

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## UMA members deliver motorcoach message to Congress

WASHINGTON — United Motorcoach Association members turned out in record numbers for the 2015 Capitol Hill Days, meeting face-to-face with lawmakers to boost their awareness of federal issues threatening the motorcoach industry and its customers.

UMA dispatched 80 members to 418 appointments in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

“The response was very positive,” said Christian Holter of Rochester City Lines in Rochester, Minn. “The legislators were interested in talking to us and were receptive. From my experience, there were some very sympathetic ears our message fell on.”

Last year, 57 members met with 284 elected representatives or their

staff members. This year’s larger contingency of UMA members were prepared to explain the industry’s positions on three critical legislative and regulatory issues — the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration proposal to raise financial responsibility (insurance) minimums; FMCSA’s methods of compiling and publishing carrier Compliance, Safety, Accountability scores; and preservation of the federal Charter Service Rule.

“These issues are important to the continued growth and success of all motorcoach companies, from the one-bus operator to the bigger players,” said Rick Soules of Cyr Bus Line in Old Town, Maine. “We were able to highlight the safety record of the industry and the roles



we play in our communities. By taking part in the fly-in in the numbers we did, we made it clear that the motorcoach industry is active and involved.”

Capitol Hill Days, also referred to as the UMA “fly-in,” was moved up to March 17 from its traditional June date to precede congressional action on MAP-21 (Moving Ahead

for Progress in the 21st Century), which covers a broad range of federal surface transportation programs.

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## Lawmakers seek to reform bus and truck safety system

WASHINGTON — Criticism by congressional Republicans of the federal system for measuring the safety of bus and trucking companies has been increasing in recent weeks, with one House member filing legislation aimed at reforming the system.

Rep. Louis Barletta, R-Pa., filed the Safer Trucks and Buses Act late last month because, he said, commercial motor vehicle operators are unfairly penalized for minor infractions under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s current Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) scoring system.

“A faulty safety score might as well be no safety score,” Barletta said in a statement. “I have four daughters, and I want the roads to be safe. Unfortunately, companies across the country and in Pennsylvania are being unfairly misrepresented by their safety scores, causing economically devastating impacts to these bus and truck

companies, many of which are small businesses.”

On the Senate side, Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune, R-S.D., said he also plans to unveil legislation to reform the CSA program.

### A better way

“We need to take another look at the data inputs, how accident fault is used, and whether there might be a better way to develop a safety partnership,” Thune told a leading trucking magazine. “Each element of the bill I hope to introduce soon is designed to improve safety while enhancing the regulator-industry relationship.”

Meanwhile, FMCSA official Scott Darling, whose term as acting administrator ended recently but who continues to lead the agency, defended the safety program to a congressional subcommittee while promising changes to the system.

Barletta’s bill and Thune’s pro-

posed legislation were announced only days after a congressional hearing during which Sen. Debra Fischer, R-Neb., leveled some harsh criticism against the FMCSA for its “flawed approach” to implementing safety initiatives. (See April 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Fischer, chairwoman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation’s Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, said she plans to introduce reform legislation to make the FMCSA more accountable to Congress, more inclusive of industry stakeholders and more transparent in its rulemaking process. She also said she would sponsor legislation to require the agency to conduct more robust and comprehensive cost benefit analyses of proposed regulations.

Barletta’s legislation, which was unsuccessfully introduced last year, requires the FMCSA to stop publishing its compliance scores until changes are made to the program to

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## Study reveals industry slippage

WASHINGTON — When economists and business analysts say the recovery from the 2009 national recession has been uneven, it’s doubtful they had the motorcoach industry in mind — but they certainly could have.

That’s because a study released last month shows the North American motorcoach industry shrank during the three years ended in 2013, with the decline occurring in virtually every measure of industry size and activity.

There were declines, some by double-digit percentages, in total passenger trips, companies, motorcoaches, mileage, average passenger loads, service miles traveled per coach, and even miles per gallon of fuel.

About the only bright spot involved passenger trips per motorcoach. They went up, ostensibly because there was an improved utilization rate as a result of fewer coaches and fewer companies.

The industry’s other perceived assets — flexibility, cost-effective-

ness and environmental efficiency — remained relatively strong during the three-year period.

But in terms of the more important and objective indicators of overall industry health, such as measures of growth and development, the industry went backwards between 2011 and 2013, showing little in the way of dynamism.

The study, *Motorcoach Census*, was conducted for the American Bus Association Foundation, which released it last month. The foundation and/or its sponsor, the American Bus Association, have been conducting a census of the industry almost every year for the past decade.

The census numbers are based on estimates and calculations made from information gleaned from hundreds of motorcoach operators who respond to a survey sent to them on behalf of the foundation.

For the 2013 census, surveys were sent to roughly 4,000 companies in the U.S. and Canada

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# New study looks at ways to ease D.C. bus-parking crunch

WASHINGTON — A new study commissioned by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments recommends various ways of improving both on- and off-street parking for tour buses during the peak spring and summer tourist season.

The “Regional Bus Staging, Layover, and Parking Location Study” notes that 200,000 tour buses bring 8 million visitors to the National Mall each year, with as many as 1,100 buses arriving at the mall each day, “making parking a large concern for tour buses.”

Buses carry about a third of the mall’s 21 to 25 million annual visitors.

Even though buses take cars off the road, “The lack of centralized parking, layover, and curbside stops has led to negative traffic and air quality impacts that need to be addressed,” the study said.

One possible solution discussed in the study would be to construct a parking garage for buses and cars under the National Mall that also would serve as a flood-control project. Proposed last year by the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, the National Mall Underground project would include parking for

about 200 buses and 900 cars and cisterns to collect rainwater and graywater for irrigation.

The project could cost \$168 million to \$283 million, depending on design, and take five to six years to complete, according to a *Washington Business Journal* report.

## No taxpayer funds

A public-private partnership would fund the project without taxpayer money, with construction and operation funded by parking fees and water resource credits and fees, the National Mall Underground website says.

“There continues to be a strong need for mid-day and longer-term parking of motorcoach/tour buses near the National Mall,” the study concluded. “The proposed National Mall Underground would be the most dramatic improvement in bus parking capacity if constructed, but the high-cost and scale of the project likely mean that this is a longer-term option.”

The American Bus Association and AAA Mid-Atlantic cited the study recently to highlight what they called an “impending parking crisis” for buses and cars near the National Mall and the need to ad-

dress it.

“We join with our colleagues at AAA Mid-Atlantic to call on government leaders to begin a discussion about how our industry, elected officials, and other stakeholders can find long-term solutions to this problem,” ABA President and CEO Peter J. Pantuso said in a news release.

Dan Ronan, senior director of communications for the ABA, acknowledged that peak-season parking issues are nothing new in Washington, but the ABA and AAA hope to spark a dialog about a fix.

“There’s a very good solution out there; it’s a long-term solution that a lot of people have talked about and a lot of people believe would be the way to go,” he said of the underground garage.

## UMA supports garage

The United Motorcoach Association also supports the garage, not only for the parking but also for its flood-control benefits, said Ken Presley, UMA’s vice president of industry relations and chief operating officer. But he doesn’t sound as urgent a tone about the current situation.

“Is there a parking crunch?” Presley said. “Yes, but I don’t think

it’s any worse today than it was five, probably 10 years ago.

“Even if they build that garage, which we certainly support and hope they do, it’s still going to require planning just like if you were going to New York City or any major city. You have to plan where you’re going to park your bus and work with your group to maximize that time,” he said.

## Adding parking meters

In their news release, the ABA and AAA said they fear parking strains could be made worse by National Park Service plans to remove the limited number of free parking spaces and install multi-space parking meters. Motorcoaches use many of those spots near the Tidal Basin to park or drop off and pick up passengers, the release says.

“For the foreseeable future, this spring, this summer, keep things... in terms of parking spots, keep them the way they are,” Ronan said. “We’ve got the spots that are there for loading and unloading and those are very important.”

In an emailed response, Mike Litterst, public affairs officer for the National Park Service’s Na-

tional Mall and Memorial Parks, said metered parking spaces will manage the public parking turnover, allowing more access to limited parking in the urban park.

“The installation of parking meters around National Mall and Memorial Parks will have no impact on the number of dedicated tour bus parking spaces or loading/unloading spaces,” he wrote, adding that the meters should be installed by early summer.

The meters will affect motorcoaches in two locations: along Ohio Drive, where parking spaces shared by cars and buses will be metered, and on Independence Avenue south of the Washington Monument, where motorcoach parking will be metered, Litterst said.

“Loading/unloading spaces will not be metered and will not be changed in any way,” he wrote. “We recognize how important the motorcoach industry is to our park. We continue to study ways to accommodate and better serve this important sector of our visitation. Working cooperatively with George Mason University, we are developing a plan of action for short-term and long-term improvements in tour bus operations.”

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# THE DOCKET

## Lawsuit challenging feds' data system on track

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has denied a motion by the U.S. Department of Transportation to dismiss a complaint challenging the accuracy of data used by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The court action will allow the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, a trade group representing independent truckers, to continue pursuing its legal challenge to the FMCSA DataQs system of dealing with driver violations.

The USDOT and the FMCSA had filed a motion to dismiss the association lawsuit, which seeks to force the FMCSA to delete inaccurate information from its database. (See June 15, 2013, April 1, 2014, and June 15, 2014, issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The DataQs system allows drivers and companies to request and track a review of federal and state data issued by the FMCSA that may be incomplete or incorrect. The system is designed to automatically forward the Request for Data Review to the appropriate office or agency for resolution and to collect updates and responses.

But the trucking group contends the FMCSA continues to maintain and report bad data to the public that drivers violate certain safety rules, even when those allegations have been dismissed or the drivers were issued not-guilty verdicts in state courts.

The government motion was denied last month.

The FMCSA provides financial grants to individual states that agree to enforce federal safety rules governing commercial motor vehicles and drivers. The FMCSA maintains a large database, the Motor Carrier Management Information System, which acts as a depository for state enforcement activity.

The trucking association contends the FMCSA is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the records in its database.

The major issue to be decided in the case is whether the government is maintaining inaccurate information. The court rejected the government's argument that it had complied with all federal laws regarding the dissemination of records from the database.

"FMCSA has failed to fulfill its responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the data maintained by it in the MCMIS database," said Jim Johnston, OOIDA president and CEO.

The OOIDA also contends the FMCSA has no authority to delegate its statutory responsibility for

accuracy to the states.

"FMCSA should never report enforcement activity as a 'violation' before a driver has his (or her) day in court or after the driver has been acquitted or the charges dismissed," Johnston said.

The association is asking the

court to order the FMCSA to purge its database of records of all enforcement actions by states prior to the time a driver has his or her day in court, after charges against the driver have been dismissed, or after that person is acquitted by a court of jurisdiction.

## Hair testing drivers for drug use proposed

WASHINGTON — Bipartisan legislation that would allow the use of hair testing for drug and alcohol use by commercial motor carrier drivers has been introduced in Congress.

Sens. John Boozman, R-Ark., and Joe Manchin, D-W.V., introduced the bill, which would allow the Department of Transportation "to recognize hair testing as an alternative option to give companies greater flexibility when conducting drug and alcohol testing," according to a news release issued by the Senate. Companion legislation was introduced in the House.

Called the Drug Free Commercial Driver Act of 2015, the legislation is similar to a bill introduced in October 2014. Both are aimed at providing an alternative to urinaly-

sis, which is considered a less-effective method of detecting drug and alcohol abuse because it provides only a two- to three-day window for detection. Hair testing provides a 60- to 90-day window.

Although some employers already use hair testing for their own purposes, the federal government requires that duplicative urinalysis testing also take place. According to a Senate news release, companies that use both methods have found a large discrepancy in the results of the two testing methods.

For example, from May 2006 to December 2014, drug-testing data at a trucking company showed that 110 driver applicants failed the urine test while 3,845 had drug-positive hair test re-

sults. Data compiled by another company from March 2008 to June 2012 found 120 prospective drivers failed the urine test while 1,400 applicants had drug-positive hair test results.

The proposed legislation would allow commercial motor carriers to use only hair testing, thereby eliminating the added cost of administering both types of testing.

"Preventing drug users from operating commercial trucks will improve safety on our roads and enhance industry standards," Boozman said. "This legislation eliminates the duplicative drug-testing process and allows trucking companies to use the more effective option, without having to pay for two tests."

## Major road to Arizona tourist town reopens

PAGE, Ariz. — A section of a northern Arizona highway that buckled in a landslide more than two years ago, forcing travelers to take a much longer route to this tourist town, has reopened.

The closure of U.S. 89 between Bitter Springs and Page meant lengthy detours for nearby residents, school buses and tourists after a 500-foot section buckled. The highway is a major route to Page and Lake Powell.

The Arizona Department of Transportation reopened the highway late last month. Buses with the Page Unified School District were the first vehicles to use the repaired road.

The \$25 million repairs began last summer and included a realignment of the road and construction of a downslope buttress to support the area. The Transportation Department said the project is eligible for reimbursement through a federal emergency relief program.



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# U.S. National parks need \$11.5 billion in repairs

WASHINGTON — Repairs to crumbling infrastructure in America's national parks have been put off so long that it will now cost \$11.5 billion to bring them up to standards, a new report by the National Park Service says.

Deferred maintenance includes needed repairs to roads and bridges, visitor centers, trails and campgrounds that have been put off for more than a year.

In releasing the maintenance report, National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis pointed out that President Barack Obama's

fiscal 2016 budget proposal includes additional funding to reduce the backlog as part of an effort to spruce up the parks to mark the National Park Service's centennial next year.

"As we invite more Americans to discover the special places in the national park system during our centennial celebration, we need to have facilities that can accommodate them and provide the best possible visitor experience," Jarvis said.

The Obama budget calls for a \$433 million increase, to \$3 billion, for national parks. It includes

\$242.8 million to deal with the most urgent deferred maintenance.

The park service estimates that its staffing will increase by almost 500 full-time employees.

But the budget proposal has received a chilly reaction from some Republicans, who control both the House and Senate.

Republican Rep. Tom McClintock of California, chairman of the subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee that oversees the park system, said during a recent hearing on its budget proposal that record attendance at

the parks is "an illusion" created by the huge numbers visiting the new World War II Memorial and the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial.

Craig Obey, senior vice president with the National Parks Conservation Association, told a different House subcommittee that a poll found 73 percent of respondents believe it is important that the parks are fully restored and

ready for the national park centennial in 2016.

"This is a critical time for our national park system and the National Park Service, which celebrate their 100th birthday next year," Obey said. "Our parks, though beloved by Americans from all walks of life and celebrated worldwide, are under significant financial strain."

## Program can reduce wait times at Canadian border

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — BorderPlanner.com, a year-old pilot program designed to reduce bus wait times at the border, has been fully implemented and is now available to all bus companies.

BorderPlanner.com, a joint effort between two bridge authorities, U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), allows bus companies to use an online portal to submit the scheduled arrival date, crossing location (Peace

Bridge, Rainbow Bridge or Queenston-Lewiston Bridge), time of day, and the number and citizenship of passengers.

Detailed passenger manifests are not required to participate. Bus companies and border officials are able to view the number of buses scheduled for each time slot for each of the three border crossings. This can help bus companies select a border crossing and time that have open time slots and fewer buses.

It also helps CBSA and CBP

adjust staffing at each crossing according to expected bus traffic volumes. There is no fee to use the voluntary system.

When bookings are made, the bus operator receives an e-mail receipt that should be given to the driver. The receipt doubles as a windshield placard to indicate to bridge and border crossing officials the bus is participating in the program.

Operators can register for the program at BorderPlanner.com.

## Connecticut opens public transit bus-only corridor

HARTFORD — The Connecticut Department of Transportation opened a \$567 million bus-only corridor last month between Hartford and New Britain.

Unfortunately for private motorcoach operators, however, the 9.4-mile corridor is restricted to Connecticut Transit buses and private contractors under contract with DOT to operate commuter buses on this corridor, said Jean Cronin of the Connecticut Bus Association.

The corridor is part of the CTfastrak system, under construction for three years, that includes

11 stations in New Britain, Newington, West Hartford and Hartford, with buses running every three-to-six minutes during peak commuting hours.

The corridor also will be used by buses that will exit the system to take passengers to destinations such as Westfarms Mall, Manchester Community College, UConn Health Center and Central Connecticut State University.

Hartford Express buses also will run from Bristol, Cheshire, Southington and Waterbury, entering the bus-only corridor once they reach New Britain.

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# Red-light cameras? Of course there's an app for that

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — For drivers who dread, fear or are fed up with red-light cameras, there's now a mobile smartphone application that helps locate cameras in 130 cities at 900 intersections and roadways nationwide.

The initial version of the app, which is available for iOS and free to download, also includes speed cameras elsewhere but contains only static maps.

A second version under development should be GPS capable, providing audio alerts when approaching a photo-enforced area.

Both interestingly and significantly, Redflex Traffic Systems created the app, called RedflexLocator, and also installed the cameras.

For the company to try to increase driver awareness and, thus, avoidance of its cameras might seem an odd approach — given that Redflex relies on fines from violations to pay its bills. Redflex insists otherwise.

"This is the exact reason why we launched this app," said company spokeswoman Jody Ryan. "We have not done a good job of communicating the reason for the cameras. The reason is safety. This app is one step of our overall communication strategy for letting people know where the cameras are located and how the cameras work."

There also could be value in the data collected.

"If you are using something for free, something is being gathered, something is being shared," said Mike Johansson, senior lecturer in the Rochester Institute of Technology School of Communication.

Think of the social media application Foursquare, which over five or six years built up billions of data points of where people were going and what they were doing, Johansson said. The same could be true, on a smaller scale, in this case.

"Do people change their driving behavior?" Johansson asked, noting GPS also can measure speed, track a driver's entire route and show what adjustments motorists make knowing a camera is coming up in the next block.

Rochester launched its red-light camera program in October 2010 and has 48 cameras at 32 intersections — generating upward of 90,000 tickets a year. Each ticket carries a \$50 fine, with a portion of that going to pay for rental of

the cameras and processing of the tickets.

In November, the Rochester City Council voted to extend the red-light camera program through 2019 after a consultant report showed a drop in crashes at 22 intersections with the cameras.

Crashes increased at eight other intersections, suggesting drivers may be altering their trips to avoid the camera-monitored intersections, so the council sought further study of those concerns.

Posted signs alert motorists whether there is photo enforce-

ment at a given intersection.

Ryan said that Redflex already knows people change the way they drive when there is a camera in the vicinity. She described it as a "halo effect."

Ryan said there will be a fee for the GPS version of the app

when it adds the capability for audio alerts and, possibly, push notifications including AMBER alerts and road closures.

No price has been set, but revenue generated from the app will be donated to a non-profit, she said.

## Family Values

**Lancer heartily congratulates all of this year's bus and motorcoach award winners** presented by ABA, IMG and UMA, especially the several winners that are family owned or operated companies...and longtime Lancer policyholders.

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# New solutions needed to combat driver shortage

As if finding new drivers and generally coping with the driver shortage weren't hard enough, new figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and pronouncements from labor market experts suggest it may get tougher still.

There is a contrarian view, however.

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, Millennials will make up the majority of the nation's workforce by the end of this year and comprise 75 percent of the country's labor pool by 2030 — and that could compound recruiting problems for the motorcoach industry.

Baby Boomers are retiring and there are fewer replacement workers for them and that is stifling operators' ability to address the shortage of both drivers and maintenance technicians throughout the transportation industry.

Plus, getting the "next generation" to join the ranks of drivers and technicians remains a difficult proposition, say experts, largely because traditional hiring solutions may not function very well.

## What Millennials want

For example, a February survey conducted by Futurestep, a Korn Ferry division specializing in recruitment solutions, found that pay gets trumped by other factors in terms of what matters most for Millennial employees — generally defined as those born after 1980:

- The greatest number of respondents (23 percent) said "the ability to make an impact on the business" is most important.
- Next is "a clear path for advancement" (20 percent) followed by "development and ongoing feedback" (16 percent).
- Income came in at fourth place with 13 percent.

When asked what makes Millennials choose one job over another, more than a third (38 percent) said "visibility and buy-in to the vision of the organization," while 28 percent said "a clear path for advancement."

In third place came "job title and pay" at 18 percent.

"This research demonstrates the changing priorities of today's young workforce," noted Trish Healy, a Futurestep vice president.

"Where traditionally we might have expected salary to be the number one differentiator for talent choosing their next employer, Millennials are now placing greater value on understanding what a company stands for and how, as employees, they can play a role in growing the organization into a better, stronger brand," she noted.

One recruiting expert says the findings mean hiring practices within the motorcoach industry — as well as for the transportation in-

dustry as a whole — need to undergo major "behind the scenes" change to attract and keep younger workers.

## Thinking outside the bus

Moving 56 passengers from place to place is often fast-paced work, requiring a lot of multi-tasking on the part of drivers — and that's what many Millennials appear to be looking for.

Additionally, anyone who cannot make the connection between a driver and technician's "ability to make an impact on the business" clearly undervalues the role of both employees.

And, assuring job "visibility and buy-in (by employees) to the vision of the organization" is a critical job skill of and requirement for successful owners and managers today.

Plus, today's tech-savvy Millennials should be very comfortable with — and possibly even in-

trigued by — today's high-tech buses, which older drivers may have found intimidating.

Does anyone think an electronic dashboard or electronic logging device is going to deter a Millennial from getting behind the wheel? Other factors may dissuade them, but not a device aimed at doing something as basic as recording hours of service.

A significant deterrent is widely thought to be the fact the industry is one Millennials don't know much — if anything — about. That means they need to be exposed to the industry's long-term potential, high-tech focus and green connection, as well as the critical importance of drivers and technicians.

And the pace of such "exposure" may need to happen faster, in part, because so many Baby Boomers are retiring.

A path needs to be built for them to follow into a transportation career, with mentorship along

the way. Companies need to have their ducks in a row as they strive to bring this next generation into their workforce.

## Manufacturers' role

Motorcoach manufacturers also have a role to play.

The bus OEMs and their suppliers have spent a lot in recent years on research and development of in-bus and on-bus systems.

While most of the R&D dollars have gone to powertrains and emissions-reduction systems, money also has been spent within the coach on driver comforts, connectivity and convenience.

Demands on the part of next-generation drivers for more health, wellness and well-being focus in their work environment will only continue to grow.

Futurestep's Healy added that her firm's survey also found that nearly half (42 percent) of those Millennials it polled believe social media is the best tactic for recruitment, followed by "word-of-mouth/networking" (28 percent) and online talent communities (19 percent).

That translates to businesses needing to meet younger job candidates where they live, which is on social and mobile platforms.

These channels are clearly a way of life for this generation, making it imperative that when companies look to hire they are including or creating digital recruitment strategies.

Using a "multi-channel" approach is essential to attracting, engaging and retaining younger talent with the right skills, experiences, traits and drive to achieve the company's strategic objectives.

Doing so will allow a company to stand out from competitors in the war for top young talent.

## Smartphone security likely to get better, much better

More and more motorcoach drivers are using personal smartphones on the job, a trend that can cause problems for businesses if the devices are lost or stolen, say technology experts.

But even if drivers are using company-issued phones, the issue of protecting data often is not a top concern for fleets, the experts add.

Perhaps luckily for them, technology that is in the pipeline and will be adopted by smartphone makers will "lock down" lost or stolen phones.

The ubiquity of smartphones has compelled some manufacturers to help protect users.

Last year, member companies

of the Washington-based wireless industry group CTIA signed a "smartphone anti-theft voluntary commitment," in which they pledged to offer "a baseline anti-theft tool that is preloaded or downloadable."

Law enforcement representatives and lawmakers in California have been urging companies to implement kill switches, citing an "epidemic" of smartphone thefts. Federal legislation to require kill switches also has been introduced.

One group of law enforcement agencies reported that 1.6 million people were "victimized for their smartphones" in 2012, accounting for the majority of robberies in U.S. cities.

In 2013, that number nearly doubled to 3.1 million, according to an estimate by Consumer Reports, which said it derived the number from a survey of adult internet users.

The kill switch, scheduled to be available in the latter part of this year, will be capable of remotely wiping the user's data if the smartphone is lost or stolen.

It will render the device inoperable, and only a user with a password or personal identification number will be able to activate it.

The switch also will prevent re-activation without the user's permission and reverse the inoperability if the smartphone is recovered, according to the agreement.

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# Heed the Battle of Gettysburg: Recruit first-rate drivers

By Dave Millhouser

John Tomaszewski has died.

You probably don't recall his name, but you'll remember the event that made him newsworthy. Tomaszewski was driving a bus that struck a bridge in 2010, killing four people.

By all accounts, he was a fine man, and it appears that the qualities that made him a good person contributed to his death. Despite eventually being acquitted of criminal charges, he felt such enormous guilt for the accident that it affected his health.

Driving a coach entails tons of responsibility, and that's worth remembering...a single error can be life altering. We all make mistakes and are fortunate they don't often result in disaster. He was not so lucky. The tragedy raises several issues that shouldn't be forgotten.

First, driving wasn't Tomaszewski's chosen career. He took the job when a slowing economy eliminated his previous employment. That's not a criticism. In fact, I admire his work ethic. But how do we get to be the first choice of quality people?

Particularly when you consider that the Tomaszewski's were about to lose their home because a family of five couldn't live on his salary.

Clearly, this is anecdotal and we have little idea of this family's specific situation, but do any of us believe our industry pays well enough to be a quality candidate's first choice of careers based on income?

If you think this is a naive appeal to pay drivers more, you're only partially correct. We need to stretch to pay drivers as well as possible, but the economy and competition hamstrings us.

## Wake up, reader

Stay alert, shifting gears here.

When Joshua Chamberlain's 20th Maine was defending the Union army's left flank on Little Round-top during the Battle of Gettysburg, they found themselves nearly out of ammunition after repelling numerous Confederate attacks. Chamberlain chose a bold course.

Understanding that retreat meant that the battle (and likely the war) was lost, rather than waiting, Chamberlain charged. Bayo-

nets carried the day, and you know the rest.

## Regain the offensive

Are there ways we can regain the offensive when it comes to attracting more first-rate people?

A substantial part of our driver pool consists of part timers. Many hold other jobs, or are semi-retired. Often these are superb employees, but it may become increasingly difficult to use them.

Older folks (like me) are aging, and increased scrutiny by regulators (and common sense) may cause "hours of service" issues for drivers who have other jobs. They're "on duty" no matter where (and at what) they're working.

My buddy (Wizened Executive) has long advocated recruitment, rather than "hiring," feeling that seeking good people is more effective than waiting for them to turn up. Often the folks who stagger in your door are there because they "need" a job, the hours fit, or they've been driving for another company and have baggage (pun intended).

They are commodities.

When you recruit, you can pick

who you go after, and sell them on driving as a career. You get to tell the story your way, and point out the fun parts of the job. The pay's OK, but they get to go places and see things. No two days are alike, they have real responsibility, and if they like people...

Recruit them and you get to train them your way. In ye olden days GBB (Great Big Busline) didn't hire people with coach driving experience, preferring "newbies" without bad habits who could be molded in their corporate culture.

You're in this business BECAUSE you love it, so find good people, and tell them what you like, then hire them.

## Push the envelope

Historically insurers have been reluctant to cover younger drivers. We need to start pushing that envelope (at least for good candidates). Younger people seek responsibility and they're in a position to trade adventure for income. Some universities have used student bus drivers successfully for years.

Honestly, I'm not sure where we should be searching, but we

should be looking, not waiting.

Ask your best drivers how they got into motorcoaches and if they have friends who might fit. Pay your folks a bonus when they find good candidates.

Attack job fairs with enthusiasm about the fun parts of the coach business. If you're going to advertise, don't seek "bus drivers," ask for folks who like people and seek adventure and travel (who also happen to have a good driving record).

If Joshua Chamberlain had waited on Little Round-top until the battle came to him, we'd all be speaking with a Southern accent (not a bad thing). Instead the 20th Maine used what they had and went for it.

We need to hunt for good people in creative ways, so we don't have to settle for mediocre ones who may not want to be there.

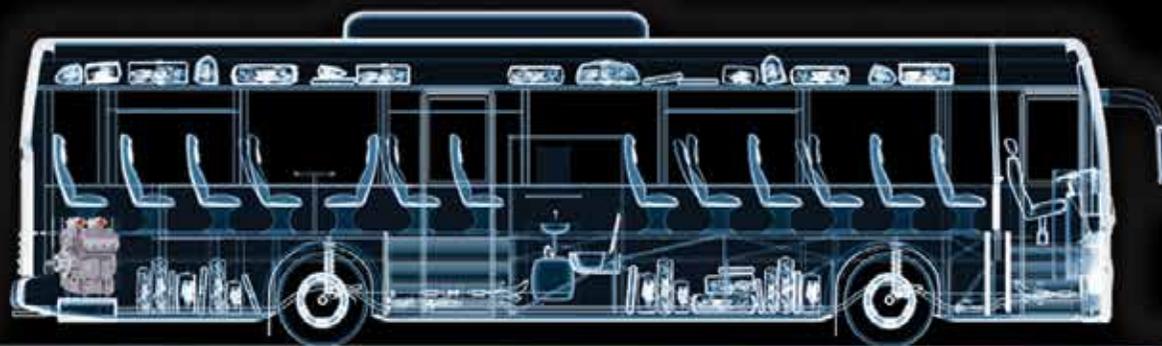
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# A stadium full of customers awaits marketing superheroes

By Christian Riddell  
Motorcoach Marketing Council

In the next 12 months, the motorcoach industry will move more than 20 million people.

Wow. That's a lot.

The vast majority of those will be incident-free, comfortable trips. We will take cars off the road, reduce emissions and make the world just a little better for the effort.

Now, this sounds great and is something to take pride in as an industry. However, it also shines a light on the flip side of the coin.

There are nearly 529 million people in North America. However, only four out of every 100 Americans and Canadians will actually step foot on a motorcoach. Perhaps even worse news is that if we assume only one in 30 people is responsible for booking the coach, then only one in every 1,000 people in North America will actually book with us.

The more I talk to operators around the country, the more I see these numbers are the future of our businesses, even our industry. In most markets, there are a number

of viable operators that compete for business. These operators are constantly bidding against one another for work. All are bidding to offer a better service for less than the other guy.

Competitors invest in equipment, drivers, training and insurance. They work hard to create a company that is worthy of beating out their competitors.

Today you win the bid. Tomorrow you lose it. The following year you get it back. Round and round we go — discounting, sharpening the pencil, trimming costs and refining your business model to be able to compete. Salespeople have become very aware of who is using coaches, whose coaches they are using, and often even know why they don't have a particular contract.

When I was selling, I would go as far as following our competitors' coaches around town looking for what kinds of business they were doing. I would look for their contracts, and I would dive into finding what I needed to do to land them.

Now, if you're thinking about sending your sales people out to do

## Marketing Minute GoMotorcoach It's the Smart Move

the same thing, don't. I was wrong. I admit it now and wish that I could go back and do it differently.

### A piece of the crumb

We are all fighting for what we believe to be the pie. But that pie only represents a tiny little crumb out of what is a very large market.

Imagine a sports stadium full of people. At this year's Super Bowl, a little over 64,000 fans sat and watched a great game (if you're a Patriots fan). Based on the above numbers, of those 64,000 screaming, face painted, crazed fans, only 64 will book a bus in the next year.

Sixty-four. Now that number is not something we, as an industry, should be cheering. The bright spot on that otherwise dark statistic is the other 63,936 people. Almost all of them will do something that a motorcoach would make better. Some will attend weddings, some will have family reunions

and others will go on ski trips or wine outings.

The list of what these people will do that we, as a motorcoach industry, could help them do better, more comfortably, safer and more economically is as diverse as the group itself.

The question is not whether they need a coach, but whether they know they need a coach. One of the key points I have been teaching around the country is that our job as charter operators is not to sell to those who have transportation needs.

You see, if people know they have transportation needs, they already are consumers of our product. If they are calling about booking a coach they know about our industry. They know about our product. They know they have a need that we can fulfill.

What I have been teaching owners, managers and sales teams is that those are not the people on which to focus our time and resources. Yes, we need to provide them with good customer service. We need to provide them with a good product. We need to make sure that their experience is such

that they will book again.

### The wrong crowd

However, when we talk about growth, when we talk about how we get more people on our coaches or how we fill up dispatch holes, those existing customers are not the people we need to think about. We need to think about those who do not know they need us.

We need to start talking to the rest of the people who don't know they have transportation needs. These may be churches that have parking problems or brides who have to get the entire wedding party from the reception to the dinner. It could be families that can't let Uncle Harry drive again to this year's reunion, or businesses that want to help their employees get to work on time.

These people did not wake up and say, "What I need is a charter bus." They woke up with a knot in their stomach trying to fix a problem they don't even know how to begin to fix.

The entire point of marketing is to sell more of your product to more people for more money. If we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ►

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Marketing Minute

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believe this as an industry, then we must look outside the comfort of those 64 people and focus on the other 63,936. We must look at ways to reach out into our communities and share what it is we do, and what solutions we can offer to help more people have the knot in their stomach go away because we can solve their problem.

We are not simply transportation providers. We are solution makers. We are wedding savers. We keep your family safe. We make sure your employees get to work on time. We are solve-your-parking-problem superheroes.

**Wear the stretchy pants**

It's time we take off our mild-mannered glasses, jump in that phone booth and wear our cape and stretchy pants proudly. It is time that we leap out of our comfort zone, stop simply taking orders and sell what it is we really are.

This is the vision I hope we all

**Greyhound not at fault in deadly 2010 accident**

FRESNO, Calif. — In a case closely watched by the motorcoach and insurance industries, a jury found that Greyhound Bus Lines was not at fault in a 2010 deadly crash that killed six people.

The bus crashed into an SUV that had overturned on Highway 99 in Fresno, killing its three female occupants. Also killed were two people on the bus and its driver, James Jewett.

The families of the three women sued Greyhound, claiming the driver was operating at an unsafe speed, was not wearing his glasses and made an unsafe lane change about the time of the crash.

Greyhound disagreed with the allegations, citing a California Highway Patrol report that confirmed Jewett was wearing his glasses and couldn't have avoided crashing into the SUV.

The highway patrol blamed the deadly crash on Sylvia Lopez Garay, 18, the driver of the SUV, saying she was drunk when she overturned the vehicle.

embrace. I hope we, as an industry, will begin to reach further and further into the market that exists beyond the walls of our existing customer base. I am excited to work with the Motorcoach Marketing Council as it represents operators who are passionate about this vision, who understand the importance of this moment in the history of this storied business, and who know how paramount it

is that we grow.

The future is bright for this industry. There will be operators who wrap their arms around this vision and push the bounds of tradition. There will be those who find new markets, develop new customers, provide solutions and expand their horizons. There will also be those who will go out of business.

There is a saying in the market-

ing world that there is not such a thing as a business that stays the same; you are either growing or you are dying. For those companies that continue to believe that the opportunity to sell to that stadium full of people exists only in those 64 people, the future is clear. But to those who embrace the other 63,936 as the hope for their companies, the future is limitless.

Together we are changing the

future of this industry. Years from now, we will all look back and see this moment, these tools, and the vision and direction of this council as the starting point of a revolution that will reshape this entire industry. That is a very exciting realization.

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

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**25-28** New England Bus Association Annual Conference, Mountain View Grand Resort & Spa, Whitefield, N.H. Info: [www.newenglandbus.org](http://www.newenglandbus.org).



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Rep. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., left, meets in his Capitol Hill office with Brian Annett, UMA chairman and president of Annett Bus Lines in Sebring, Fla.

## UMA members

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“MAP-21 expires on May 31. We simply could not take a chance that Congress might pass a reauthorization bill before our traditional fly-in meeting in June that coincided with the board of directors and committee meetings,” said Ken Presley, UMA’s vice president of industry relations.

“This was a hugely important event for everyone in the private bus and motorcoach business,” said UMA President and CEO Victor S. Parra. “These operators ought to be congratulated for taking valuable time from their business, during a very busy time for the charter and tour industry, to fight for and protect the interests of the entire industry.”

The legislative appointments were arranged by Prime Policy Group of Washington, D.C., UMA’s lobbying firm.

“All of the personnel who organized this event did a fantastic job,” Soules said. “All of my appointments were on time!”

### Financial Responsibility

Since 1985, the federal government has required passenger motor carriers to hold a minimum of \$5 million in liability coverage for vehicles carrying 16 or more passengers and \$1.5 million for vehicles carrying up to 15 people. The FMCSA has announced a rule-making process that could double the minimum coverage to \$10 million — or possibly raise it as high as \$20 million.

A 2014 report used by the FMCSA to justify the proposal is flawed, UMA contends. The association believes the current liability minimums are sufficient and that future adjustments should be approved by Congress rather than handed down by regulators.

“A move like that would put 50 percent of bus and motorcoach companies out of business,” Parra said.

Holter added that in an indus-

try in which 85 to 90 percent of operators are considered small businesses, “a change like that could have a huge effect. A dramatic increase in insurance rates would mean an increase in the cost of doing business. That would mean more expense to the end users and fewer trips taken by groups.”

Mike Bayless of Premier Transportation in Knoxville, Tenn., said that everybody UMA members met with was understanding of the industry’s issues, especially the insurance issue.

“We did speak with a member who was leaning toward favoring the increase but seemed to understand what the problem was, and that was our issue — you can’t promote safety just by increasing insurance rates,” Bayless said.

He said he suggested that regulators increase efforts on education and training. “We ought to be helping new entrants in the profession become better qualified in order to make our industry stronger.”

### Accountability Reform

UMA supports a bill proposed by U.S. Rep. Louis J. Barletta, R-Pa., that would require FMCSA to halt publication of Compliance, Safety, Accountability’s Safety Management System scores until the tracking system better reflects actual crash risks. (See related stories on pages 1 and 15.)

Position papers provided to UMA visitors and legislators argued that current safety scores “lack any perspective to assist consumers in selecting a passenger carrier” because a carrier’s score “is impacted by the states in which a carrier operates based on nothing more than the states’ varying enforcement priorities.”

Carrier scores posted on the FMCSA website “are confusing at best and misleading at worst, since they include accidents on a company’s record that were not preventable,” Parra said. “It gives out raw data that may lead consumers to choose less-safe carriers.”



Left to right, Bill Allen of Amador Stage Lines in Sacramento and Ryan Kelly of Terrapin Blue in Las Vegas chat with Rep. Mark Amodej, R-Nev.

## Trade groups call on Congress to pass new highway bill, oppose ‘devolution’

WASHINGTON — A coalition of nearly 40 transportation trade groups, including the United Motorcoach Association, recently sent a letter urging Congress to pass a long-term transportation bill before the current federal highway funding plan ends next month.

The coalition also called on lawmakers to oppose any move toward devolution — a concept supported by some in Congress that calls for eliminating federal funding for transportation programs and shifting the burden to the states to collect fuel taxes and support and maintain roads on their own.

“Some federal rules arguably increase the cost of projects and slow construction,” the letter stated. “However, these challenges do not warrant putting the safety of motorists and the health of the na-

tion’s economy at risk by decimating the primary funding program for our nation’s most critical infrastructure.”

The coalition’s concern stems from the 2014 Transportation Empowerment Act that proposed to devolve the federal system. The measure was defeated in the Senate but still enjoys some support in Congress.

The letter said that devolution of the federal-aid program would prohibit states from keeping revenue that currently flows into the Highway Trust Fund from fuel and excise taxes. That would force state and local governments to replace billions of dollars with tax increases, the letter said.

“Devolution represents abandonment by Congress of a most fundamental constitutional obliga-

tion to promote interstate commerce and would prove disastrous to state and local governments’ ability to maintain, improve and coordinate their transportation systems when it is widely acknowledged that current resources are already seriously insufficient,” the letter said.

Those signing the letter included the UMA, the American Trucking Associations, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Associated General Contractors of America, and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, as well as AAA, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, FedEx Corp. and UPS Inc.

Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx has stated his opposition to devolution.

### Charter Service Rule

“Our representatives understand that we can’t compete against entities that are federally funded,” Bayless said of the industry’s third priority in 2015, protection of the federal Charter Service Rule.

The rule, in place for nearly four decades, prohibits public transit agencies and their contractors from providing charter service in competition with private providers.

“The parties I spoke with knew our issues and were well-studied,” Bayless said.

But not all of them were well informed, Holter said. “Some people were more familiar with the issues but there were certainly some who gave the impression they didn’t have any idea what was

going on,” he said. “It is important for us to make an impact on upcoming legislation.”

### Economic footprint

It also is important for members of Congress to look beyond the windshield to see the communities served by the motorcoach industry and the affiliated jobs it supports, said Bob Greene, sales representative with Amaya-Astron Seating. He is the vendor associate representative on the UMA board of directors and participated in his second Capitol Hill Days.

“Issues that affect the ability of operators to get on the road affect their ability to purchase the products and services that coach manufacturers and vendors provide,” Greene said. “Getting in front of

our representatives and presenting those issues made the trip very worthwhile.

“We received very positive responses from House and Senate members. They understand how important transportation is to America and that stop-gap reform on MAP-21 is not going to be the answer to long-term solutions.”

Para said the record turnout at this year’s Capitol Hill Days made a strong impression on lawmakers and their staffs, but he added that the motorcoach industry has to keep pushing its agenda.

“This was the best fly-in we’ve ever had,” Parra said. “We made some real progress here and now we need all our members to keep reaching out to their elected leaders to ask for support.”



Dale Krapf, left, of Krapf Coaches Inc. of West Chester, Pa., and Becky Weber of Prime Policy Group meet with Rep. Louis Barletta, R-Pa.



Members of the National Association of Motorcoach Operators traveling to Washington included, sitting, from left, James Brown Sr. of Magic Carpet Tours, Allen Robinson of Robinson Tours and Clarence Gaten of Gaten's Adventures Unlimited. Standing, from left, are Kasanya Vines of Bohannon & Vines, Marcia Milton of First Priority Trailways, Duane Bohannon of Bohannon & Vines and Eric David of Potomac Tours.



Don Adams, right, of Kelly Tours in Savannah, Ga., has a one-on-one meeting with Rep. Buddy Carter, R-Ga.



New Trailways President and CEO Sheila Ryba, center foreground, attended her first UMA Capitol Hill Days. Joining her were, from left, Bill and Gail Allen of Amador Trailways, Ron Moore of Burlington Trailways, Steven Clemmer of Lancaster Trailways of the Carolinas, Marcia Milton of First Priority Trailways, Tom Giddens of Pacific Coachways Trailways, and Alan Thrasher of Thrasher Brothers Trailways.



Members of the International Motorcoach Group take a break from meetings with their representatives to pose on the Capitol steps.



UMA leaders Victor Parra, Brian Annett, Dale Krapf and Ken Presley pause for a photo during their meeting with Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., center.



Rep. Lois Capps, D-Calif., second from right, listens as officials of Silverado Stages in San Luis Obispo, Calif., explain the UMA's legislative priorities.

## Lawmakers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

better reflect bus and truck companies' safety records. The measure prevents the agency's scores from being used as evidence in court cases involving bus and truck companies and directs the agency to work with the non-partisan National Academy of Public Administration on creating new metrics for measuring safety.

Barletta said he re-filed the legislation this year because the Transportation Department has been unresponsive to complaints about the scoring system.

"The publishing of flawed safety scores does not benefit anyone," he said. "But rather than focusing on improving the flawed system, last week, the FMCSA further spread the bad information to the public by introducing a phone application for the CSA data program."

"Whether it's a parent looking for the safest bus for her kid's school trip, a shipper looking for the safest truck to haul its goods, or a small business trying to make it in a tough economy, we need better safety scores to provide adequate safety information," Barletta said. "This bill in no way eliminates law enforcement access to safety data, and the worst offend-

ers can still be targeted."

Thune said his legislation would establish market-driven, voluntary investment in safety technology and practices. He said such a system would encourage drivers to complete more thorough pre-trip inspections and address violations quickly without having to worry about being penalized for problems that may occur while driving.

**Little safety benefit**

Thune noted that a 2014 Government Accountability Office report said that CSA's analysis "does little to improve safety but has significant economic impacts."

Susan Fleming, GAO's director of infrastructure issues, testified at Fischer's hearing that the FMCSA has serious challenges in its reliability of CSA's safety measurement system in predicting carrier crashes and determining the prevalence of so-called chameleon carriers operating on U.S. highways using different company names to avoid federal monitoring.

A key component of CSA — the Safety Management System (SMS) — uses carrier performance data collected from inspections and investigations to calculate safety scores for carriers and supposedly identify those at high risk of causing a crash. The program then uses the scores to target high-risk carriers

for enforcement actions.

However, the GAO report identified flaws in the SMS that limit the accuracy of the scores in predicting crash risk. The report also questioned whether there was sufficient data from inspections and violations to assure that a carrier's SMS score could be reliably compared with scores for other carriers.

The GAO report concluded that these challenges raise questions about whether the FMCSA is able to identify and target the carriers at highest risk for crashing in the future.

Highway safety groups are opposed to removing CSA scores from public view, and the Transportation Department contends that the current safety compliance scoring system has been effective in reducing the number of accidents involving trucks and buses.

**Changes coming**

In a written statement to the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies, FMCSA official Darling said the agency planned to announce additional changes to SMS this spring, although he provided no details.

"These changes will strengthen our ability to identify companies for investigation before they are in-

involved in a crash," Darling wrote. "We will publish notice of these changes in the *Federal Register* and provide the public an opportunity to comment before finalizing."

**Darling to stay**

Darling, who was named acting administrator of the agency in August when Administrator Anne Ferro left, was supposed to step down from the position on March 23. But Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced that day that Darling would continue to run the FMCSA, although without the title of acting administrator.

President Obama has yet to nominate a successor to Ferro, and acting administrators are only allowed under the law to have that title for a set period of time. Foxx has "delegated" Darling, who is FMCSA's chief counsel, to perform the duties of administrator.

"Thus, consistent with the Vacancies Act, he will continue to perform the duties of the administrator but will no longer be referred to as the acting administrator," the Department of Transportation said in a March 23 statement.

Darling acknowledged in his statement to the congressional subcommittee that "the issue of data sufficiency has received much attention recently," but he contended that studies by the FMCSA and

independent researchers found the SMS to be "effective at identifying carriers that are engaging in behaviors likely to cause a crash."

Darling also acknowledged that the GAO recommended that the FMCSA revise the SMS methodology to better account for data limitations, but he made it clear that the agency doesn't agree with the GAO.

"The GAO developed a methodology that considers only carriers that have at least 20 inspections or 20 vehicles and eliminates the use of safety event groups," Darling wrote. "That approach runs counter to the goals of SMS, which identifies dangerous violation patterns much earlier."

"The overwhelming majority of motor carriers — more than 90 percent of our regulated population — never reach the 20 observation level during the relevant measurement period. Under GAO's approach to SMS, the safety performance of all these companies would be simply ignored."

"The public demands a proactive approach, rather than waiting for 20 events before we intervene," Darling said. "The SMS is effective at identifying carriers that have non-compliance patterns that have been proven to result in crashes because the carriers are violating regulations."

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# New FMCSA smartphone app draws criticism

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration launched a free smartphone application designed to provide safety performance information on bus and trucking companies.

But the new app immediately met with criticism from the commercial motor vehicle industry.

The FMCSA's new QCMobile — QC stands for "query central" — is available for Apple and Android devices. The agency said the app is expected to be a particularly valuable tool for law enforcement personnel, insurers, brokers, freight-forwarders and members of the public interested in reviewing the registration and safety performance information of motor carriers.

"By making currently available safety information on interstate truck and bus companies more easily accessible for both law enforcement personnel and the general public, we are providing greater transparency while making our roadways safer for everyone," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

The app, which requires no login, immediately reveals whether the federal operating status of the carrier is authorized, helping to expedite an "inspect/pass" decision by a commercial vehicle safety inspector. It retrieves data from a number of FMCSA sources, including its Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program.

However, the CSA program has come under heavy criticism in recent weeks from members of Congress and the Government Accountability Office, which issued a report in 2014 identifying flaws in the program that limit the accuracy of the scores in predicting crash risk. (See related story on page 1.)

Susan Fleming, director of infrastructure issues for the GAO, said the agency has concerns about reporting safety scores publicly.

"We don't feel that they're reliable, and so we don't think they should be reported on a website or, obviously, on an app," Fleming said. "The scores are probably fine for targeting enforcement efforts, but again, based on our analysis, we don't feel they are reliable enough to compare safety performance across carriers. Once the scores are publicly released, third parties... might use those scores for purposes that are not appropriate, given the limitations we identified."

The American Trucking Associations also has criticized the new app, saying the FMCSA's action was "recklessness cloaking itself

as transparency."

ATA has said the scores are fine for federal and state law-enforcement personnel, but the group has opposed the posting of scores for individual motor carriers online.

"It is wholly inappropriate for

'Immediately pull this tool from the marketplace.'

FMCSA to encourage and facilitate public access and use," ATA spokes-

man Sean McNally said. "The agency should immediately pull this tool from the marketplace."

In a release announcing the new app, however, FMCSA head Scott Darling said it would further enhance highway safety.

"Aggressive safety enforce-

ment, research and technology development and deployment, combined with strong stakeholder participation, will continue to be directed toward removing unsafe trucks and buses from our roadways and protecting every traveler from needless harm," Darling said.

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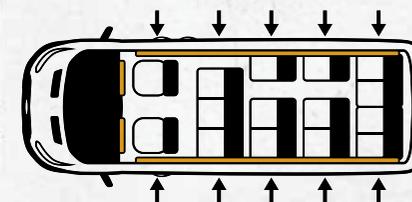
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## Study

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

thought to operate motorcoaches. A total of 407 usable responses, which may be the highest number since the census began, were received from the operators.

However, because of the various factors associated with the survey, it has a relatively high margin

of error of 4.59 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Still, that is an improvement over the 5.4 percent margin-of-error rate for the census done last year for 2012.

Contributing to the challenge of the company conducting the survey and analysis of the industry, John Dunham & Associates of Brooklyn, N.Y., is that many of the participating companies complete

only parts of the survey.

For example, while there were 407 usable surveys, nearly one-quarter of the companies participating failed to report fuel or mileage information.

**Reasons for concern**

Here are some of the survey's more disconcerting findings:

Total passenger trips by motor-

coach in the U.S. and Canada dropped 5.1 percent in 2013, falling to 605.1 million from 637.4 million in 2012. That compares with 743 million enplanements (both domestic and international flights) by U.S. airlines in 2013, which was up from 736.7 million in 2012.

While the motorcoach industry numbers include both the U.S. and

Canada, the airline figures are only for the U.S. If passenger enplanements for the top 50 Canadian airports are included in the airline numbers, the figure for U.S. and Canadian air carriers rises to more than 800 million.

The number of motorcoach operators actually conducting business declined by an estimated 177 companies, or 4.9 percent, between 2011 and 2013. Most of that decline occurred in 2012, when 153 companies stopped — for one reason or another — providing motorcoach services.

The ABA Foundation speculates that the drop in the number of operators resulted from industry consolidation and the closure of companies because of economic pressures and higher capital and operating costs due to increased government regulation.

**Changing demographics**

In 2013, the Dunham numbers indicate there were 3,471 motorcoach companies operating in the U.S., down from 3,648 in 2011. There were an estimated 330 coach companies in Canada in 2013, down from 336 in 2011.

The combined 3,801 U.S. and Canadian companies operated 36,903 motorcoaches in 2013, down from 40,141 in 2011, or a drop of 8.1 percent.

One of the most dramatic changes between 2011 and 2013 occurred in one of the industry's most important markets — student travel. There was a significant decline — 16.9 percent — in organized student trips from 2011-13.

Average passenger loads also decreased during the three years — especially among tour groups. The average number of passengers on packaged tours dropped from 41.1 in 2011 to 37 in 2013, a 10 percent decline.

Average passengers per charter, sightseeing and fixed-route trips also slipped.

**Big get bigger**

Large operators carried a higher percentage of passengers in 2013 than in 2012, taking market share from both midsize and smaller carriers. About 38.5 percent of the passenger trips in 2013 were provided by companies operating 100 or more motorcoaches, up from 34.7 percent in 2012; 23 percent of the 2013 trips were by midsize companies, operating 25 to 99 motorcoaches, down from 24.7 percent in 2012; and 38.5 percent of the 2013 passenger trips were on companies operating fewer than 25 coaches, down from 40.5 percent in 2012.

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# NYC taxi industry likely to propose cap on Uber

NEW YORK CITY — Here's a fact that may have escaped your attention: There are now more Uber vehicles being operated on New York City streets than there are yellow taxicabs.

And that development has significant implications for the motorcoach industry — particularly for those companies that regularly send coaches into the city.

Not only does it mean more passenger vehicles on city streets, increasing the prospect of greater gridlock, but it also means more vehicles driven by individuals who may not have as much experience coping with Manhattan and borough traffic as cabbies, more sources of vehicle-created emissions and more parking-related issues.

There is one other aspect that could impact the motorcoach industry: The city taxi industry is gearing up to propose a cap on Uber-like, for-hire vehicles.

The proposed cap, which is still being drafted, seeks to halt the growth of for-hire vehicles, which are like taxicabs except they cannot legally take street hails, until city officials can study the impact they're having on traffic, parking and pollution, Tweeps Phillips, executive director of Committee for

Taxi Safety, an industry group, told *USA Today*.

The planned cap comes on the heels of new data showing the number of Uber cars in New York City now outpaces yellow taxis for the first time.

There are 14,088 cars, including luxury SUVs, affiliated with Uber in the city's five boroughs, compared with 13,587 yellow cabs, according to the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

"It's remarkable that this one company is able to put vehicles on the road willy-nilly without anyone saying what this means for traffic conditions or parking or the environment," Phillips told *USA Today*. "It's like the city fell asleep."

## Uber weighs in

Uber, as would be expected, disputes the criticism from Phillips and others.

"The facts clearly show that Uber is changing New York City's transportation ecosystem for the better," said Matthew Wing, Uber's head of communications for the Northeastern states.

Wing points to Uber drivers in the outer-boroughs "where taxis don't go," as well as Uber Pool, which encourages car-pooling.

"It's not surprising that the taxi industry would try to stop this progress and any effort to offer more drivers better earning opportunities," Wing added.

Uber, which matches riders with drivers through an application for smartphones, is accustomed to taxis around the globe seeking to stymie its growth, which has been aided in some cases by fewer regulatory barriers.

But the call to measure the impact its growth may be having on cities and their residents could resonate among a wider swath of people, including environmentalists, and potentially spread to other cities.

"I would absolutely support a moratorium until this could be studied," Samuel Schwartz, a transportation engineer and advocate of controlling traffic through tolls, told *USA Today*.

"The specter of gridlock looms if we continue these trends," said Schwartz, who is known by some as "Gridlock Sam."

"If there is evidence that the proliferation of new services is leading to chaos on our streets, the (Taxi and Limousine Commission) should more forcefully flex its regulatory muscle," added Paul White,

executive director of Transportation Alternatives, a non-profit that advocates decreasing private car use.

## Research called for

"The bottom-line here is, more research is needed on this," said Susan Shaheen, a transportation expert with the University of California, Berkeley, who recently published a paper examining the impact of Uber, Lyft and other ride-sharing companies on transportation in the San Francisco area.

Shaheen's study found that companies like Uber and Lyft carried slightly more passengers per ride than traditional taxis. But such services also had no visible reduction on private car ownership.

Since its launch in 2009, Uber has expanded to 55 countries, and has 160,000 drivers in the United States. Last month, Uber vowed to create 1 million jobs for women drivers by 2020, suggesting it has no plans to slow its breakneck pace.

The number of yellow cabs in New York City, by contrast, is severely capped — thanks to legislation pushed by Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia in 1937. Since then, the city has increased the number of yellow cabs, also known as me-

dallion cabs, by a mere 1,800.

Of course, yellow cabs still dominate when it comes to number of rides and time on the road. The Taxi and Limousine Commission says there are about 440,000 yellow cab rides a day, compared with between 20,000 and 30,000 Uber rides. Indeed, a recent study by Uber shows that 51 percent of its drivers work 15 hours or less per week.

## Unhappy Uber drivers

Oddly enough, some Uber drivers also support a cap on the number of cars allowed on the road due to concerns that its growth has restricted their earnings.

"It's crazy now to make a living," said Jesus Garay, who quit Uber a few weeks ago because he was having a tough time making money like he did before Uber became so popular. "There's an influx of so many drivers flooding into Manhattan," Garay said.

Garay's concerns echo the very same complaints that led to a cap on taxis in 1937. After the Great Depression, a flood of unemployed people took up driving taxis in hopes of making extra cash, which led to violent protests and demands for increased regulation.

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## Study

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Other highlights from the Motorcoach Census include:

The industry remains a bastion of small business, with 94 percent of the companies operating fewer than 25 motorcoaches, and 82 percent operating fewer than 10 coaches.

Motorcoach companies offer a variety of services. Nearly 98 percent provide charters, 38 percent provide tours, 19 percent run airport shuttles, 16 percent provide scheduled service, 13 percent offer sightseeing, 7 percent have special operations, and just under 5 per-

cent handle commuter runs.

Charters accounted for about 48.4 percent of motorcoach service mileage in 2013, followed by scheduled service (33.9 percent), commuter runs (6 percent), packaged tours (6 percent), airport service (2.3 percent), sightseeing (2.2 percent), and special operations (1.1 percent).

**More demographics**

The composition of the individuals who traveled by motorcoach in 2013, or industry demographics, saw noticeable movement between 2011 and 2013 — primarily because of the decline in the number

of student trips.

In 2013, 21 percent of the passengers were students, compared with 25.2 percent in 2011, a 16.7 percent drop.

At the same time, the number of senior riders went from 26.2 percent in 2011 to 28.3 percent in 2013, an 8 percent increase.

Other age groups made up nearly 51 percent of passengers in 2013, versus 48.5 percent in 2011.

Other noteworthy findings from the census include:

**Industry Employment.** The motorcoach industry provided jobs for 133,200 people in 2012, down from 135,100 in 2011. The average

motorcoach company had 35 employees, or 3.6 jobs per coach.

**Employment by Company Size.** Just over 54 percent of motorcoach industry jobs were at small companies (those operating fewer than 25 coaches). Midsize companies (those operating between 25 and 99 motorcoaches) provided 20.6 percent of the industry jobs. Large companies (those operating more than 100 motorcoaches) provided 24.8 percent of industry jobs. Dunham says there are 19 companies in the U.S. and Canada with 100 or more motorcoaches.

**Fuel Efficiency.** In 2013, the average fuel efficiency of a motorcoach was 6.1 miles per gallon. Average passenger miles per gallon in 2013 totaled 207.8, down from 220.8 in 2011. The average coach used 8,200 gallons of fuel in 2013.

**Motorcoach Use.** The average coach traveled 50,400 miles in 2013. The largest carriers, those

with more than 100 coaches, averaged 75,500 miles per coach, while the smallest carriers, those with 10 or fewer coaches, averaged 36,000 miles per coach.

The American Bus Association Foundation says the overarching goal of its *Motorcoach Census* is to reveal the scope and impact of the motorcoach transportation industry in the U.S. and Canada. The picture it paints is of an industry that serves a broad range of customers, from students to seniors, and that moves people with notable fuel efficiency.

The industry provides a wide variety of passenger transportation services that are vital to the economy's travel and leisure sectors, as well as intercity and commuter services.

The ABA Foundation is the scholarship and research arm of the ABA. The complete census is expected to be posted on the foundation website: [www.buses.org/ABA-Foundation/Research](http://www.buses.org/ABA-Foundation/Research).

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 2.98 trip nights (avg)  
 28.3% of trips last 3+ days  
 55.8% requested a full-size coach  
 44.1% requested a minibus  
 Average pax was 43.6

**SAME-DAY TRIPS**  
 DEPARTING **UPSTATE NEW YORK:**  
 57.7% of trips  
 61.7% requested a full-size coach  
 38.4% requested a minibus  
 Average pax was 48.5

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New Jersey	53.4	2.434	\$9,748
Pennsylvania	47.0	2.194	\$7,734
Ohio	42.8	3.176	\$10,183
Massachusetts	39.3	2.794	\$8,235
Virginia	37.4	4.348	\$12,196
Illinois	40.4	5.158	\$15,629
Maryland	40.9	2.777	\$8,518
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Other	41.4	3.852	\$11,960

\*Night room rate of \$75 used to illustrate Potential Revenue per Group

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Van	5.8%
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## People

**WILKES-BARRE, Pa.** — Frank Henry, longtime chairman of the **Martz Group**, will become chairman emeritus and his son, **Scott Henry**, will take over as chairman of the company, which provides charters, sightseeing tours and line runs in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida and Washington, D.C.

Frank Henry has been growing the company for 58 years and has been active throughout all Martz Group companies, which include **Gold Line, National Coach Works, First Class Coach and Martz Trailways**. He will remain a member of board of directors.

He has served as a board member of the **American Bus Association** since 1974 and also has been chairman of **Trailways, the Pennsylvania Bus Association and Gray Line Worldwide**.



Frank Henry Scott Henry

**ABERDEEN, Scotland** — **FirstGroup PLC**, corporate parent of **Greyhound Lines, First Student and First Transit**, announced that **Wolfhart Hauser** will succeed **John McFarlane** as chairman, following the FirstGroup annual general meeting on July 16.

Hauser will join the First Group board as a non-executive director and chairman designate on May 18.

For the past 10 years Hauser has been CEO of Intertek Group PLC, a London-based international quality and safety services provider. He leaves Intertek May 15.

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