

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Industry officials vent their frustrations over FMCSA

WASHINGTON — The national commercial motor carrier safety system — from Congress to federal regulators to state inspectors — was criticized for confusing, misguided and sometimes antagonistic enforcement during a hearing intended to discuss safety improvements.

The U.S. House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit invited five industry representatives, in-

cluding United Motorcoach Association member Brian Scott, to discuss the “Future of Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety: Technology, Safety Initiatives and the Role of Federal Regulation.”

The hearing, held late last month, produced some talk about future technology and safety initiatives, but participants mostly vented about current federal regulations and regulators.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration was generally blamed for a punitive approach to compliance with administrative regulations rather than issues more closely related to road safety, such as traffic enforcement and driver behavior.

In one exchange that summed up the tone of the hearing, Rep. Bob Gibbs, R-Ohio, asked UMA's Scott if the FMCSA engaged with

the industry effectively.

“I would say absolutely not. It is a hostile environment,” replied Scott, president of Escot Bus Lines of Largo, Fla. “There was a time when the FMCSA would work with the industry. Those days are long gone.”

Rep. Crescent Hardy, R-Nev., later asked Scott if regulations were restricting opportunities to grow his business.

“What we have seen in the course of 30 years we have been in business is what I call mission creep from just about every federal agency that has purview over what we do,” Scott said. “The regulatory burden in general just seems to be one of ‘gotcha’ from just about every agency there is. That weight that we have coming from the FMCSA doesn’t really

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**Prized Addition.** ABC Companies is donating this refurbished 1955-56 GM Scenicruiser to the Museum of Bus Transportation in Hershey, Pa. ABC restored the coach eight years ago, converting the livery to that of Faribo Lines, a bus company once operated by ABC founder Clancy Cornell. See story on Page 18.

## Inbound Chinese group-travel market seen growing

As the motorcoach tour market has generally dimmed and dwindled during the past 15 years, one of the few bright spots has been the growth of the inbound Chinese market.

New figures — from a variety of sources — suggest that growth will continue to outpace other groups.

Nearly 2.2 million Chinese visitors traveled to the United

States last year, a 21 percent increase over 2013.

And by 2019, China is projected by the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office to become the third-largest inbound market, sending some 4.9 million visitors to U.S. destinations.

By 2021, nearly 7.3 million Chinese are projected to travel to the U.S., contributing nearly \$85 billion a year to the economy and

supporting 440,000 jobs, the White House said in November.

### Extended visas

That is when President Obama announced that visas for Chinese would be extended five years for students and exchange programs and 10 years for businesses and tourists.

Extending the visa validity period makes it easier for Chinese

travelers to return to the United States for a second or third visit.

Since the November announcement, the State Department has seen a 41 percent increase in Chinese applications for U.S. visas, Christopher Thompson, president and CEO of Brand USA, told the *China Daily*. Brand USA is a public-private partnership to promote inbound tourism.

Also seen as aiding the surge is

the U.S. State Department opening of more consular offices in China in 2013, reducing the wait time for visa application processing.

According to the 2014 *United Motorcoach Association Membership Survey* and Industry Assessment, China was the No. 4 supplier of inbound international customers for the motorcoach industry in 2013. Ahead of China

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# National Interstate reports mixed first-quarter results

RICHFIELD, Ohio — National Interstate Corporation, which experienced a challenging financial year in 2014 due mostly to a rise in truck accident claims, continued to see its net income decline during the first quarter of 2015.

National Insurance, a leading motorcoach industry insurer, reported first-quarter net income of \$7.1 million, or 36 cents a share, compared with \$8 million, or 41 cents a share, during the same period in 2014.

The company attributed the decline to both lower operating earnings and after-tax realized gains from investments.

On the positive side, National

Insurance said it experienced fewer accident losses during the January-to-March period.

"Development from our assigned risk claims, over which we have no control, and our runoff business were a drag on 2015 first-quarter results," said Dave Michelson, president and CEO of National Interstate. "However, we are pleased with the positive movement of the 2015 first-quarter accident year combined ratio of 96.2 percent."

Michelson said rate increases on renewed business averaged approximately 6 percent during the first quarter, with alternative risk transfer (captive insurance) up 5

percent and the remaining traditional businesses averaging an increase of about 9 percent.

He added that the underwriting expense ratio of approximately 20 percent for the first quarters of both 2014 and 2015 remains favorable and is in line with the ratios reported for the past two full years.

The company generated net gains from investments of \$1.1 million for the 2015 first quarter, compared with \$2.6 million last year, from sales and gains related to limited partnership investments.

The company said gross premiums written for both alternative risk transfer and transportation, the largest components, decreased

approximately 7 percent compared with last year, while specialty personal lines and Hawaii and Alaska were relatively flat.

National Interstate has been focusing in recent years on shedding poor-performing policies, which has affected earnings, and that continued during the first quarter of this year.

"In the 2015 first quarter this disciplined underwriting contributed to the decrease in our top line when compared to the 2014 first quarter as renewal retentions were impacted as a result of rate actions and non-renewals of underperforming accounts," Michelson said. "We do not expect the first-

quarter gross premiums written decrease to continue throughout the year, but we will continue to prioritize disciplined underwriting ahead of top-line growth."

He said the company plans to continue its emphasis on pricing and risk selection and on improving its accident year combined ratio.

"Without question our primary focus has been, and continues to be, on improving accident year underwriting results and we feel the 2015 first quarter is an indication that our actions are working and moving us closer to our goal of low-mid 90's combined ratios," Michelson said.

## Passenger vans hold their value as economy improves

GAINESVILLE, Ga. — Of all the vehicles in your fleet, the ones that may be holding their residual value the best are the large passenger vans.

The Black Book, an independent commercial vehicle valuation service, reports that as new Euro-style vans are being introduced in the U.S., older, boxier, full-size vans have shown strong results at vehicle auctions.

The vehicles were expected to finish 2014 with an increase in residual value, while the broader market showed depreciation.

Specifically, full-size vans were forecast to finish the year with an increase of 1.7 percent in value, according to a senior executive at Black Book.

The strength of used full-size van values corresponds to the economic recovery in the services

sector for plumbers, electricians, carpet layers and other service fleets.

These tradesmen and their fleets often buy passenger van models and convert them to cargo vans by removing seating.

Additionally, the new European-style vans, such as the Ram ProMaster and Ford Transit, have brought more interest and attention to the category, even though

the first used U.S.-made, European-style vans won't appear at auctions for at least 12-16 months after being placed into service, according to Black Book.

"There's more demand for that older box van," said one Black Book executive. "It's a good choice for the buyer who's looking for a more reasonable price of entry for that tool."

Almost 233,000 full-size vans

were sold at auction through October in both passenger and cargo models. Through the same time a year earlier, just over 206,000 had been sold.

Vans make up a significant percentage of used-vehicle sales in the fleet industry. For the seven leading fleet management companies that provide vehicle sales data to Black Book, vans made up 6.6 percent of their sales in 2014.

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# THE DOCKET

## FMCSA proposes 'Beyond Compliance' reward program

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is calling for comments on its proposal to create a "Beyond Compliance" program to reward motor carriers for implementing safety systems that exceed regulatory requirements.

"The U.S. Department of Transportation and motor carriers have invested millions of dollars in research, development and implementation of strategies and technologies to reduce truck and bus crashes," the agency said in a *Federal Register* filing last month. "FMCSA is evaluating the impacts of considering a company's proactive voluntary implementation of state-of-the-art best practices and technologies when evaluating the carrier's safety."

The FMCSA is requesting responses by June 22 to specific questions as well as any supporting data the agency should consider in

the potential development of a Beyond Compliance program. It said such a program would include "voluntary programs implemented by motor carriers that exceed regulatory requirements, and improve the safety of commercial motor vehicles and drivers operating on the nation's roadways by reducing the number and severity of crashes."

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has published as a final rule increasing fine levels for several different violations of Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

The new fines take effect on June 2.

The FMCSA said the adjustments were inflation-driven, pointing out that "most of the civil penalties were last adjusted for in-

flation in 2007, and some have not been changed since 2003."

The agency noted that other changes to the civil penalties were mandated by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) spending bill passed in 2012.

Examples of the higher penalties include hefty increases for violating these out-of-service orders:

- \$5,000 more for requiring or

technology.

In developing its Compliance, Safety, Accountability program in 2010, the FMCSA said it found agreement among industry and law enforcement stakeholders that an incentive-based approach to improving carrier safety would be a more effective tool than the current penalty-based system.

The agency said that to test the concept of Beyond Compliance, it is interested in working with the private sector on demonstration projects but would not consider requests from carriers for safety waivers, exemptions or pilot programs.

The FMCSA said it wants to know what technologies would be appropriate and what type of incentives would encourage motor carriers to invest in technology and best practices programs, plus how the agency could verify that the voluntary technologies or safety programs were being implemented.

The FMCSA also highlighted a 2011 report by the American Transportation Research Institute that detailed possible benefits from alternative compliance, especially for larger operators that tend not to see a major change in safety performance after traditional compliance reviews, while smaller operators tend to see bigger gains in safety.

## Safety agency increasing fines for several violations

permitting operation of CMV by driver

- \$5,000 more for conducting operations during suspension or revocation for failure to pay penalties

- \$1,000 more for operation by driver of CMV or intermodal equipment that was placed out of service

A complete summary of the increased fine levels can be found at [federalregister.gov](http://federalregister.gov).

## Rochester transit system will no longer bus students

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — A series of fights involving students at Rochester's Downtown Transit Center has prompted the city's public bus system to stop busing

students after this school year.

Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority CEO Bill Carpenter said the contract between the Rochester City School

District and the Regional Transit Service ends in June and will not be renewed.

The decision means the RTS will have to cut 144 jobs and the

school district will likely have to use a private bus company next year.

The agreement between the school district and the transit authority was controversial when it

started in 2006. The Federal Transit Administration ruled in 2007 that the transit authority was providing illegal service for the school district, displacing routes that had been operated by Laidlaw Education Services.

However, a judge later struck down the FTA's ruling, allowing the agreement to go forward.

The public bus system typically has been seen as a better option to accommodate schools with different closing times and to allow students to get to and from after-school activities and jobs.

The city, transit authority and school district most recently have been in the spotlight after a series of student fights at or near the Transit Center. The problems with violence aren't new, but shifted to the center when the facility opened late last year.

Jim Redmond, chairman of the transit authority, said the efforts to stem recent fights have failed.

"People have the right to move safely through our system," he said.

Busing students represents a significant percentage of the transit authority's annual revenue. Carpenter said it would lose \$11 million out of its \$90 million budget by ending the contract with the city schools.

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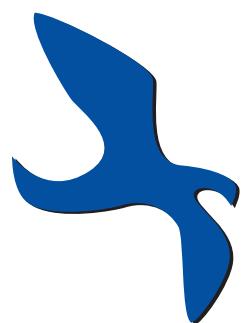
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# NTSB offers tips on using onboard video systems

WASHINGTON — The National Transportation Safety Board has issued recommendations about the proper use of onboard video systems by school buses and motorcoaches to make sure they can assist in accident investigations.

The recommendations stem from a recent NTSB safety report, *Commercial Vehicle Onboard Video Systems*, which focused on the video systems on two buses involved in crashes, one of them resulting in a fatality.

The NTSB said the onboard video systems on both buses were either improperly installed or included inferior cameras.

Buses and motorcoaches are equipped with onboard video systems for a variety of reasons. They can be used to monitor passenger behavior and dissuade negative actions, such as bullying or theft; to monitor traffic surrounding the vehicle and assist in recording the observance of traffic laws; and to enhance driver safety through feedback programs that correct potentially unsafe behaviors.

The NTSB has also used onboard video systems in its accident investigations.

In some cases, however, commercial vehicle onboard video

systems lack the capability to record useful video in certain conditions, or they are not properly installed or maintained.

Common shortcomings among video systems include:

- No view of what is happening in front of the vehicle
- No view of all seating positions, including the driver
- Lack of low-light recording capability (no night vision)
- Low frame rates, such that videos are jumpy or skip over events
- Poorly positioned cameras
- Improperly maintained cameras

The NTSB safety report high-

lighted a 2012 accident in Port St. Lucie, Fla., that involved a semi-truck traveling 63 mph colliding with a school bus preparing to make a left turn. The bus, occupied by the driver and 30 elementary school students, was equipped with lap belts and a continuous audio and video system that recorded useful pre-crash, crash and post-crash information.

However, of the four camera views, none recorded the one occupant who was fatally injured.

The other accident covered in the report occurred in 2011 in Kearney, Neb., when a semi-truck overturned and came to rest across both lanes of Interstate 80. A short

time later, two commercial vehicles — another semi-truck and a motorcoach — came upon the overturned truck.

The semi managed to only side-swipe the overturned truck but the bus crashed into it.

The motorcoach had seatbelts and a continuous audio and video system, which recorded pre-crash information from a forward-facing camera. However, due to poorly oriented interior cameras and a lack of low-light recording capability, the system did not capture any information concerning the driver or the motorcoach interior.

As a result of the safety report, the NTSB has sent recommenda-

tions on the optimum use of video systems to trade organizations representing the commercial motor vehicle industry, including the United Motorcoach Association.

The NTSB recommends that school districts and bus operators properly install and maintain onboard video systems and check to make sure they:

- Provide visibility of the driver
- Provide visibility of each occupant seating location
- Provide visibility forward of the vehicle
- Ensure optimized frame rate
- Allow low-light recording capability (night vision)

## Roadcheck 2015 is just around the corner

GREENBELT, Md. — This is your second warning: Roadcheck is coming up fast.

The annual North America-wide safety blitz, operated under the aegis of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, will be conducted from Tuesday, June 2, through Thursday, June 4.

Since Roadcheck is the largest targeted-enforcement program of commercial vehicles in the world, motorcoach operators should be

ready for 72 hours of rigorous and thorough destination and roadside inspections.

Each year, roughly 10,000 CVSA-certified local, state, provincial and federal inspectors at 1,500 locations across North America perform bus and truck inspections.

A total of 1,071 motorcoaches were inspected during Roadcheck 2014, down from 1,471 inspected the year before.

Experts say the first line of defense during a Roadcheck inspection is the driver. Drivers should be reminded to keep a keen eye on their paperwork.

"It's not so much maintenance anymore; they're getting nailed for paperwork," says one safety specialist.

The CVSA offers its own set of tips to get ready for Roadcheck.

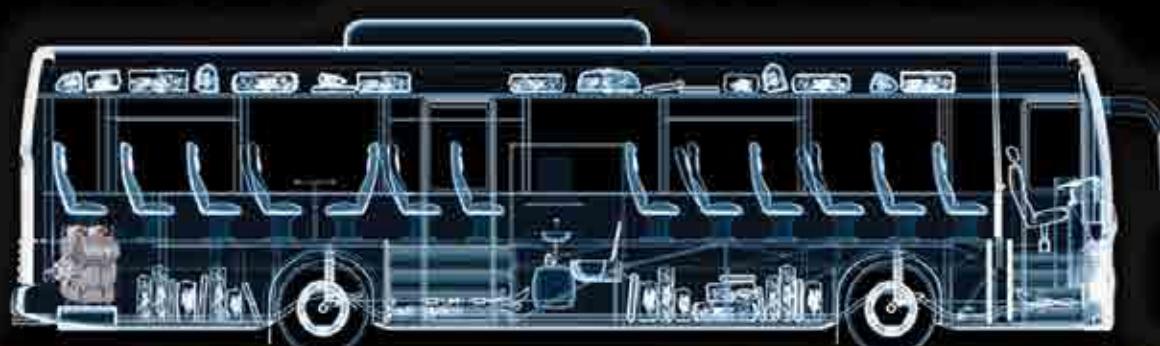
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sion, tires, wheels, rims and hubs are all listed in a prep package on its website. Don't forget battery terminals.

Roadcheck inspectors typically perform more than 70,000 truck and bus inspections during the three-day marathon, 65 percent of which are North American Standard Level 1 inspections — the most comprehensive type of inspection.

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# Key questions, answers for getting the capital you need

By Gary Miller

Lacking sufficient capital to grow is the main constraint for most small companies.

To reach the next level of success, capital is the fuel that drives a company's growth engine. Without it, reaching that next level is almost impossible.

Many entrepreneurs are skilled at starting and building small, successful companies.

But growing a small company into a bigger one is very different, and in many ways a more difficult task, which is why raising growth capital is so important.

Entrepreneurs and business owners often stumble in obtaining growth capital because they are inexperienced and unprepared.

Here are the key questions, and some answers.

What do I do first?

**1. Prepare your company to raise capital.** Hire an experienced management consulting firm to help you prepare your company and to help you raise the capital.

Raising capital means seeking investors whether it is debt equity through a bank loan or investor eq-

uity through an investment firm.

To prepare for either choice, clean up your books and records, prepare for due diligence, update your strategic business plan, detail how much capital is needed including its purpose and uses, and plan the optimal deal structure.

Lean on your consultant for help with all this.

**2. Develop growth and expansion plans.** Prepare detailed financial pro formas showing monthly income and expenses.

Institutional investors look to invest in companies that have a clear differentiation, scalability, execution capabilities, and a great management team. Your growth plans must be creative and strategic.

Consider forming a joint venture, strategic partnerships or strategic alliances with your customers, vendors or competitors.

**3. Hire a valuation company to render a "market valuation" opinion.**

Don't expect the sort of sky-high valuation entrepreneurial companies enjoyed in the past. Investors have returned to ground level. Therefore, be prepared to give up more ownership for small-

er amounts of capital and possibly even more control if you need to raise equity capital.

**4. Prepare a "leave behind" presentation.** Prepare marketing materials such as an executive summary, management presentation and due diligence materials.

Your knowledge, confidence, experience, commitment and enthusiasm are critical to your success. Practice the presentation. Know your numbers!

Where do I find growth capital?

First, decide whether you are willing to give up some equity and some control of your business.

If not, then your options may be limited. The path you will then follow is to seek debt financing or debt equity through a variety of sources:

(1) Small Business Administration loan programs have significantly expanded over the last decade ranging from loan program guarantees to women's business centers; (2) asset based lenders; (3) factoring companies; (4) mezzanine financing companies (a hybrid of debt and equity); (5) self-funding (second mortgage on your home, tapping retirement ac-

counts); (6) friends and family; (7) banks (revolving lines of credit and structured financing); (8) Small Business Investment Companies; (9) business incubators; (10) peer to peer lending and investing; (11) OFIs (other financial institutions, such as GE Capital); and insurance companies.

If you are willing to give up some equity and some control of the business, then your options expand substantially and you can follow both paths of debt equity and investor equity.

I tell our clients to look at a variety of sources: (1) angel and venture capital investors; (2) high and super high net worth individuals; (3) family offices; (4) private equity firms; (5) investment bankers; (6) merchant bankers; (7) crowd funding; (8) joint ventures, partnerships, alliances; and (9) SBA venture capital programs.

Make no mistake about it. Plenty of growth capital sources are waiting for the right opportunity. However, there is a price to pay and a cost to bear for growth capital.

Expected returns vary significantly depending on the source of capital. The cost of capital is high

for privately held. Investors in this space are seeking high returns.

I tell clients, it is best to raise capital when you can, not when you need it. It doesn't matter who the capital sources are, if you're desperate for funds, they will smell it a mile away. Your chances of success will be reduced greatly if you are playing with a weak hand.

The best institutional investors act as partners. They bring in other investors, open doors for business development, help in recruiting, act like coaches, are objective in their advice as your company grows, and guide you through the inevitable difficult times.

Choose your source wisely. Match your choice to your goals. Be aggressive, creative and persistent and develop the ability to convince others to buy into your vision and share your dream on a foundation of substance, trust and integrity.

Remember, growth is the greatest driver of enterprise value.

*Gary Miller is founder and CEO of GEM Strategy Management Inc., a management consulting firm. Contact him at gmiller@gemstrategymanagement.com.*

## Six ways to create better, stronger passwords

Almost everything we do these days involves computers and passwords, and with hacking so prevalent this is a good time to make sure your passwords are strong enough to repel hackers.

Here are six ways to fortify them:

**Make your password long.** The recommended minimum is eight characters, but 14 is better and 25 is even better than that. Some services have character limits on passwords, though.

**Use combinations of letters and numbers, upper and lower case and symbols such as the exclamation mark.** Some services won't let you do all of that, but try to vary it as much as you can. "PaSSWoRd!43" is far better than "password43."

**Avoid words that are in dictionaries, even if you add numbers and symbols.** There are programs that can crack passwords by going through databases of known words. One trick is to add numbers

in the middle of a word — as in "pas123swor456d" instead of "password123456."

Another is to think of a sentence and use just the first letter of each word — as in "tqbfjotld" for "the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."

**Substitute characters.** For instance, use the number zero instead of the letter O, or replace the S with a dollar sign.

**Avoid easy-to-guess words, even if they aren't in the dictionary.**

You shouldn't use your name, company name or hometown, for instance. Avoid pets and relatives' names, too.

Likewise, avoid things that can be looked up, such as your birthday or ZIP code. But you might use that as part of a complex password. Try reversing your ZIP code or phone number and insert that into a string of letters. As a reminder, you should also avoid "password" as the password, or consecutive keys on the keyboard,

such as "1234" or "qwerty."

**Never reuse passwords on other accounts — with one exception.** Over the years, many individuals have created dozens of accounts. Many are for one-time use, such as when a newspaper website requires registration to read a full story. It's OK to use simple passwords and repeat them in those types of situations, as long as the password isn't unlocking features that involve credit cards or posting on a message board.

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Vandalia Bus Lines  
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Thrasher Brothers Trailways  
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Tim Wayland  
ABC Companies  
Faribault, Minn.

T. Ralph Young  
Young Transportation  
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# Keep passenger belongings safe — after you take selfies

By Dave Millhouser

It was the strangest thing. Every one of the 170 kids who'd just returned from a youth camp in Colorado found, when they had their photos printed, an identical picture of their (beloved) bus drivers. None of them remembered taking the shot, and had no idea how it got there.

I know.

We'd bused the kids up an abandoned rail bed called Chalk Creek Gulch and dropped them off in the wilderness so they could climb a mountain. Generally they left their cameras and other stuff in the coaches, and we drivers felt the need to stay and guard their belongings. We were also too lazy to make the climb, based on the assumption that, if you've seen one mountain, you've seen them all.

As soon as the kids were out of sight, we'd grab all the cameras, strike a macho pose, and take the same selfie with each one. Then we'd put each camera back where we found it, secure in our immortality.

It was pure luck, but we did do one thing right. We knew that we were accountable for our passengers' stuff that had been left on our coaches, and other than taking bad photos, we'd made sure it was all secure.

Perhaps it's obvious, but we need to make drivers aware that both they and their company have some responsibilities even when they and the passengers aren't on the bus.

Line operators generally remind folks to take their belongings with them when they disembark, but charters and tours are different. At stops, folks leave their things in seats and package racks, and some sort of security needs to be provided.

## Lock the door

Sometimes the driver stays with the coach. Other times they join the group and, it is hoped, lock the entrance door. Either is fine, but passengers need to know what to expect.

A similar situation arises on trips where luggage is stored in the baggage bays. Most modern

coaches have locks, but they need to be used. In ye olden days there were stories of miscreants running alongside buses caught in traffic, opening the compartment doors and making off with luggage. If the coach has an automatic locking mechanism, the driver needs to know how to use it.

It's also not a bad idea to inform passengers that, once an item is buried in the under-floor bays, it's difficult, if not impossible, to remove it before the day's trip ends. Medicine and anything else that might be needed during the day should be brought into the coach's cabin.

When storing items that are definitely going to be needed mid-trip, it's a good idea to stick them in a curbside bay (heck, you knew that) and make it clear before departure when the bays will be unlocked and available.

Drivers should know how bay door locks function on their coaches. Some require compressed air to open, perhaps necessitating firing up the coach for unscheduled access.

You probably know your folks

well, and none of them would pilfer stuff, but when you farm a job out, your customer is going to hold everyone in sight accountable if there's a problem. Bear that in mind when you hire another company. It's not just whether their drivers are honest, but also whether their training includes securing the passenger's belongings.

## Safety and stuff

The point (and you already knew this, too) is that we are not just responsible for our passengers' safety, but in many situations for their stuff, and we need to train drivers accordingly.

When drivers are going to leave their coaches (locked up), it doesn't hurt to give some thought about where they park them. They should be looking for secure areas that minimize the likelihood of a break-in, such as a special bus-parking area at a hotel. And they should remember that leaving roof hatches open on an empty bus is an invitation to an athletic thief.

If your driver can't find a secure parking area, someone needs to stay with the coach. But then

they are still on duty, which could create hours-of-service problems. It would be better to clearly announce to passengers that they need to take their belongings.



Dave Millhouser

I live near a tiny commercial fishing cove, and one night I parked my demonstrator coach in the gravel lot next to the dock. The next morning I found a broken window and evidence that a fisherman had slept in the back seat. It's possible that alcohol was involved; who knew that fishermen drank?

In hindsight, I shouldn't have parked the bus there, but was very lucky I spotted the signs that a drunk had slept in the back of the bus. Imagine showing up at a customer's place with a shiny demo and having a smelly fisherman stagger up the aisle.

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

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# Your future customers are already riding on your buses

**By Christian Riddell**  
Motorcoach Marketing Council

Last month we talked about the opportunities that exist outside of our current customer bases. We touched on the fact that even though we will move more than 20 million people this year, only a small percentage of those people are actually responsible for booking the coach.

This month we would be remiss if we did not discuss the opportunity those non-bookers represent to the future of this industry.

In marketing, there are three categories of customers worth addressing in your efforts to fill up those pesky dispatch holes. The first — and the lowest-hanging fruit — is past customers. These are people who know about your product, know what you offer, and who have, in the past, actually paid you for your services.

Keeping these customers happy and rebooking them is good, but it is better to expose them to what is possible. If you have a wedding planner who books with you, he or she may not know you also do local sightseeing trips.

Your corporate transportation coordinator may not know you also do wine trips or you could handle the company's upcoming team-building events.

It is also important to consider that one of the fastest ways to get new business is to have your sales team follow up with happy customers and ask for referrals. These warm handoffs can go a long way in helping you land new customers.

The second group includes the more than 500 million people in North America who will not set foot on a motorcoach this year but who will almost all do something a coach would make better.

Although this represents a massive opportunity to grow, we understand they also represent the most challenging sector to market to because they simply don't know what we have to offer.

#### Blue Juice and Mentholatum

Many have misconceptions about modern motorcoach travel. They picture in their heads old, tired coaches that smell of Blue Juice and Mentholatum and are filled with octogenarians. Few un-

#### Marketing Minute

## GoMotorcoach

### It's the Smart Move

derstand the modern luxuries and amenities that make what we offer so much better than any other form of group transportation.

The opportunities here are as big as the market and as diverse as the populations we serve. However, it will take work to show people who we are and what we have to offer. The tools created by the Motorcoach Marketing Council will help open these doors and show more and more people just how great we are.

The other demographic that we, as an industry, need to realize as an untapped market includes people who ride in our coaches but who are not responsible for the booking. I am constantly surprised by the lack of enthusiasm many charter operators show for this avenue of marketing.

These are people who have been on a coach; they have seen the amenities and they understand

how efficient and effective we are at group transportation. In most cases, they will arrive comfortably and safely at their destination, they will be happy with the service and they will leave feeling like they had a good experience.

As charter companies, we work hard to ensure this is the case. We invest in driver training and equipment we can be proud of. We work hard to ensure our maintenance program keeps our coaches on the road safely. We pay our wash crews to keep the coaches looking (and smelling) good.

Then we load 50 passengers onboard and work to get them from point A to point B safely and comfortably. Yet in most cases, only one out of those 50 charter passengers is actually our "customer."

#### Busload of customers

That means that the other 49 are potential customers who have already been exposed to our company, our equipment and our level of service. These are people who may have never been on a coach before, or perhaps they use coaches regularly but have never thought

to book one.

They could be business passengers whose company uses coaches but who have never thought to look into chartering a coach for their son's sports teams. They could be people attending a wedding who never thought this could be the perfect solution for their growing church's transportation needs.

We, as an industry, know if you have a group that needs to go from point A to point B, there is no better way than on a motorcoach. We know we are the greenest, most efficient and most comfortable, convenient and cost-effective way to move groups.

We cannot, however, assume that just because someone attending their cousin's bat mitzvah rode a coach from their hotel to the venue, they also will know about the benefits of motorcoach travel. Yet, this is a very real opportunity for us to plant those seeds in that person's mind.

Now, I know what you are probably thinking. People paid to charter the coach. We can't be selling to their guests. Well, you are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ►

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## Marketing Minute

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

partially right and completely wrong.

Yes, someone chartered your coach and you shouldn't send a salesperson onboard to make sure every one of those passengers ends up on your email list. But that is not the kind of selling you should be doing anyway.

### Planting seeds

You are already selling your service by the very nature of how you do business. How your drivers dress, how the passengers are treated and how your coach looks and smells already are selling what you do. The next step is simply to plant some seeds about what else motorcoaches are great at doing.

This can be done in unobtrusive, non-threatening ways that will deliver the message and won't cross the line with your paying customers. There are lots of ways to do this. Some are easy and fast, some are more difficult, but all will deliver real results.

One of the simplest ways to accomplish this is to implement a "campaign of the month" that includes distributing materials on your coaches focusing on the services you offer and the advantages of coach travel. Materials for more than 20 such campaigns are available through the GoMotorcoach program.

This can be as simple as attaching a card rack and brochure holder to one of the front rows of the coach. Some operators have incorporated these messages into their safety briefing videos. These short commercial messages simply talk about all the things a coach can do, with no hard selling needed.

Other operators have their drivers hand out the GoMotorcoach pass-along cards that highlight a specific service or attribute, while still others have built custom pieces that include safety messages on one side and marketing messages on the other. These are handed out to everyone boarding the bus.

Marketing to these passengers does not have to be expensive or intrusive, nor does it require a sales pitch. It simply requires an effort to get them to think, for just a moment, about all of the other places in their life where a motorcoach might fit and to deliver a quick explanation about how to book with you.

This is an opportunity to show them how affordable we are. Break down the cost of your minimum into a per-seat cost, and say things like "Prices starting at \$8 per per-

son" to get people thinking about all the ways they could use your coach.

No matter where you live or market, if you sell charters, far more people get on your coaches every day than those who have booked with you. This is an opportunity to engage with and recruit new customers from a group that has already seen exactly what you have to offer.

As you prepare to grow your business and to launch your marketing campaigns targeting those hundreds of millions of people who need what you have to offer, don't forget about those that are already well within your reach — your current passengers.

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



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## Chinese groups

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

were Canada, Mexico and Germany. Japan was fifth.

The overall surge in Chinese visitors largely is seen as a numbers game. The world's most populous country has a rising middle class with a growing desire — and the money — to travel.

Chinese tourists spend \$6,000 each per trip to the U.S. on average, the highest of any country they visit, according to Thompson of Brand USA.

The total number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad jumped nearly 20 percent last year, to 109 million, according to China National Tourism Administration, a government agency. That means

the U.S. currently is capturing only 2 percent of Chinese overseas travelers, leaving lots of room for growth.

### Getting 'China ready'

The National Tour Association reports it continues to register more tour operators to serve Chinese group travelers.

NTA announced earlier this

spring that enrollment in its "China Inbound Program" has grown to more than 200 active tour operators.

Last year, the NTA China Inbound Program conducted familiarization trips to Arizona; Houston and Galveston Beach, Texas; Park City, Utah; and, this year, New Orleans.

The trips were organized in

collaboration with NTA supplier and DMO members, helping the program operators explore new destinations and develop new product and itineraries beyond the gateway cities, the NTA said.

Along with assisting tour operators, the NTA says it works with hotels and other tour suppliers to help them become "China-ready."

Haybina Hao, NTA's director of international development, leads workshops in cities across North America, explaining Chinese customs and expectations to those working with the group leisure travel market.

### The 'Chinese' way

"It took time for American travel professionals to learn about the Chinese market and become confident working with it," Hao said. "It's been eight years since we opened the market up, but it's a scary market for some because it's so complex — culturally, politically and the way the Chinese do business."

Hao's sessions are designed to help suppliers understand how to meet travelers' expectations, how to conduct a cultural analysis and how to deal with the unexpected. She also provides translation services and encourages tour suppliers to make their information — in print and online — available in Chinese.

Last month, an NTA board delegation traveled to China, where, along with Hao, they met with government officials involved in Chinese travel trade and owners of key Chinese travel agencies. The delegation also attended the China Outbound Travel & Tourism Market and the World Travel Market Vision Conference.

"And back in the U.S., we help China Inbound Program operators get Chinese travelers into more motorcoaches, hotels, restaurants, stores, parks and attractions," Hao said.

NTA is sponsoring a China Market Forum in mid-August in Savannah, Ga., as part of Contact, the association's annual tour operator retreat.

### The 'ugly Chinese'

While the NTA and others seek to educate the American travel industry about the Chinese tourist market, the Chinese government has embarked on a program to educate its citizens about being better visitors.

While "the ugly American" is an old travel industry cliché, badly behaving Chinese tourists are now being pressured to improve their manners while traveling abroad.

The often-brusque style of Chinese tour groups ranges from minor slights, such as spitting and

# California bus dealership cleared in fatal crash

CARSON, Calif. — A Carson-based bus dealership was not liable in a 2010 rollover bus crash that killed two Chinese tourists and injured eight others during a trip to the Grand Canyon, a jury has ruled.

The Los Angeles Superior Court jury last month found in favor of BusWest in a lawsuit filed by 13 plaintiffs who claimed there would have been fewer casualties had the company equipped the minibus with seat belts. The plaintiffs sought \$57 million in damages.

"Our hearts went out to the plaintiffs, but we just didn't think there was any responsibility on the

part of the dealer," the jury forewoman told the *Daily Breeze*.

She said bus owner Betti Chi could have provided the plaintiffs with a bus that had seat belts and that the tourists decided to board a bus without belts.

Douglas Robinson, a lawyer

for BusWest, said during final arguments that his client had no role in providing the vehicle's specifications.

Seven of the 10 tourists were ejected from the 2006 Starcraft bus in the crash, which occurred on a sharp curve along Pierce Ferry

Road, just off U.S. Highway 93 in Arizona. Driver Zhi Lu testified that he lost control of the minibus after failing to see a sign before a curve signaling a speed reduction to 35 mph.

Robinson maintained that fault for the accident was attributable to

Lu and his employer, TBE International Inc., which was owned by Chi and bought the vehicle from BusWest in 2008.

TBE, Chi and bus manufacturer Forest River Inc. settled with the plaintiffs before trial for \$8.25 million.

## Chinese groups

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

cutting in line, to more outrageous incidents.

In Thailand in February, Chinese tourists outraged Thais by drying underwear in an airport, defecating in public and kicking a temple bell.

In December, a group of Chinese tourists abused Thai staff on a flight from Bangkok.

The rude behavior prompted Thailand authorities to issue thousands of Chinese-language handbooks on etiquette.

"Uncivilized behavior when traveling overseas has to some extent already affected the image of Chinese people," the China National Tourism Administration stated on its website. Such incidents "make Chinese people blush with shame," it said.

### Blacklisted offenders

To save Chinese face, the China National Tourism Administration announced new rules last month to establish a "blacklist" of offenders who demonstrate illegal or inappropriate behavior abroad.

The six types of banned behavior include causing disturbances on public transport, damaging cultural relics, ignoring social customs and engaging in gambling or prostitution.

Under the trial regulations, the China National Tourism Administration is developing a national database on misbehaving tourists, with the records kept for up to two years, though tourists are allowed to appeal their inclusion on the list.

The rules do not specify what punishments are likely, but the *Beijing Times* reported that being blacklisted could affect a person's ability to travel abroad again or secure a bank loan, as an offender's information may be passed to law enforcement, customs, transport and banking authorities.

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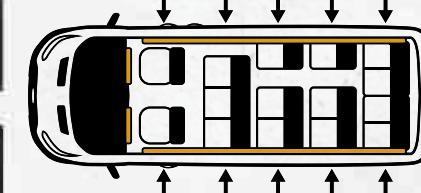
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## 15 PASSENGERS 5 ROWS – 1 AMAZING – INNOVATION



**The new 15-passenger Transit Wagon is equipped with the industry's first 5-row side airbags.<sup>††</sup>** Standard. And with multiple safety features designed to help protect passengers, safety is clearly the top priority in Transit.

• THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE •

# Bendix upgrades collision mitigation system

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Bendix Wingman collision mitigation system, which was introduced to the motorcoach industry last year on new MCI coaches, is being upgraded with additional features, including a camera that can identify speed limit signs and report speeding drivers to their employer.

Bendix says its new Wingman Fusion combines radar- and camera-based safety systems and integrates them with vehicle braking to bring a heightened level of collision avoidance to the market.

The system can automatically apply the brakes to avoid collisions with stationary vehicles, but it can't yet identify non-metallic objects such as wildlife.

Among the features it does include are lane-departure warnings, following-distance alerts and overspeed alerts — a new attribute.

The Wingman Fusion camera reads speed limit signs posted along the road and, when the driver exceeds the posted limit by 5 mph, the system issues an audible warning.

When the driver is 10 mph over

the speed limit, the system will again issue an audible alert, but also will de-throttle the engine for one second to get the driver's attention.

Additionally, it will capture 10 seconds of video — five from before and after the threshold was crossed — and will transmit that to the fleet manager.

A total of 20 seconds of video are captured and available if the fleet manager wishes to access the complete video, but only 10 seconds are transmitted to reduce data

requirements.

Another new system feature is called "alert prioritization," which — in the event multiple warnings are generated — will determine which of them is the most urgent and issue only that one.

## Early impact warning

Bendix executives say Wingman Fusion will provide up to 3.5 seconds of notice to a driver before an impact occurs. This is seen as being particularly useful when a motorcoach or other large commercial vehicle is coming upon stopped traffic and is in danger of a rear-end collision.

Wingman Fusion will provide audible alerts and, if necessary, apply the brakes to reduce the severity of the collision or prevent it altogether, the company says.

"Wingman Fusion represents a pioneering technological stride that is far more than simply the collection of its parts," said Scott Burkhart, Bendix vice president of sales, marketing and business development. "It offers an all-inclusive, better-performing safety option for fleets..."

The Wingman Fusion system is now being offered to truck and bus OEMs, and MCI says it's looking at the latest technology.

"Our roadmap takes into account the new advances made by Bendix, and MCI will look to incorporate these on coaches if appropriate," said MCI Vice President of Marketing and Product Planning Brent Maitland.

## MCI adopts technology

About a year ago, MCI announced it was introducing a series of active safety and wheel-end technologies from Bendix Commercial Vehicle System on its popular J4500 model. (See June 1, 2014, and March 1, 2015, issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The suite of technologies included the Bendix Electronic Sta-

bility Program full-stability system, Bendix Wingman advanced collision mitigation technology, Bendix Wingman active cruise with braking, the Bendix ADB22X air-disc brake, and the SmarTire Tire Pressure Monitoring System.

Maitland said addition of the systems represented a significant advancement in vehicle safety, performance and reliability.

Bendix ESP is designed to help address both roll and directional instability through sensors that recognize and mitigate conditions that could lead to rollover and loss-of-control situations.

## Active interventions

Bendix Wingman is built on the foundation of Bendix ESP. It uses a radar sensor mounted to the front of a vehicle to provide active cruise control with braking features, along with collision mitigation technology that delivers both warnings and active interventions to help drivers potentially avoid rear-end collisions, or at least help reduce their severity.

The Bendix ADB22X air disc brake provides improved stopping power while virtually eliminating brake fade, and offers drivers a car-like feel and straight, stable stops, the company says.

Bendix's SmarTire continuously monitors the pressure and temperature of each tire to provide real-time tire status information to the driver.

A temperature-compensation feature allows the system to accurately monitor pressure whether the coach has been sitting idle or has been driving for hundreds of miles.

"While no system replaces the importance of safe drivers practicing safe driving habits, Bendix and MCI are...improving motorcoach safety for drivers, their passengers and everyone on the road," said TJ Thomas, Bendix director of marketing and customer solutions.

# Ontario considers online ticket dispute system

TORONTO, Ont. — The province of Ontario is considering adopting an online system for disputing traffic citations, or what are known as administrative monetary penalty system fines.

The Web-based traffic court of sorts would allow individuals or companies to deal with traffic-related provincial and municipal fines via the Internet.

The province currently is consulting with various stakeholders in a bid to determine whether motor carriers think an online sys-

tem would be effective, and whether it could maintain the principles of procedural fairness, including the right to be heard before an unbiased decision-maker.

Fundamentally, for owners of commercial vehicles, it boils down to whether movement to an online system would be of benefit or a hindrance in disputing municipal or highway traffic offences.

The Ontario Motor Coach Association has expressed concerns about the unintended consequences of such a system.



## Statistic Center

### Georgia at a Glance

#### TOP 10 GEORGIA DEPARTURE LOCATIONS:

01)	ATLANTA
02)	SAVANNAH
03)	DECATUR
04)	MARIETTA
05)	ATHENS
06)	LAWRENCEVILLE
07)	LITHONIA
08)	MACON
09)	STONE MOUNTAIN
10)	COLLEGE PARK

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#### PERCENTAGE OF GA GROUP TRIPS DEPARTING EACH MONTH:

january	2.53%
february	5.68%
March	<b>8.29%</b>
april	<b>8.92%</b>
may	<b>11.05%</b>
june	<b>12.71%</b>
july	<b>16.18%</b>
august	7.26%
september	6.63%
october	<b>9.31%</b>
november	6.55%
december	4.89%
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# Luxury transit company threatened with discrimination suit

SAN FRANCISCO — Luxury transit startup Leap has been threatened with legal action by a group accusing the company of violating the Americans with Disabilities Act by removing wheelchair accessibility features from its buses.

The Independent Living Resource Center filed a complaint with the Department of Justice alleging that Leap illegally discriminates against disabled people by not making its buses wheelchair accessible.

The group also sent a demand letter to the company threatening legal action if it didn't reinstall the wheelchair features.

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Leap purchased used, wheelchair-accessible public transit buses and then retrofitted them to add bar-style seating and plush leather armchairs to the spaces once reserved for wheelchairs.

"You don't get to pick and choose what members of the public you serve," Jessie Lorenz, executive director of the Independent Living Resource Center, told the newspaper. "People with disabilities in San Francisco run the gamut. Some of the people here with disabilities are the haves. There are software engineers in wheelchairs that would love to use Leap."

Leap runs one route between the Marina District and the Financial District during the morning and evening rush hours, offering workers a comfortable ride complete with iced coffee and Wi-Fi for a one-way fare of \$6. The company, which has raised \$2.5 million in venture capital, began a version of its service in 2013, but then went on hiatus and started up again in March.

The demand letter sent to Leap alleges that in application documents submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission, Leap "identified all of its buses as accessible to individuals with disabilities. Meanwhile, Leap redesigned and refurbished the buses and added many amenities." (Leap is not currently licensed; according to the letter, its application is still pending.)

The letter demands that the company "immediately redesign and operate its buses to provide full and equal transit services for individuals who use wheelchairs."

It notes that many clients of the Independent Living Resource Center have also complained about Leap's inaccessibility. An anti-Leap Facebook group is advocating a bus-blocking protest on Leap's route.

In an email to the *Chronicle*, Leap CEO Kyle Kirchoff did not

explain why the company chose to rip out its wheelchair-accessibility features.

"The reason we bought used buses in the first place was so we could inexpensively strip down the interior to an empty box, and create the type of experience that would

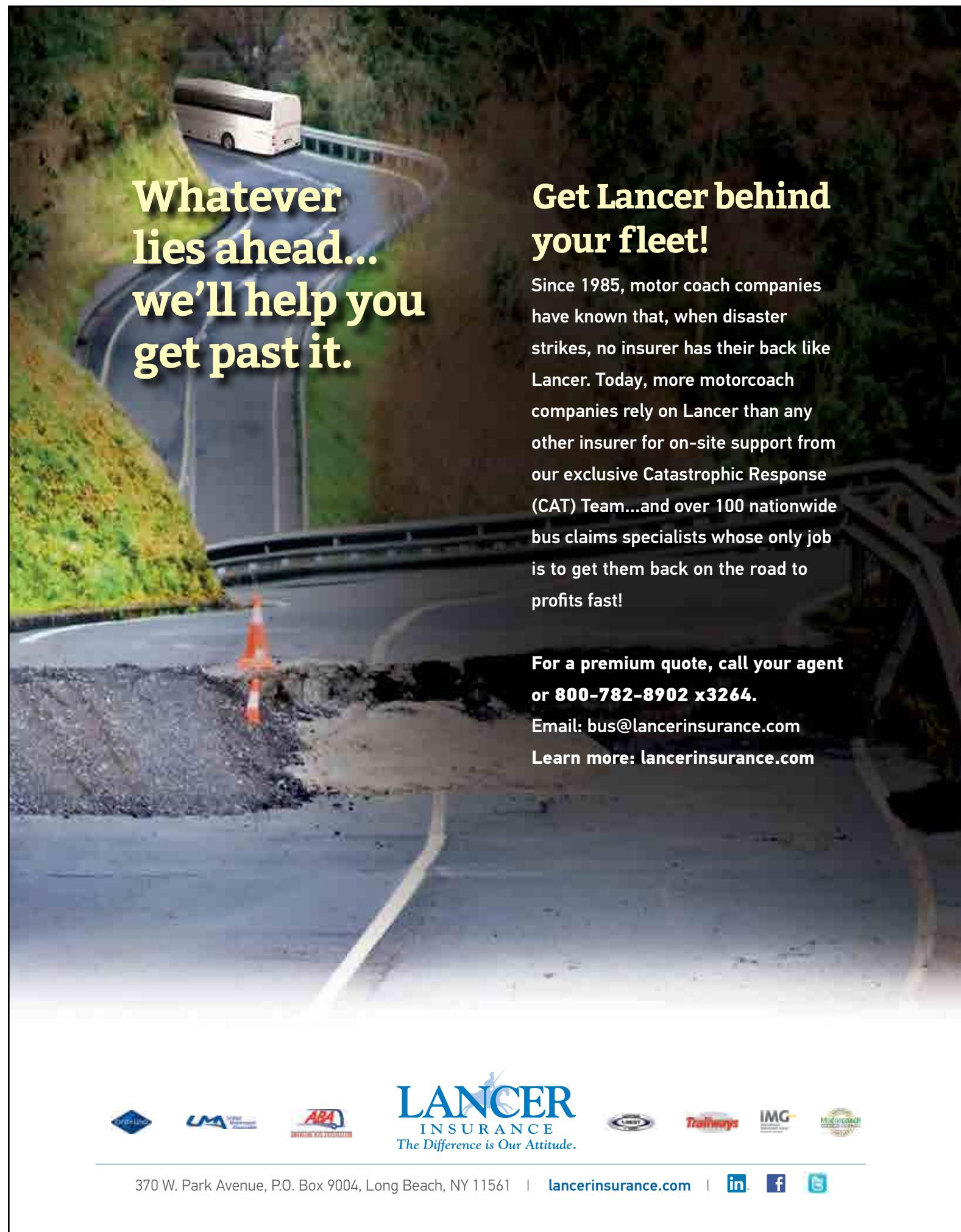
encourage people who typically drive their own cars to work, to start riding the bus," he said. "It was important to start from scratch."

Kirchoff said that the company has always planned on eventually adding accommodations for disabled passengers and is "currently

investigating ways we can remove seats from one of our buses to accommodate disabled commuters."

In a previous statement, Leap also said that its "understanding is that used vehicles do not have the same accessibility requirements as new vehicles."

After the complaint was filed with the Department of Justice, the *Chronicle* determined that at least four Leap buses had wheelchair accommodations before they were sold to the startup, meaning that the company would be required to maintain those features under the law.



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## Industry officials

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

seem to be accomplishing much of any goal."

Participants in the hearing took aim at various FMCSA policies, including its efforts to significantly increase the minimum levels of financial responsibility (liability insurance) required of bus and truck companies. The FMCSA's Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program also was a target of ire. Even the president of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, representing state law enforcement agencies, called for CSA scores to be removed from public view because the program "is not being used as intended."

### Good news, but...

"The safety record of commercial motor carriers and motorcoach operators has improved dramatically since the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration was established in 1999," said Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., committee chairman, in his introductory statement. "The number of large trucks and buses involved in fatal crashes decreased by 17 percent and 4 percent, respectively, from 2003 to 2013."

"Industry, drivers and the enforcement community alike de-

serve credit for these achievements. I am concerned, however, about the growing scope and number of new regulations being placed on the industry," Graves said.

Among his goals, he said, is "reforming the way FMCSA undertakes rule-making."

Rep. Peter A. DeFazio, D-Ore., past chairman of the subcommittee, said, "We can do better. Many of the problems we investigated — the development of CSA, drug testing, medical qualifications of drivers, bus safety, truck size and weight, cross-border trucking, FMCSA's oversight of carriers — unfortunately is all still very much a work in progress. Very little has been settled."

Congress shares responsibility for the muddle, DeFazio said. In the last federal surface transportation law, "We directed FMCSA to undertake 41 regulatory changes, most of which required rule-making. We keep mandating lots of activity and today it seems to have resulted in less clarity for the industry and a wide variety of stakeholders."

As an example, DeFazio cited driver hours-of-service rules. "FMCSA's regulations are incredibly difficult to understand," he said.

The FMCSA also was criticized for not acting promptly on congressional mandates.

"The DOT (Department of

Transportation) recently convened a negotiated rule-making committee to develop a rule on driver training," said Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, a Democrat representing Washington, D.C. "Robust driver training is something Congress has directed DOT to consider for nearly 25 years. The first directive was in a bill in 1991. To say this rule is overdue is putting it fairly mildly."

### Financial responsibility

In his opening remarks Graves said the government should spend its resources on "initiatives that will move the needle in terms of reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities on the nation's highways. Of particular concern to me is a recent regulatory proposal to raise the minimum levels of financial responsibility potentially by millions of dollars."

Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., who has introduced a bill that would block the FMCSA from implementing higher insurance minimums, focused on the issue in his questioning of hearing participants, including UMA's Scott.

Perry asked Scott how the motorcoach industry would be affected if required to boost insurance coverage from \$5 million to \$20 million per bus, an increase that has been discussed in recent

months.

"It would be financially devastating," Scott answered. "For companies smaller than myself, it would literally put them out of business. It very well could put us out of business as well. It would most certainly discourage new entrants from coming into this industry because they simply would not be able to afford it."

"There has been no study, no data shown that even proves that it is necessary. It is almost like the action might be specifically designed to put companies out of business to a certain extent."

Perry asked if Scott's company has been involved in any accidents that approached \$5 million in liability.

"We have been in business for 33 years and no, we have never experienced a loss that has even come remotely close to that," Scott said.

### Compliance, compliance

Representatives of the trucking industry also expressed their frustration with FMCSA policies and regulations.

"Instead of a reasoned, understanding approach to improving highway safety by addressing the key factors behind at-fault truck crashes, FMCSA policy enforcement is driven by a goal of absolute compliance with the letter of

every single regulation, no matter the connection to at-fault crashes," testified Danny Schnautz, vice president of Clark Freight Lines of Pasadena, Tex.

"This is a huge missed opportunity to achieve greater safety results at a lower regulatory burden," said Schnautz, who represented the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association at the hearing.

He said an enforcement emphasis on finding violations harms motor carriers by degrading safety scores over insignificant violations and diverting attention to paperwork.

"Recently one of my trucks was inspected by a Texas state trooper," he said. "Although the truck was in stellar condition, an inspection violation impacting our CSA score was issued because the decal for two digits of the truck's USDOT number were unreadable."

Schnautz added, "At a recent safety meeting, rather than discuss topics that would actually relate to safety outcomes, such as breaking down the preventative actions a driver could have taken to avoid a crash, because of CSA we trained drivers on the proper completion of a form."

Meaningful improvements will require a broadened approach

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## Industry officials

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from the current rules- and enforcement-centric model, said Tom Kretzinger, president of American Central Transport of Liberty, Mo., who represented the American Trucking Associations.

### Traffic enforcement

"Despite clear evidence driver behavior is responsible for the majority of crashes, federal funding for on-road truck enforcement is predominately spent on inspecting vehicle condition, not traffic enforcement," Kretzinger said. "Government research shows that traffic enforcement coupled with limited inspection is at least four times more effective in preventing crashes and saving lives. Yet FMCSA data reflects a steep decline in enforcement activity."

State law enforcement agencies also would like to adjust the focus of commercial motor vehicle activities, said Capt. Bill Rees of the Idaho State Police, who is president of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance.

The federal government influences state enforcement goals through the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program, which gives the states \$218 million in annual funding.

"Most critical is giving the states more flexibility to design and implement programs that improve commercial motor vehicle safety," Rees said. "Our top priority is saving lives but we also have a responsibility to meet a long list of requirements under the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program to enforce associated safety regulations...with limited resources."

The federal program requires states to conduct roadside inspections, traffic enforcement, compliance reviews, safety audits, targeted strike forces and educational activities, Rees said.

### CSA is broken

The Safety Measurement System scoring within the Compliance, Safety, Accountability program is "definitely broken," said Rep. Bob Gibbs, R-Ohio. "When I talk to truckers in my district, the stories they tell me are unbelievable and scary."

Schnautz, speaking for the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers, called for current CSA scores to be pulled from the Internet. He said carrier scores could be tarnished for violations unrelated to safety.

"We get citations for a trailer light being out on a daytime, 20-minute drive. That light won't be used in that 20-minute drive,"

he said. "It has turned us into a standard of perfection and that is not the real world."

Schnautz said carrier scores could be ruined by the overzealousness of local law enforcement agencies. "It is easy money for an agency, a jurisdiction, to pull a truck over that has one light obviously out, write the ticket and let him go. That is a big disconnect. The revenue drives this a lot."

Rees agreed that CSA scoring is not working. "CVSA supports legislation to remove the scores from public display for a number of reasons. It is beginning to impact our state programs. Motor carriers are now requesting inspections frequently in an effort to try and get clean inspections and get their scores down. We have the citation adjudication to deal with now.

"The bottom line, it is not

being used as intended. We have shippers using this to determine whether a carrier is safe and it was never intended for that."

### Sound science and enforcement

UMA's Scott, in a prepared statement he read to the subcommittee, took issue with what he called the FMCSA's "over-zealous regulatory enforcement and lack of due process," as well as delays by the agency in processing new entrant applications, often resulting in companies never opening.

He shared real-life cases of motorcoach operators who were wrongly forced out of business by the FMCSA, resulting in huge financial losses.

"A long, miserable trail of employee layoffs, equipment repossession, foreclosures and unpaid creditors are the hallmark of the

FMCSA's unwarranted out-of-service orders," Scott said. "Surely Congress wants the FMCSA to direct companies to correct deficiencies when they find them, but not to put companies with longstanding good safety records out-of-business — the equivalent of the corporate death penalty."

Scott said UMA is willing to work with Congress to create "a regulatory climate at the FMCSA that ensures safe practices by drivers and operators, reasonable regulations grounded in sound science and testing, and strong but fair enforcement of regulations that will improve the safety for our passengers and the traveling public while at the same time supporting a vibrant and growing passenger transportation industry. We do not believe these goals are mutually exclusive."

Dale Krapf, met with Perry during Capitol Hill Days to discuss the insurance issue.

"The bus and motorcoach industry is facing a dire threat to growth and sustainability of our industry," said Krapf, board chairman of Krapf Bus Companies. "A grateful United Motorcoach Association is thrilled Congressman Perry took the time to listen to the industry's concerns and introduce critical legislation."

## Insurance bills

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

transportation industries have an exceptionally high safety record," he said. "If we unnecessarily raise minimum insurance rates we'll only force out of business companies with an extremely safe track record; this is not the proper role of the federal government. We shouldn't look to penalize companies that work hard and play by the rules."

The issue is a primary focus of UMA lobbying efforts and was prominently discussed during the 2015 Capitol Hill Days in March. During the two-day event, 80 UMA members held face-to-face meetings with senators and representatives in their Washington, D.C., offices to boost their awareness of federal issues threatening the motorcoach industry and its customers.

Members of UMA's leadership team, including UMA Vice-Chair

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# Museum fleet gains iconic coach — the Scenicruiser

HERSHEY, Pa. — Parked prominently on the floor of the Museum of Bus Transportation here is a motorcoach that seems destined to become the flagship of the museum fleet — a 1955/56 Scenicruiser.

Yes, a "1955/56" Scenic.

The coach has been on display since last summer when ABC Companies loaned it to the museum.

A months-long process has been under way to transfer ownership of the coach after ABC Companies decided last fall to donate it to the museum. The ownership change is expected shortly with a ceremonial handover of the title and keys in June.

ABC acquired the coach eight years ago, restored it at the company facility in Faribault, Minn., and kept it at its headquarters complex in Winter Garden, Fla., before loaning it to the museum last year.

With the donation, the museum is, in effect, getting two Scenicruisers for the price of none.

That's because Scenicruiser (PD4501-932) has the ABC history that has more twists and turns, as well as potholes and detours, than any road it traveled during the

40-plus years it was in service.

Thanks to research by Fred Rayman, acknowledged Scenicruiser expert and co-author (with Tom McNally) of the 2013 book, *Greyhound Scenicruiser: Flagship of the Fleet*, lots is known about the service life of the coach.

But, like any good bus story, the tale of the 932nd Scenicruiser to roll off the General Motors assembly line also has gaps and a little mystery.

## Long, difficult road

Here are a few of the high (and low) points on the long road of Scenicruiser No. 932:

First, it's actually two Scenicruisers — Nos. 365 and 932.

Scenicruiser No. 365 was delivered to Pacific Greyhound Lines in April 1955. Over the years it was part of the fleet of Western Greyhound Lines and Central Southwest Greyhound Lines.

Ten years into its service life, in the early morning of Aug. 29, 1965, it was on a Houston to New Orleans run along U.S. 90 when a west-bound lumber truck crossed over the center line and hit the bus nearly head-on. The crash, be-

tween Vinton and Edgerly, La., killed the truck driver and 10 passengers on the bus. Twenty-seven passengers were injured.

The Houston-based driver of the Scenicruiser, Jeff Blankenship, survived. The lower level of the coach was destroyed.

In May 1956, Scenicruiser No. 932 was delivered to Eastern Greyhound Lines. It was transferred to Central Southwest Greyhound Lines, running coast to coast. In 1967, No. 932 experienced a major fire in the rear end.

Within a year or so, the rear one-third of No. 365 was mated with the front two-thirds of No. 932. As part of the rebuild, the surviving coach was converted into what was known as a combo-car, that is, a freight-hauling passenger bus.

This was done by removing the seats from the aft portion of the upper deck, erecting a bulkhead to partition off the remaining seats, and installing an access door that replaced the rear-most curbside window.

An estimated 100 of the 1,001 Scenicruisers that General Motors delivered to Greyhound were converted to combo-cars. The conversion reduced the passenger seating capacity from 43 to 26.

Scenicruiser No. 932 was essentially the surviving bus of the rebuild and reconfiguration. It was given a new fleet number, 0753, and operated from Dallas to Memphis to New Orleans to Houston and back to Dallas.

Greyhound retired the coach early in 1977 after 21 years on the road.

Between 1977 and 2007, when it was purchased by ABC Companies, Scenicruiser No. 932 had a succession of owners, including the First Baptist Church in Denver; Bellingham-Sumas Stages and Hesselgrave International, both of Bellingham, Wash.; and a Hesselgrave driver.

ABC purchased it from the Hesselgrave driver and restored it to a seated coach, reinstalling



Bus & Motorcoach News columnist Dave Millhouser, a special advisor to the board of the Museum of Bus Transportation, steps off the Scenicruiser he once helped drive more than 3,000 miles.

Scenicruiser seats in the upper deck with the exception of those across the rear of the bus. A solid bench seat was installed instead of the five reclining seats Scenicruisers had originally.

The cargo door was removed and replaced with a solid side wall.

Finally, ABC painted the coach in the livery of Faribo Lines, a charter service once operated by ABC Companies founder Clancy Cornell. In the early 1970s, Faribo Lines owned and operated a Scenicruiser (No. 777) that it eventually sold.

The last long road trip of No. 932 occurred in April 2010 when Coach USA Executive Vice President John Oakman and *Bus & Motorcoach News* columnist Dave Millhouser, a retired ABC sales representative, drove the coach 3,006 miles from Winter Garden to Adrian and Amarillo, Texas, for a reunion of Scenicruisers. The bus performed flawlessly.

## Iconic design, designer

Many bus industry veterans consider the Greyhound Scenicruiser to be the most-attractive bus ever to roll along an American highway. Its basic design was created by world-famous industrial designer Raymond Loewy.

Among Loewy's designs were

the Shell, Exxon, TWA and the former BP logos, Coca-Cola vending machines, Lucky Strike cigarette packaging, the Studebaker Avanti and Champion, and Air Force One livery.

## Popular attraction

Since the Scenicruiser went on display at the museum last year, it has become a popular attraction. "It seems like every visitor can relate to it," notes museum President Tom Collins.

ABC Companies is a long-time supporter of the museum. Clancy Cornell has served several terms on the museum board.

"He, (current ABC Chairman) Dane Cornell and everyone at ABC have been instrumental in the restoration of four of our most popular historic coaches," Collins said.

The Museum of Bus Transportation ([www.busemuseum.org](http://www.busemuseum.org)) shares a building with the Antique Automobile Club of America, providing a wide variety of historic vehicles for car buffs, as well as bus nuts.

The Scenicruiser will be formally donated by ABC Companies during the museum's annual Spring Bus Fling on Saturday, June 6, on the museum campus in Hershey. For information, call (717) 566-7100 Ext. 119.



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### June 2015

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

### August 2015

**8-12** Georgia, Alabama and South Central Motorcoach Associations Regional Meeting, Lake Lanier Islands, Ga. Info: [www.alabamamotorcoach.org](http://www.alabamamotorcoach.org).

**10-11** 2015 Midwest Bus & Motorcoach Association Convention, Hotel Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne, Ind. Info: [www.mbmca.org](http://www.mbmca.org).

**20-23** Motorcoach Associations of South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia Regional Meeting, Doubletree by Hilton, Columbia, S.C. Info: [www.scmotorcoach.org](http://www.scmotorcoach.org).

### October 2015

**17-20** 42nd Annual California

**Bus Association Convention and Trade Show**, Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, Fish Camp, Calif. Info: [www.cbabus.com](http://www.cbabus.com).

**25-27** 2015 BANY Annual Meeting and Marketplace, Villa Roma Resort and Conference Center, Callicoon, N.Y. Info: [www.BANYbus.org](http://www.BANYbus.org).

**30** California Highway Patrol Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit, Wyndham Anaheim in Garden Grove, Calif. Info: [www.chp.ca.gov/html/cvss](http://www.chp.ca.gov/html/cvss)



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