspected after the accident and there were no out-of-service violations found on the tractor or the trailer.”

What investigators did find was drug paraphernalia in the cab of the truck. “The driver used it extensively because he knew it would never be caught on a DOT drug test,” LaPonte said. “The problem is the gap between what DOT tests for and what some of these new designer drugs do in terms of not showing up.”

NTSB has asked the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to study the prevalence of synthetic drug use among commercial motor vehicle drivers and determine whether new testing methods could reveal them, he said.

The board also has called for mandatory event data recorders on buses and other passenger vehicles. According to a briefing paper, “The NTSB has seen how an event data recorder in a motorcoach would have provided information after a crash about what may have gone wrong with the vehicle, how occupants were killed or injured and what safety devices and systems were employed, if any.”

## Marketing Council auctions motorcoach

ATLANTA — The Motorcoach Marketing Council wrapped up a strong fundraising effort at Expo this year, auctioning off a Van Hool motorcoach and items donated by more than 50 companies.

John Benjamin of Northfield Lines in Eagan, Minn., made the winning bid of \$383,500 in the live auction for the Van Hool CX35, with ABC Companies donating its profits on the coach to the marketing council.

“I think it was a good deal,” Benjamin said.

The council’s silent auction featured trips technology, coach parts and clothing, among other items, all of them donated by motorcoach industry companies and individuals.

Christian Riddell, executive director of the council, said the silent auction represented a major departure from years past, with many items bringing above-retail values, demonstrating the level of support the industry has for these products, training and services.

“We are thrilled to see the sup-

port from the industry for the work that we are doing,” Riddell said. “It is amazing to see companies like ABC who respect what we are doing so much that they were willing to donate such a great coach to the auction. It really speaks to the fact that we are doing things right.”

The Motorcoach Marketing Council’s GoMotorcoach program is now in its third year and has helped hundreds of operators around the United States and Canada sell their products in their respective markets.

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Thomas Built Buses says its Transit-Liner C2 (top left) is a versatile cutaway that can be customized to meet a customer's specific needs. Gretch Motors brought its GM40-model (bottom left) upscale cutaway, which rides on a Freightliner chassis. The Volvo 9700 (top right) is always popular in the Prevost stand at Expo, as is the Prevost H3-45 (bottom right).

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Utilization

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

said. The panel was asked if they look at utilization data to determine additions or reductions to their fleet. Rogers looks at how much each vehicle was utilized, particularly the lowest utilization of any

one bus. "That's a real, for us, a telltale sign," he said. "If that vehicle was 20 percent utilized, we may not need to add in that segment of the fleet, but if it was 60 or 80 percent utilized, maybe we do." Rogers also considers revenue per day in that decision. King bases his equipment on what his market share is in his re-

gion. He likes to keep the number around 25 coaches. At one time he was at 35, but couldn't keep enough drivers and mechanics. Cantrell said a new bus requires two drivers to fill its seat and keep it on the road. "Secondly, you've got to have about \$300,000 of new business to support that bus to keep it on the road, because otherwise...you're

going down a hole — and that's rough numbers," he said. **Maintenance issues** Related to maintenance, a questioner asked if panelists had a fleet-out-of-service percentage they consider reasonable. Rogers budgets a percentage of the fleet out of service every day. Depending on the day of the week,

four to six units can be pulled out of service. He doesn't count buses down for maintenance in his utilization number. Operations and sales people know that if they're tapping into the fleet down for maintenance, there's a protocol for how to use those, he said. Streif said, "We don't keep anything down for maintenance; maintenance works around operations. I work my (maintenance) guys four 10-hour days, nobody's off on Monday, everything's back in the yard on Sunday night, so it gets maintained Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday."

Because most charter operations are Thursday or Friday through Sunday, Friday is a good day for maintenance days off when the yard's empty, he said. Cantrell also prefers to do all maintenance Monday through Thursday. Hotard asked if the panelists had seen utilization swings over the last several years and if it coincided with profitability. Cantrell said he used to aim for 75 to 85 percent utilization.

"I wanted every bus off the yard," he said, but realized that profits suffered. "So we, in essence, raised our price, lowered our utilization and made more profit."

King did almost the same thing, raising prices, which dropped utilization, but customers accepted the prices, and utilization and profits rose.

Rogers raised prices and saw utilization dip, but his mix of business with contracts brought utilization up and improved profitability and revenue per day and per vehicle.

Hotard said, "Sometimes you can have too much utilization. You wouldn't think so, but it certainly can affect your bottom line."



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**15-18 2016 Van Hool Training Workshop**, Costa Mesa, Calif. Info: <http://abc-companies.com/service/training-and-support/workshops/register>.

**30 Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplace...a Group Leader Show**, Spooky Nook Sports Complex, Manheim, Pa. Info: [www.pabus.org](http://www.pabus.org).

**31 Annual 2016 Maryland Motorcoach Association Group Leader Travel Showcase**, Spooky Nook Sports Complex, Manheim, Pa. Info: [www.marylandmotorcoach.org](http://www.marylandmotorcoach.org).

# Christian Tours founder Udean Burke dies at 82 in N.C.

MAIDEN, N.C. — Udean Burke, who founded Christian Tours/Burke International Tours with his late wife, Nancy Barringer Burke, has died. Burke, 82, died six months after the death of his wife, who was 81.

The Burkes got their start in the motorcoach business in 1976 when they were celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary with

their dream trip to Hawaii. After talking to friends from church they got a group of 67 people together to join them on their vacation.

The trip was so successful that several of the women on the tour wondered why they couldn't get the same kind of people they had on the Hawaii tour to go on a motorcoach tour and share a Christian atmosphere with great fellowship

with family and friends.

That led to the Udeans chartering a Trailways bus driven by their neighbor and leading a tour of the Amish Country of Pennsylvania; Washington, D.C.; and Williamsburg, Va.



Udean Burke

That trip also was successful and, eventually, Nancy and Udean's Christian Tours was born. By 1977 their daughter Mellonee, who now operates the company, became the secretary, making reservations and handling many office tasks.

Nancy, Udean and their son Tim were the tour directors/escorts on each of the tours.

Udean Burke, who also had a

farming business, loved people and his easy-going and tell-all personality enabled him to touch many lives. He had a contagious smile and never met a stranger.

He is survived by his daughter, Mellonee Burke Owenby; his brother, Rondel Burke; his sister, Rebekah B. Josey; six grandchildren; 15 great grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild.



CHCT (USA) of Chino, Calif., displayed the HT45 (left) and HT35. The Chinese coaches are equipped with Cummins ISX and Allison B500. Standard features include Fainsa leather seats, ISRI adjustable driver seat, ZR air suspension and electronic stability control.

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## New products

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

and retract into the floor. It is fully automatic.”

Lap and shoulder belts for the wheelchair passenger are part of the system, Kost said.

“When it is not in use, we have a seat that is mounted there that you can gain that floor space back. Even though it has to be built into

the bus, you still have all of the seating options available. Previously we have done a lot of work in transit and would like to expand into the bus community.”

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

### Tradition with a new name

The banner of international transportation fabric manufacturer Camira flew over Motorcoach

Expo for the first time but the company's origins stretch to 1822.

“We used to be known as Holdsworth, a company that has a lot of legacy,” said Rune Akselberg, president of Camira Group Inc., based in Grand Rapids, Mich. The company's main headquarters are West Yorkshire, England.

“We acquired the company in 2006. Two years ago we decided to bring our divisions under one umbrella name, Camira Fabrics, to make it more understandable and get branding effect worldwide,” Akselberg said. “We sell our fabrics to about 80 countries so going to market with one brand makes a lot of sense.”

John Holdsworth & Co. was founded in the textile-producing region of north England to manufacture seating fabric for rail cars.

“There is a lot of talent and knowledge in that area,” Akselberg said. “We are vertically integrated, so we make our yarn, dye it, weave it, finish it and sell it. Everything is happening in this area with our facilities being 15 to 20 minutes apart.”

Camira produces polyester and vinyl materials but its founding company has been known for wool moquette for nearly 200 years.

“Wool is a natural fiber — those lambs out there on the hill have that wool protecting them,” Akselberg said. “It will spring back to life and it will look nice 10 years later. It will not disintegrate or deteriorate, while polyester may after some time do that.”

Camira introduced two materials at Motorcoach Expo. Fusion is a wool moquette that is 10-percent lighter than traditional pile fabrics for fuel-saving potential, the company said. It is offered in 36 color and design options. Vita is a leather-look vinyl available in 23 colors.

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

### Turbocharging

Selling original-equipment turbochargers at less-than-dealer prices is the market niche of Central

Turbos, which has U.S. facilities in Doral, Fla., and Richmond, Va.

“We have the same OEM items as the dealers,” said Carlos Rudge, branch manager at Richmond. “We sell BorgWarner, Holset and Garrett, who are the manufacturers for Detroit Diesel, Cummings and Volvo engines.

“All the motorcoach operators I have known only accept OEM original items. They don't want refurbished or remanufactured. We have the same high standards and high quality. The benefit is our price, 30- to 40-percent cheaper than the dealer price for the same product,” he said.

Central Turbos also stocks Mitsubishi, Hitachi IHI and ABB turbochargers.

“We also have branches in Brazil and Peru. We move items from all those locations according to prices,” Rudge said. “Since we have a couple of locations in the U.S. we can ship directly from our warehouse or drop-ship from the factory.”

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

### More parts

Started five years ago to serve the school bus industry, Bus Parts Experts announced its expansion to new markets at Motorcoach Expo.

“We are breaking into the motorcoach and transit areas,” said Laura Thomas, who works out of Orlando, Fla., and represented the company on the show floor.

“We deal in all bus parts — engine, transmission, air conditioning and body. We pride ourselves on keeping prices low by buying huge quantities and giving the best warranties in the industry for over-the-counter parts, from one year to three years,” she said. “We keep our costs low. Some parts we are manufacturing ourselves in an effort to save our customers money.”

Bus Parts Experts stocks 10 warehouses across the U.S., Thomas said. “We do our very best to

ship from the warehouse closest to the customer. On the bigger items, as in transmissions and engines, you never pay any shipping.”

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

### Have a seat

American Seating presented a prototype of its Wayfarer-TC recliner at Motorcoach Expo.

The seat features a new back that is designed for private tour and charter operators.

The Wayfarer line was introduced in 2015. The new back option features a contoured, adjustable headrest; a slim-line profile that allows passengers to stretch out and get comfortable; and a tapered back shape that provides a more open-coach feel.

“The ergonomic design of the seat, accompanied with a number of flexible features, makes it the ideal choice for tour and charter operators and their customers,” said Doug Oswald, director of marketing-transportation.

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

### Sell your seats

One company arrived at Expo not to sell to you but to buy from you.

UBUS of Phoenix, Ariz., would like to help charter operators monetize the seats that go to waste on deadhead trips, said Britany Cannon.

“UBUS allows bus companies to enter their deadhead routes on line. We will market that route and they can sell bus seats for \$29. They get \$20 and we keep \$9,” she said. “The amount of advance notice is up to the bus company. More time in advance would be great. If they can do it a month, a week, a day before, it is up to them.”

The service was launched as of Motorcoach Expo, Cannon said. Initial registration for a bus company is \$99.

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

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## Job exchange

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

operators who use Distinctive System Coach Manager to share jobs with each other.

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droid device.

In addition to its ability to handle jobs, CHX also allows operators to post mechanical assistance requests, available vehicles and empty legs. Each of the three different types of posts has a dedicated input form, which not only streamlines posting, but also allows operators to have greater control over their notification preferences.

For example, if operators want to be notified about new jobs but not mechanical assistance requests, they can easily specify that in their account preferences.

CHX is also integrated with Google Maps. When a new job is posted, both the pick-up point and destination can be located on a map and automatically geocoded

in just a few seconds.

This not only allows a route map to be viewed by other operators, but it also makes it possible for operators who are only interested in local jobs to elect to be only notified about jobs within a chosen distance. Mechanical assistance requests, available vehicles and empty legs can also be geocoded.

The CHX website can be used on a browser running on a desktop or laptop computer, a tablet or a smartphone. The website's responsive design adapts automatically to any size display.

CHX is also available as free apps for Apple and Android smartphones and tablets.

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

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