

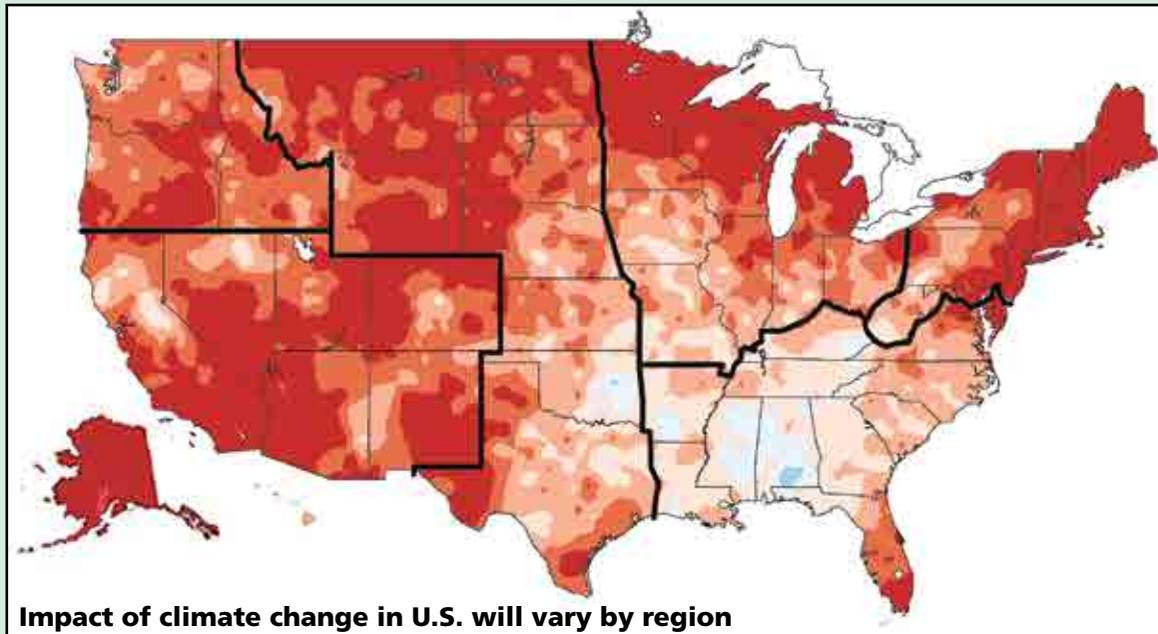
Report: Climate change poses challenges for industry

WASHINGTON — A new federal report on the impact of climate change across America includes some sobering news for the motorcoach industry, which already has plenty of experience with weather-related disruptions.

The National Climate Assessment, released last month by the White House, predicts that rising sea levels, warmer temperatures and an increase in severe weather events could wreak havoc on the nation's transportation system, influencing the daily and seasonal operations of transportation companies.

"Transportation systems are already experiencing costly climate change-related impacts," the report states.

"Many inland states — for example, Vermont, Tennessee, Iowa and Missouri — have experienced severe precipitation events, hail and flooding during the past three years, damaging roads, bridges



Impact of climate change in U.S. will vary by region

and rail systems — and the vehicles that use them.

"Over the coming decades, all regions and modes of transportation will be affected by increasing

temperatures, more extreme weather events and changes in precipitation."

The report goes on to predict that delays caused by severe

storms will disrupt almost all types of transportation.

"Storm drainage systems for highways, tunnels, airports and city streets could prove inadequate, re-

sulting in localized flooding. Bridge piers are subject to scour as runoff increases stream and river flows, potentially weakening bridge foundations. Severe storms will disrupt highway traffic, leading to more accidents and delays."

Bus and motorcoach companies are certainly used to dealing with severe weather — the protracted winter in the East and Midwest this year played havoc with many companies and their ability to get buses on the road, maintain schedules and keep charter jobs.

But costly weather-related disruptions are not all that common, says Jim Davis, owner of Davis Tours in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., who has experienced his share of hurricanes.

"There aren't any more now than there were before," Davis observed. "Hurricanes have been happening for centuries."

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Luxury service turns 11, changes hands

BOSTON — Two metropolises, three to four hours apart by road, plus premium service.

Those factors are critical to achieving success for frequently-scheduled, luxury motorcoach service, says the new president and general manager of LimoLiner, the pioneering upscale coach service.

LimoLiner links downtown Boston and New York's Manhattan with two to four daily departures on full-size MCI coaches outfitted for 28 business-class passengers.

The carrier was founded in 2003 by Fergus McCann, a Scottish-Canadian entrepreneur whose interests included a golf vacation company and, for a time, controlling interest in the Celtic Football Club of Glasgow. (See Sept. 15, 2003, and Jan. 1, 2004, *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The 20-employee company was purchased in April by Hamil-



Mark Richardson, who began driving buses as a college student, now manages LimoLiner.

ton Transportation Group, which is headed by Mark Richardson, who got his feet wet in the motorcoach business as a college student about 25 years ago, driving tour buses on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.

Richardson and partners heard McCann was interested in selling his company.

"LimoLiner was his vision. He did a good job building it into a pretty successful business. He was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►

Legal wrangling continues in Caterpillar engine suits

The motorcoach industry's years-long struggle with Caterpillar engines passed something of a milepost earlier this spring as lawyers for Caterpillar Inc. asked a federal judicial panel to consolidate five putative class-action lawsuits filed against the company.

The Caterpillar attorneys also requested the suits over alleged defects with Caterpillar C13 and C15 engines be transferred to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida in Miami.

"They're engaging in legal maneuvering instead of saying, 'we should make this right by our clients. We should do the right thing,'" said Paul M. Weiss, an attorney representing bus and truck owners who are suing Caterpillar. Weiss, of Complex Litigation

LLC in Highland Park, Ill., said he and other plaintiff attorneys are not opposed to the consolidation of the separate cases pending in federal courts in Florida, New Jersey, California, Louisiana and Pennsylvania.

However, he said, they are requesting that the case be heard in New Jersey, where it will include buses and trucks with C13 and C15 engines. In Florida, the case is limited to the C13 bus engine, he said.

According to legal filings, Caterpillar argued for the transfer to Florida "because the first action was filed there, significant discovery and motion practice have occurred there, and the court is familiar with the issues."

Plaintiffs in the Florida case in-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►



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Calif. Air Resources Board gives small operators a break

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The California Air Resources Board approved amendments to its Truck and Bus Regulation last month to provide more time for small operators to meet the state's stringent emissions requirements.

The board ruled that small operators — those with three or fewer motorcoaches or buses — that complied with the regulation and brought at least one vehicle into compliance by this year will get to run it longer.

The deadline to replace the vehicle with a newer one will be

pushed back from 2020 to 2023.

Those operators will also get two more years to bring the rest of their buses or coaches into compliance. They will have until 2016 for the second vehicle and 2018 for the third.

Under the changed rules, small fleet operators that were unable to afford to bring buses into compliance and were denied loans to upgrade will be able to run them as-is until 2017.

But there's a wrinkle: "The criteria for claiming this option is being revised as directed by the

board and will not be finalized until the summer of 2014," according to CARB.

The slate of amendments also addresses the troublesome issue of particulate matter filters that have been recalled and cannot be repaired by their manufacturer. (See March 1, 2013, *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Vehicles that had been retrofitted with the faulty filters will be allowed to operate for up to five years from the date of the recall.

Final versions of the amendments will be hammered out in the

next few months. They will be subject to a 15-day public comment period before they are put into effect.

The board estimates that the proposed amendments will save affected fleets more than \$400 million in compliance costs through 2023.

The board approved the changes after hearing hours of testimony from trucking and motorcoach industry representatives, single-truck owner-operators, and members of the public.

According to one trucking

publication, a large majority of speakers from the trucking industry came down against the amendments, saying they were unfair for those companies that had already made the upgrades to comply, which in some cases cost millions of dollars.

"I'm getting slapped in the face because I complied," the owner of a 64-truck fleet was quoted as testifying. "My husband and I stepped up and are over \$3 million in debt [to comply], while competitors who have not com-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

Lawsuit challenges tech shuttles in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO — Community activists here are continuing their campaign against corporate tech shuttles, known as "Google buses," including filing a lawsuit last month to block the shuttles from using public bus stops.

The suit, filed in San Francisco Superior Court, claims a city-approved pilot program that allows the shuttles to use city bus stops violates the state vehicle code and environmental law.

Set to begin in July, the 18-month program will permit the shuttles to pick up and drop off passengers at about 200 bus stops for a \$1 per-stop, per-day fee.

The program was approved by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency in January, and upheld by the County Board of Supervisors in April. (See Feb. 1 and Feb. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

City officials contend the shuttles, which are used primarily by

employees of high-tech companies who live in San Francisco and work in Silicon Valley, help take hundreds of autos off the road, reduce gridlock and benefit the environment.

The motorcoach shuttles are used by more than 35,000 passengers daily, eliminating at least 45 million vehicle miles traveled and 761,000 metric tons of carbon every year from the region's roads and air, according to the city.

The coalition that filed the suit includes tenant advocacy groups and the Service Employees International Union Local 1021. They contend that officials failed to conduct an environmental impact review before approving the program.

"(T)he project will result in significant environmental impacts, including air pollution, impacts to pedestrian and bicyclist safety, delays to public transportation systems, and displacement of low- and

moderate-income members of the community that live and work in areas near proposed shuttle stops," the lawsuit states.

Run by Google, Apple, Facebook and other tech companies, the shuttles have become a symbol of the influx of tech workers into San Francisco and a target of protestors frustrated by gentrification, rising housing costs and the displacement of longtime residents.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

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Roman Cornell, ABC Bus, Winter Garden, FL

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Mike Dickson, President, Southeastern Stages, Atlanta, GA

"We have been testing the Toyo tires and they have been performing extremely well"

Brian Scott, President, Escot Bus Lines, Largo, FL

"The tires are doing great. Thanks for the good service and product"

Andy Barber, President, Corporate Coach, Ft Lauderdale, FL

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John Adams, President, Southern Coach, Dothan, AL

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THE DOCKET

Are you ready? Roadcheck 2014 is June 3-5

It's that time of year again. Roadcheck 2014 is right on (or is it on top of?) bus and truck operators.

The annual inspection event — the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance's 72-hour safety blitz — will be June 3-5.

CVSA sponsors Roadcheck with participation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, Transport Canada, and the Secretariat of Communications and

Transportation (Mexico).

The inspection free-for-all is the largest targeted enforcement program of commercial vehicles in the world, with approximately 14 trucks or buses being inspected, on average, every minute from Canada to Mexico during a 72-hour period.

Here's a quick — and by no means complete — Roadcheck checklist for drivers:

- Buckle up
- Pre-inspect the condition of your vehicle

- Check your brakes
- Ensure all required lamps are the proper color and operational

- Look and listen for leaks
- Look over your tires; check for proper inflation, cuts, bulges and the like

- Don't forget battery terminals
- Make sure you have all your paperwork, including CDL and medical card, and everything is up to date, including the logbook

Last year, CVSA completed more than 73,000 truck and bus

inspections during the enforcement campaign. Of those, a total of 47,771 were North American Standard Level 1 inspections — the most comprehensive roadside and destination inspections.

CVSA is made up of local, state, provincial, territorial and federal motor-carrier safety officials and industry representatives in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Since its inception in 1988, the roadside inspections conducted during Roadcheck have numbered more than 1 million.

Bus drivers use seatbelts more; rate is still low

WASHINGTON — Seatbelt usage among bus drivers grew at the fastest rate of all types of commercial vehicle drivers between 2010 and 2013, figures released by the U.S. Department of Transportation show.

Still, the rate of safety belt usage by bus drivers is the second lowest among all types of commercial vehicle drivers. Only dump truck drivers buckle up less often than bus drivers.

The figures are from the latest *Seatbelt Usage by Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers* survey compiled by the USDOT.

Overall, the use of seatbelts by commercial drivers continues to increase, hitting a record high last year, according to the USDOT figures.

The survey found that the overall safety belt usage rate for drivers of all medium- and heavy-duty trucks and buses rose from 78 percent in 2010 to a new high of 84 percent in 2013.

Since the inception of the study in 2007, overall safety belt use for drivers has increased each year from a rate of 65 percent during the first year.

The rate of seatbelt usage among bus drivers went from just 47 percent in 2010 to 74 percent last year, outpacing all other driver categories in rate of growth.

But that 74 percent usage rate was below all other categories except dump truck drivers, which had a 70 percent rate last year, up from 65 percent in 2010.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Administrator Anne Ferro said the 2013 survey shows that more commercial vehicle drivers are getting the message about the safety benefits of seatbelts, adding that her agency would continue to work to encourage those drivers who do not use their safety belts to buckle-up.

Other highlights from the survey:

- Safety belt use was higher in states governed by primary seatbelt-use laws, 85 percent, than secondary belt-use laws, 78 percent.

- The usage rate for drivers and other occupants in the West

Obama: Eliminate tolling ban on interstates

WASHINGTON — President Obama has proposed lifting the ban on tolling existing interstate highways.

The highly controversial proposal was contained in the four-year transportation plan the Obama administration proposed to Congress.

Under the proposal, states could toll to raise money to upgrade the interstates that run through them, providing the U.S. Department of Transportation has approved a state's plan.

But also under the president's

proposal, USDOT is to draw up criteria by which toll plans would be approved.

Tolling the interstate system is a controversial issue that has been opposed for decades by many highway user groups, as well as shipper and manufacturing groups.

Opponents contend tolling is an inefficient way of raising revenue for infrastructure.

The critics also say allowing interstate tolling would create the opportunity for a patchwork of inconsistently maintained highways.

If recent attempts to toll aging interstate highways to improve them is an indication of what will happen when states advance tolling plans, the president's proposal may not get much use by the states, even if Congress agrees to lift the ban.

Under a federal pilot program, Virginia, North Carolina and Missouri were told they could lay plans to toll interstates, but the outcry was so great at the state level that lawmakers in all three passed measures banning tolling on the roads.

The Obama tolling proposal is contained in the four-year, \$302 billion highway bill Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx sent Congress.

While the bill is given little chance of moving through Congress, Foxx urged lawmakers to take up the proposal before the federal Highway Trust Fund account runs out of money in August, noting that a few states have canceled or delayed infrastructure projects "because of the uncertainty at the federal level."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

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Operator decries slow pace of FMCSA bureaucracy

CORDESVILLE, S.C. — The owner of a six-coach company shut down in February said he has been waiting for more than two months for a response to his request to resume service.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration ordered Motts Transportation Inc. of Cordesville, S.C., out of service in mid-February, citing a number of violations of driver and vehicle safety.

The list included a trip on which an unqualified driver was allowed to operate a motorcoach. Federal investigators said the company owner could not identify some drivers listed on his logs.

James Carter Sr., the owner, said he hired an attorney and safety consultant to deal with the allegations and shutdown.

“For what they shut me down for, the sentence doesn’t fit the crime,” he said, adding “we have to try to get it right.”

“We submitted a 125-page compliance letter. They have had this paperwork since the last part of March. The month of April is gone. Now this is May and they still haven’t done anything.”

“I have been calling every day and I have no indication of when they might act. I am doing everything I can to do what they asked me to do.”

In the meantime, said Carter, “I have six buses sitting in my yard. It is like they want you to give up.”

An FMCSA news release said Mott’s was investigated because of “elevated alert” scores in the agency’s BASIC (Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories) peer-group safety ranking system.

The out-of-service order issued by the FMCSA cited “widespread and serious noncompliance with federal safety regulations. Motts Transportation fails to oversee and monitor its drivers and ensure that its motorcoaches are systematically and properly inspected, repaired and maintained and meet minimum safety standards.”

Inspectors also said Motts does not ensure drivers submit accurate records-of-duty status and hours-of-service reports.

The company was cited for employing part-time drivers but not requiring them to report hours spent on duty for other motor carriers or jobs.

By reconstructing records, investigators said they found five days, from Nov. 23 to Dec. 14 last year, during which one driver violated hours-of-service regulations.

The order stated: “Motts Transportation also has no effective oversight of its drivers, which has led to unknown drivers and an unqualified driver operating its motorcoaches. During the investigation, Jerome Carter Sr. could not identify all drivers who had worked for the carrier during the previous 12 months...(he) told FMCSA investigators that he did not know four drivers listed on Motts Transportation’s roadside inspection reports and could not explain how or why these drivers were operating Motts Transportation motorcoaches.”

Carter said he was ordered out of service for paperwork errors. He said some hours-of-service violations resulted because drivers were not properly signing in and out of their log books.

“There have been no complaints from the public, no accidents. They are coming after companies that don’t keep up with the paperwork.”

“The drivers I have converted from truck drivers to bus drivers. I thought they knew how to fill out logs. They didn’t,” Carter told *Bus & Motorcoach News*, adding that the federal investigators “picked the least little thing. They made a federal case out of it.”

Carter has been in the motor-

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Missouri, Oregon courts say flashing headlights is okay

ST. LOUIS — Two courts have ruled that a driver's flashing his headlights to warn other drivers of a speed trap is constitutionally protected "speech."

In the first case, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri in St. Louis, issued a permanent injunction against the city of Ellisville, Mo., prohibiting it from enforcing its ordinance that forbade the flashing of lights by any vehicles other than buses.

The federal judge pointed out that the ordinance contradicted guidance by the Missouri Department of Transportation to the effect that drivers should be allowed to flash their lights to warn others of emergencies, and then went on

to hold that, as in the case before him, warning of a speed trap was protected communication under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

In Oregon, the Justice Court for Jackson County in Central Point, threw out a ticket given to a truck driver who flashed his lights to warn drivers ahead of him that he was being followed by a police car.

The court found the driver's action to be protected "expressive conduct," under the state constitution.

The driver had been issued a ticket for misuse of his high beams. The court found the rule invalid "as applied."

Former House transportation leader dies

POTOMAC, Md. — Former House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar died last month.

He was 79.

The longest-serving Congressman in Minnesota history, Mr. Oberstar, a Democrat, was dominant in transportation policymaking for 25 years.

Mr. Oberstar was first elected

to Congress in 1974 as a member of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party in a district that encompassed Minnesota's Iron Range, where he was born.

He became chairman of the Transportation Committee in 2006 but was swept from office in the 2010 wave of Republican sentiment that ended Democratic control of the House.

FMCSA foot dragging?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

coach business for 12 years.

"I have had issues in the past and got it straight. Now they say 'the law has changed — for what we slapped you on the wrist before the law is stricter now. You have to do better.'"

The violations cited by the FMCSA brought \$14,000 in fines, Carter said. "How am I going to pay a \$14,000 fine when they are

not doing anything to help me get going again? Everybody is giving me the runaround. I am at the bare minimum right now. I am at the bottom of the bottom."

The FMCSA shutdown order said Motts did not have driver qualification files for eight of its drivers and allowed a coach to be driven by an individual who did not hold a valid Class B commercial driver's license.

Motts also was cited for deficient practices in driver drug and

alcohol testing and vehicle inspections and maintenance. The carrier "was unable to produce all — or even many — of the required vehicle records," the order stated.

One Motts coach was placed out of service for defective brakes twice, last June in Georgia and then in January in South Carolina. On the latter trip, the coach was driven by Carter.

Roadside inspections of Motts coaches produced a 60-percent out-of-service rate, the order stated.

Interstate tolling

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The administration bill, called the "Grow America Act," would update programs in the 2012 MAP-21 law that expires in September.

The new proposal is similar to the president's fiscal 2015 budget submission in which he called for reforming corporate taxes to generate some \$150 billion in revenue.

Top House Republicans have indicated they will not adopt such

a corporate tax overhaul this year.

The Obama bill contains other controversial items. For example, it would authorize the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to set standards for driver compensation.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Administrator Anne Ferro said the provision is designed to "ensure fair pay for long-distance bus and truck drivers who are often paid by the miles they travel, not their total time on

duty, and face economic pressure to jeopardize safety by driving beyond the mandatory limits."

Additionally, the bill would change the Highway Trust Fund name to the Transportation Trust Fund and include \$19 billion for rail programs in a separate account. It would authorize \$25 billion for the Transportation Trust Fund's highway account in 2015.

It also would eliminate the practice of self-insurance among large motor carriers.

Drivers seatbelts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

was the highest at 91 percent, compared to the Northeast, which had the lowest rate at 76 percent.

• Usage rates were higher on expressways, 86 percent, compared

to surface streets, 78 percent.

• Safety belt usage in heavy traffic, 85 percent, continues to be higher than in light traffic.

The survey is described as a nationally representative field data collection program that provides estimates of safety belt re-

straint use by drivers and occupants of medium and heavy-duty commercial motor vehicles.

A copy of the report can be obtained from the FMCSA Office of Outreach and Education at (202) 366-0627, or email the request to fmcса.outreach@dot.gov.

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Cat engines

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clude a number of bus operators, including Salud Services Inc., doing business as Endeavor Bus Lines, of Miami; Gentry Coach Co./Gentry Trailways of Knoxville, Tenn.; Vandalia Bus Lines of Caseyville, Ill.; Roadrunner Charters of Dallas, and Eclipse Charters & Tours of Gary, Ind.

The coach operators filed their case in late 2012 (see Dec. 15, 2012 *Bus & Motorcoach News*). The New Jersey lawsuit was filed by BK Trucking in April 2013.

Lawsuits aplenty

The lawsuits are among scores of legal actions brought against Caterpillar over its on-highway engines, including one involving Transportation Specialists Inc., which does business as Red Carpet Charters in Oklahoma City. In 2006 and 2007, it bought more than 40 new Van Hool coaches powered by Cat engines.

Another case is unusual in that the plaintiff is a motorcoach distributor, CH Bus Sales Inc., of Fairbault, Minn., which distributes Temsa coaches in the U.S.

CH filed its lawsuit over 72 Caterpillar C9 engines that went into 35-foot Temsa coaches purchased in 2009.

Michael Haggerty, owner of CH Bus Sales, said the suit asks that Caterpillar pay about \$125,000 per vehicle, the cost of re-powering all the coaches and installing new transmissions.

"We want them to (pay for re-powering) all 72 vehicles. We want to make it right for our customer," said Haggerty.

"We hope it sends a strong message to the industry that we're

watching out for them and we're in this to the long haul."

The case is scheduled to go before a jury in Orange County, Calif., on June 24.

Muzzled settlement

At least one coach operator is known to have settled with Illinois-based Caterpillar but, under the terms of the settlement, the operator is not allowed to acknowledge that it even had a dispute, much less that there was a settlement.

Such confidentiality orders put other plaintiffs at a disadvantage, said attorney Richard Burke, also of Complex Litigation.

"It's one thing if one person has a problem, it's another thing if a hundred people have a problem and they can't tell anybody about it. That means every time there is a case, the defendant can say, we didn't do anything wrong," he said.

In the pending putative class-action lawsuits, plaintiffs allege "that model-year Caterpillar C13 and C15 engines have defective regeneration systems; that the defect leads to frequent breakdowns and repairs causing economic loss to the owners' of vehicles containing the engines; that Caterpillar failed to comply with its obligations under the emissions system warranty; that the engines are not merchantable [or "marketable"], and that the engines do not comply with a warranty of fitness for a particular purpose."

Dirty word: Re-gen

The complaints about the engines focus on emissions technology, called ACERT, that Caterpillar used to meet 2007 pollution standards mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

for on-highway commercial trucks and buses.

One major problem cited in the lawsuits had to do with the engine's regeneration, or "re-gen," system that's designed to burn off or oxidize the soot in the diesel particulate filter.

When the system malfunctions, the engine shuts down, often stranding the vehicle and its passengers on the highway.

'Breakdowns occurred so frequently...the company maintenance director quit.'

Caterpillar, which reportedly used its ACERT technology in about 20,000 15-liter engines and an unknown number of 13-liter engines, bailed out of the on-highway bus and truck market in 2009, just ahead of the USEPA mandate that 2010 engines meet even stricter pollution control requirements.

Ron Willis of Roadrunner Charters in Dallas has seen it all with his Caterpillar-powered coaches. The operator said they have been the source of innumerable headaches.

"For instance, with a 2010-model Van Hool, we had a customer in Washington D.C., and the bus was only two months old at the time, and it shut down on the road," said Willis, who has 12 buses with 2008 and newer Cat engines.

"I had to send a bus all the way from Texas to pick them up. Not only I was out the fuel, of course, but I had to put the passengers up in hotel rooms. This was a brand new bus."

Stress inducing

Breakdowns occurred so frequently that his son, the company maintenance director, quit.

"He couldn't handle the stress anymore. He was getting calls in the middle of the night so often when we had buses out of town, and they break down, you have a busload of people. Cat won't help you because you can't get a hold of anybody in the middle of the night," said Willis, adding that his son has since rejoined the company.

He said on-the-road breakdowns have lessened through the years as the engine maker refined a troublesome part. But he gave more credit to his maintenance personnel's savvy at monitoring for potential malfunctions than to Caterpillar's fixes.

"They've gotten it to the point where it's serviceable now, where we're able to use the buses, but we still have problems with it," he said. "We just know when it's coming up. We're really proactive, and we're able to fix it before it shuts us completely down."

Problems keep coming

Now, he's facing other problems.

"I'm out of warranty on this stuff, and I'm still paying to have them redone because they're still failing every three to six months," he said, noting that one vital part costs about \$200. "That's not counting what it costs for the breakdown, people wanting their money back, the tow bill or anything else."

Bedford Wynne of Wynne Motorcoaches in Dallas, can recount similar stories.

He said he began encountering problems almost immediately after

buying six MCI coaches with 2008 model-year Caterpillar engines.

"We went right back to MCI, and they took back three of the Caterpillar engines and replaced them. We continued to run three of the Caterpillar engines with numerous problems," said Wynne, who joined the Florida suit last year.

He estimates that each of the buses was in the shop between 18 and 24 times a year.

"We'd pick the bus up and it would go back in the next week with the same problem," he said. "Any manufacturer is going to have challenges. That's just part of the bus industry. But when they can't fix it and it gets repetitive, that's when it's frustrating."

Wynne and other operators seem less inclined to fault coach manufacturers than the engine maker for the problems.

It's Cat, Cat, Cat

"It's not MCI. I don't want to throw MCI under the bus. It's Caterpillar, no matter which manufacturer. I've heard of people who bought Van Hools who were picking them up in Florida and bringing them back to Texas and they didn't even make it to Texas," he said.

"Basically I want Caterpillar to admit fault for what they've done. And, yes, financial considerations should be awarded. I've lost thousands of dollars because of a brand new engine I bought from them that should have been tested."

According to Weiss, the case is likely to be resolved "within a year, maybe two." He invited other operators who own coaches equipped with the Caterpillar engines to contact the firm at info@complexlitgroup.com.

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Driver responsibility, authority...and paying attention

By Dave Millhouser

The summer sun was setting as the two-bus convoy headed west across Kansas on old U.S. 40.

Between them, the well-traveled Brill IC41's were carrying 75 high school kids, as we looked for a safe place to pull over and make "the switch."

Experience had taught us that teenagers foam with hormones, and the only sure way to control the situation during nighttime was by putting all the girls on one bus, and the boys on the other.

This was the days of open windows (A/C was a luxury we couldn't afford) and foaming is an understatement, so we made sure we didn't pass each other...heaven knew what would transpire if the coaches got too close.

This also was in the days before lawyers swarmed like locusts, but even then we knew we were responsible for virtually everything that happened on our buses.

In mid-April, a New York party bus driver was arrested for "child endangerment" after he pulled into a rest area to determine the source of a loud "bang."

According to news reports, "when troopers arrived they saw teenagers, many obviously intoxicated, and at least 100 beer cans and 'several gallons' of opened and empty bottles of whiskey and rum."

"It's really a shame that this is happening," the charter company's owner was quoted as saying. "He has been a good driver. He did the right thing."

The owner also was reported as having said: "These kids sneak stuff in and how are you to know? It's really the parents' responsibility at this point."

While I don't know the ALL specifics of this case, but if the owner was quoted accurately, he's wrong.

The driver may be a fine fellow, but he wasn't doing his whole job if all the drinking was taking place without him having a clue.

As for it being the parents' responsibility -- they weren't there. And, gee whiz, maybe the kids fibbed when asked if there were chaperones.

Best guess is that a helpful litigator is going to help him understand that both his driver and his company are responsible for any-

thing they could have reasonably foreseen.

Years ago, a lady from Geneseo, N.Y., wrote a letter to the editor. In stilted language that seemed laughable at the time, she referred to "Bus Captains" and insisted we should treat drivers as captains because they had similar responsibilities to airline and ship captains, and often operated in a hostile environment.

She was right (and I was wrong to laugh). Both the coach company and its driver are responsible for what's going on in the back of the bus.

One charter operator says his company frequently turns down charters when they don't feel there's likely to be adequate supervision or discipline.

Frequently, parents of party-hungry teenagers castigate him for "forgetting what it was like when he was young."

He hasn't, which is why he demands chaperones, and has drivers check for contraband as passengers board.

One GBB (Great Big Busline) occasionally has difficulty getting curbside pickup locations ap-

proved because communities think some of their passengers import controlled substances.

A different GBB had an unfortunate decapitation aboard a coach (as if there could be a "fortunate" one).

In each case the companies are aware they have a measure of responsibility for everything that happens on board their buses, and endeavor to train drivers accordingly.

If a motorcoach driver is not in charge...then who is?

Drivers need to be given the authority to enforce discipline on their buses, and backed up when they exercise it. Sometimes there's a delicate balance between enforcing rules and retaining customers, but in the end the driver, and ultimately the company, are responsible for anything they can reasonably anticipate.

Different types of groups require different approaches, and some training and discussion might be in order.

A friend was driving a girl's lacrosse team in a school bus when he noticed trucks passing, then slowing down and passing again. It

seems that some of the young ladies were "moon-ing" the truckers. My pal put a stop to it, and chastised himself for not checking his mirrors more often.

A couple of weeks later, the same driver was transporting the same team. He again noticed that everyone that passed him was smiling.

A belated check of his mirror revealed that this time the girls had their lacrosse sticks out the windows, and were "rowing" in unison, like an ancient galleon.

An improvement, but dangerous if the bus passed close to anything.

While not so good at checking his mirrors, my buddy at least realized that, as the driver, he was ultimately responsible for the safety and behavior of his passengers.

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



Dave Millhouser

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Climate impact

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But Davis agrees that severe weather can disrupt bus companies and cost them money. He said he has been running tour buses to Busch Gardens in Tampa for 30 years without incident — until a few weeks ago when a major rain storm flooded the tourist attraction, forcing it to close.

About 50 buses, including four from Davis Tours, filled with seniors and school groups had to turn back.

“That was the first time that happened in 30 years,” Davis noted.

There also can be a positive side for bus companies when severe weather occurs.

“It gives us more work,” said Fred Altman, owner of Florida Coach Tours in Orlando. He said that after hurricanes, his company has been hired by utilities and even Amtrak to transport workers and stranded travelers.

The National Climate Assessment outlines how climate change will affect various regions of the country in the coming years, with Miami and parts of South Florida expected to be the most vulnerable because of rising tides and hurricanes.

The report also predicts more-frequent flooding in the Northeast, heat waves in the Midwest and drought and wildfires in the West.

Here is a rundown on how motorcoach operators could be affected by climate change in six regions of the country.

Northeast

As hurricanes Irene (2011) and Sandy (2012) proved, the aging in-

frastructure in the Northeast can be seriously stressed by coastal and river flooding caused by a combination of sea level rise, storm surge and extreme precipitation.

In Vermont, more than 500 miles of roadways and approximately 200 bridges were damaged by Hurricane Irene, with estimated rebuilding costs of \$175 million to \$250 million.

According to the report, the frequency, intensity, and duration of heat waves is expected to increase in the Northeast, with states such as Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia and New Jersey projected by mid-century to experience more than 60 additional days per year above 90 degrees.

Winter and spring precipitation also is projected to increase, mainly in northern states.

“The frequency of heavy downpours is projected to continue to increase as the century progresses,” the report states.

“Seasonal drought risk is also projected to increase in summer and fall as higher temperatures lead to greater evaporation and earlier winter and spring snowmelt,” according to the report.

In New York state, the report says, two feet of sea level rise could “flood or render unusable 212 miles of roads.”

If such predictions come true and higher temperatures, increased precipitation and severe flooding do occur more frequently, motorcoach operators could be forced, at the worst, to alter or cancel schedules because of washed-out roads and bridges.

Business also could be affected by weather-related cancellations by tour groups.

Southeast

The Southeast is vulnerable to sea level rise, extreme heat, hurricanes and decreased water availability, the report states.

It adds that ‘New Orleans (with roughly half of its population living below sea level), Miami, Tampa, Charleston, and Virginia Beach are among those most at risk.’

The report predicts that the sea level is likely to rise globally from 1 to 4 feet by 2100. It also notes that “the frequency of the strongest hurricanes (Category 4 and 5) in the Atlantic is expected to increase.

As hurricanes approach landfall, they create storm surge, which carries water farther inland. The resulting flooding, wind damage and bridge destruction disrupts virtually all transportation systems in the affected area.”

Such events likely would have the most impact on charter and tour bus companies that cater to tourists and other groups of travelers. The report says that in 2012, Louisiana and Florida alone hosted more than 115 million visitors.

Major weather events also can disrupt fuel supplies, making it difficult — and expensive — for bus companies to obtain fuel to operate their fleets.

For example, the report says, “power outages resulting from Hurricane Katrina shut down three major petroleum pipelines for two days, and the systems operated at reduced capacities for two weeks.”

Southwest

Extreme heat, drought and wildfires are likely to increase in the Southwest due to climate change, according to the report. The biggest impact on motorcoach

companies, aside from flooded and damaged roads and bridges, could be a decline in tourism.

“Tourism and recreation, generated by the Southwest’s winding canyons, snow-capped peaks, and Pacific Ocean beaches, provide a significant economic force that also faces climate change challenges,” the report states.

“The recreational economy will be increasingly affected by reduced streamflow and a shorter snow season, influencing everything from the ski industry to lake and river recreation.”

In California, which boasts the nation’s largest ocean-based economy, the sea level has risen along the coast by 6.7 to 7.9 inches over the past 100 years.

“In the last decade, high tides on top of this sea level rise have contributed to new damage to infrastructure, such as the inundation of Highway 101 near San Francisco,” the report states.

“If adaptive action is not taken, coastal highways, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure are at increased risk of flooding.”

Major cities in the Southwest that already experience little rain and extreme heat, such as Phoenix and Las Vegas, could get even hotter and drier.

The West already has experienced an increase in wildfires, and that is expected to worsen, the report predicts.

Northwest

The report doesn’t provide details of transportation infrastructure problems in the Northwest, aside from those that could potentially be caused by coastal flooding.

Still, it predicts that in commu-

nities with few alternatives to existing coastal transportation networks, such as on parts of Highway 101 in Oregon, sea level rise and storm surge will pose an increasing threat to local commerce.

The report also notes that nationally, “the transportation network has some capability to adjust to climate-related disruptions due to the presence of network redundancy — multiple routes are often possible for long-distance travel, and more than one mode of transportation may be used for travel.”

However, it says that in some cases, only one major route connects major destinations, “such as Interstate 5 between Seattle and San Francisco; movements along such links are particularly vulnerable to disruption.”

Midwest

The greatest impact of climate change in the Midwest would be to the region’s agricultural lands. The region has experienced increases in annual precipitation of as much as 20 percent in some locations in the last century, and the tendency toward more intense precipitation is expected to continue.

The reports says that flooding can disrupt road travel, noting that flooding in 2008 resulted in the closure of key routes.

Great Plains

The report offered no predictions about the effects of climate change on the transportation infrastructure in the vast Great Plains region. However, bus companies likely will face some of the same challenges there as they will in other regions of the country — floods, drought and heat waves.

LimoLiner sold

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

at retirement age and thinking about moving on,” Richardson said. “He is still available on an advisory basis.”

The LimoLiner business model is based on a coach interior designed in the manner of a corporate jet — over-size leather seats, comfortable work stations, a kitchenette, fresh beverages and snacks, Wi-Fi, satellite television, XM Radio and en-route movies.

Each trip is staffed by a driver and passenger attendant. The toilets flush with running water.

The company’s newest coach was customized by Creative Mobile Interiors of Grove City, Ohio. The first four coaches in the fleet were outfitted by Amadas Coach of Suffolk, Va.

“We are not positioned to compete with other bus companies,” Richardson said. “Our fares are much higher. However, if some-

body is willing to spend a higher fare for more amenities, we compete with Amtrak and the airlines.”

Amtrak’s Acela Express trains also run from Boston to New York City before continuing to Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Amtrak says the Acela trains can hit speeds of 150 miles per hour, but Richardson says LimoLiners can cover the ground between Boston and New York in comparable overall times.

Fares for Amtrak express service range from \$129 to \$150 one-way, he said. LimoLiner’s current fare is \$89 each way, \$69 for passengers willing to take the 6 a.m. coach out of Boston.

LimoLiner’s fares are about four times those charged by most bus companies covering the basic consumer market.

LimoLiner also can match the airlines for total time and make the trip more productive and relaxing, he said. Passengers taking a motorcoach — or a “liner,” as the com-



pany calls them — are advised to arrive 10 minutes before departure.

“We offer about the same door-to-door time,” Richardson said. “If you fly you have to be there an hour or hour-and-a-half early to go through security.”

Liner trips also spare many business travelers the time and expense of driving, parking, shut-

ting or cabbing to and from airports. “We operate from right in the center of Boston and drop off in midtown Manhattan, which is very convenient,” Richardson said.

Furthermore, the hours that passengers forego in airport security are passed in a comfy leather seat with table service.

“You can work on your laptop

or read. If you want to kick back and relax, you can do that, too,” Richardson said. “The drivers travel as smoothly as they can. They don’t need to rush, and travel at a safe speed.”

Luxury bus service “is a good value for the fare,” he said. “We offer dependability and frequency

Study: Climate change may result in airport flooding

WASHINGTON — Motorcoaches are often pressed into service when airports cancel flights because of snow, ice or a combination of both.

But coaches being used because airports are flooded?

Could happen.

Twelve of the nation's 47 largest airports are vulnerable to storm surges that are expected to increase as a result of climate change, according to the climate report released by the White House last month.

The U.S. National Climate Assessment warned that coastal airports with at least one runway 12 feet or less above sea level could suffer flooding during moderate-to-high storm surges.

The report noted that metro New York's big three airports — John F. Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark — flooded in October 2012, during the 14-foot tidal surge from Hurricane Sandy.

LaGuardia was closed for three days.

LaGuardia maintains a dike and pumps for floodwaters, according to a 2002 U.S. Transportation Department study cited in the White House report.

"Many coastal airports are vulnerable to flooding," the 2002 report noted from a California assessment about airports built on swamps in San Francisco and Oakland.

"Extreme high tides, coupled with flood conditions, can reach close to the existing levels."

Sea levels are projected to rise 1 to 4 feet during this century, and more frequent storms from climate change could either flood runways or force construction of expensive barriers, the report said.

The damage from Hurricane Sandy served as a wake-up call for airports to protect against flooding, said Chris Oswald, vice president of safety and regulatory af-

fairs for Airports Council International-North America.

For example, airports in Oakland and San Francisco are studying how to buttress facilities against storm surges, Oswald said.

The New Orleans airport had

restructured before Hurricane Katrina hit that city in 2005, and the buildings and runways avoided flooding.

General airport strategies include building berms to keep water out, installing drains and pumps to

remove water and adding insulation to protect lighting from seawater, Oswald said.

But such spending has to be weighed against other priorities, such as coping with earthquakes on the West Coast, he noted.

LimoLiner sold

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

and provide good service."

The company could add more trips to its schedule at some point.

Richardson said service between New York City and Washington, D.C., would be a logical next step for LimoLiner although he recently read, in the May 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*, that startup Royal Sprinter has launched service on that route. The new company makes two daily runs using Mercedes Sprinter vans fitted with eight reclining leather seats. The one-way fare is \$90.

That story also described service offered by Vamoose, which conducts a limited Gold Bus service on coaches equipped with reclining leather seats at a one-way fare starting at \$60.

Perfect distance

Richardson and his partners spent several months in research and negotiations before closing on the purchase of LimoLiner. They found the Boston-New York City corridor to be "just right" for luxury motorcoach business.

"There is a lot of business travel between the two cities. The model is having two metropolitan areas that are three to four hours apart," he said. "If the cities are much closer people drive. If they are too far apart it becomes an airplane trip."

LimoLiner carries about 25,000 passengers annually with an occupancy rate of about 50 percent. "On some days we are sold

out, on some days we run with just a few people," he said.

The carrier departs Boston and New York City three times daily from Monday through Thursday, four times on Friday and Sunday and twice on Saturday. There is an intermediate stop in Framingham, Mass.

Morning passengers are served a breakfast, such as a croissant, bagel or fruit cup. At lunch and dinner times a "sandwich of the day" is offered, prepared by the company's "high-quality" caterer. Passengers on evening trips are greeted with a complimentary glass of wine.

Bus boy

"I've always wanted to be the owner or part-owner of a company, and I'm from the Boston area," Richardson said.

After graduating from college he stayed in the bus business, holding management jobs for carriers in upstate New York, Connecticut and Vermont before serving as assistant general manager of transportation at Boston Logan International Airport.

He recently took a drug test and is getting the paperwork in order to re-certify himself as a motorcoach driver.

"With my last company I was a back-up driver. I jumped in once or twice a month to cover a trip," he said. "I have never minded because it is a good chance to get out and visit customers and see the operation. I'm getting my compliance in order to be ready to go if there is a need to fill in."

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CARB rules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

plied are getting the golden ticket.”

Bill Allen of Amador Stage Lines in Sacramento, presented the California Bus Association position. He said CARB should consider the motorcoach industry’s “unique conditions, especially safety concerns” as they relate to

diesel particulate filter retrofits.

He asked the board to amend the rules so motorcoaches with faulty filters that were purchased in good faith and installed on well-maintained buses be allowed to operate until 2021, and that owners be released from “a regulatory purgatory consumed in endless paperwork for no practical or public purpose.”

He also strongly opposed ex-

tending deadlines across-the-board to noncompliant companies.

“Noncompliant motorcoach fleets undercut the charter market and should be brought into compliance on an individual basis no matter the size of the fleet,” he said.

“Therefore, if a noncompliant fleet owner self-discloses to CARB enforcement, prior to being cited by CARB, then CARB

should develop an individualized plan to accelerate compliance, including credit for reduction of fleet since 2006, if applicable.”

Meanwhile, CARB has been busy enforcing diesel air quality rules. It announced settlement of 256 cases last year with fines that totaled more than \$2 million.

Violations included failure to comply with the statewide truck and bus program; failure to meet

verification/certification procedures for diesel particulate filters; failure to properly self-inspect diesel fleets to ensure that vehicles meet state smoke emission standards, and dispatching non-compliant trucks on state highways.

The companies paying the highest amounts were:

- Thermo King Corporation – \$213,200
- California Gas Transport – \$136,125
- GC Harvesting - \$120,000
- KS Industries Inc. – \$230,250
- Roly’s Trucking – \$58,000
- White Arrow – \$50,700
- THX Transport – \$50,000

San Francisco

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

“What the buses do is facilitate the ability for highly paid tech employees to live in our city who otherwise would not, and when we have an extremely limited pool of housing stock available, what that does is push folks at the lower income levels out of the city,” Sara Shortt, a tenants rights advocate, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Supervisor Scott Wiener, whose district includes neighborhoods that are heavily trafficked by the shuttles, said that fighting the pilot program would not solve the problems.

“What they are trying to do is delay or (they’re) trying to kill our ability to actually regulate these shuttles.

“The whole point of the pilot program is to make sure shuttles use appropriate routes and bus stops, to try to reduce the conflicts with Muni and to have adequate staffing to enforce the rules,” Wiener told the *Chronicle*.

“To attack the pilot program... actually undermines our ability to appropriately regulate and oversee the shuttle program. In addition, it implies to the public that getting rid of the shuttles is somehow going to help our housing crisis, when that’s completely untrue,” he said.

In addition to the city, several tech companies and the University of California, the suit also names Bauer’s Intelligent Transportation, Compass Transportation and a handful of other Bay Area motorcoach companies, which operate some of the shuttles for high-tech companies, as defendants.

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Nat'l Interstate takeover fight is costly; quarter strong

RICHFIELD, Ohio — The ill-fated effort early this year by the corporate parent of National Interstate Corporation to essentially turn National Interstate into a private company proved to be expensive.

National Interstate reported last month that its total after-tax expenses resulting from the proposed transaction were more than \$1.3 million, or seven cents per share.

However, because National Interstate produced substantial gains from investments during the first quarter, the bottom-line hit from the added expenses stemming from the aborted takeover was reduced.

For the three months ended March 31, net income at National Interstate totaled \$8.05 million, little changed from first-quarter 2013 net income of \$8.02 million.

On a per-share basis, net income was 41 cents for both the first quarter of this year and last year.

Early this year, American Financial Group of Cincinnati attempted to buy all of the outstanding shares of National Interstate that were not owned by Great American Insurance Co., a subsidiary of American Financial. (See March 1 and March 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The purchase offer quickly devolved into a contentious stockholder fight. At least two class-action lawsuits were filed challenging the fairness of the offer and seeking to halt the transaction.

Additionally, National Interstate's two largest independent stockholders, company founder and former chairman, Alan Spachman, and the mega-investment firm of T. Rowe Price Associates, announced they too opposed the deal, calling it unfair, inadequate, troubling, and coercive.

In the end, legal wrangling killed the deal. (See April 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

American Financial withdrew its offer after a U.S. District Court in Cleveland, acting on a lawsuit filed by Spachman, announced it intended to grant a motion for a preliminary injunction that would block Great American from completing the offer to buy the 9.5 million shares of National Interstate it didn't own.

Spachman, by leading the fight to block the offer, essentially rejected a potential payday of \$51 million for his shares — at the \$30 offering price.

The short-lived tiff was a financial bonanza for lawyers, however.

For the first quarter of this year, National Interstate reported that net income from operations climbed to \$7.67 million from \$7.01 million a year ago.

The gain resulted from a variety of factors, including rate increases — some of the double-digit variety; better monitoring of risk selection, and a modest improvement in the company combined ratio.

Motorcoach companies participating in National Interstate-operated alternative risk transfer (or captive) insurance programs may have felt the rate increases, as well as coach companies that have traditional auto liability insurance through National Interstate.

Somewhat offsetting the rate increases and other revenue enhancing factors were slightly higher loss and loss-adjustment expenses.

“Our combined ratio of 97.2 percent improved slightly from the 2013 first quarter,” said Dave Michelson, president and CEO of National Interstate.

“Continuing from last year, we are closely monitoring our pricing and risk selection on both new and renewal business to improve and restore underwriting results to their historical levels. We are growing our business in part due to high single-

digit rate increases and in some products double-digit rate increases, and our expenses continue to be well managed.”

Gross premiums written by National Interstate during this year's first quarter climbed by 8 percent from a year ago to \$163.6 million.

After-tax net realized gains from investments at National Interstate swelled to \$1.69 million during the first quarter of this year from \$1 mil-

lion a year ago.

National Interstate said the big jump in investment income resulted from an increase in average invested assets, new purchases at higher yields, gains from holdings in limited partnership investments, and the sale of some investments.

Directors of National Interstate declared a quarterly dividend of 12 cents per share, payable June 5 to shareholders of record May 21.



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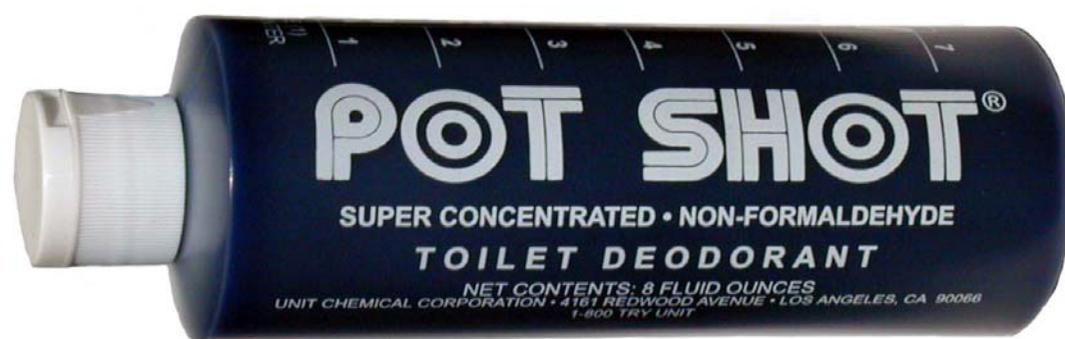
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Museum's annual Spring Bus Fling will be June 7

HERSHEY, Pa. — The Museum of Bus Transportation's annual "Spring Bus Fling," featuring the latest additions to its fleet of vintage buses, will be Saturday, June 7.

The event will be in and on the grounds of the Antique Automobile Club of America Antique Automobile Museum, where the Museum of Bus Transportation houses a

portion of its historic bus fleet.

The museum is one mile north of Hersheypark on Pennsylvania Highway 39 in Hershey.

The fling, which will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., is free to museum members. The regular admission fee to the museum, which houses more than 130 vehicles (cars, trucks, motorcycles and

buses) is reduced for other visitors from the normal \$10 to \$5.

There will be more than 20 tables of bus-related artifacts for sale to visitors.

The fling is an opportunity to view the museum's entire fleet in one day, including those buses housed at its nearby storage facility.

Wolf Bus Lines of York Springs,

Pa., again will provide shuttle service to and from the storage facility during the day.

Bus operators, manufacturers and individuals are invited to display a bus; there is plenty of parking and there's no charge to display.

For more information, call the museum at (717) 566-7100 ext. 119.

MCI rallies

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

passenger car-like brake pedal feel. This is achieved via an "optimized friction couple," says Bendix.

The ADB22X uses a two-pin floating caliper design that has fewer components than four-pin air disk brakes, improving serviceability, reducing weight, and offering more precise brake adjustment.

The brake has integrated pad-and rotor-wear sensing, and has common brake rotors.

The MCI J4500 is delivered with the Bendix electronic stability program that improves vehicle control, especially in challenging driving situations, including those where a rollover is possible.

The system appropriately intervenes during untoward driving events, reducing engine torque and, if needed, applying the correct pressure to the brake system.

A new option for the J4500 is the Bendix Wingman, which provides adaptive cruise control and collision mitigation functionality.

The system monitors a coach's position behind other vehicles and automatically reduces throttle or applies the brakes to maintain safe following distances when the driver does not act.

The Bendix Wingman system is said to be the only collision mitigation technology delivering active braking, stationary object alerts, "always-on" driver alerts, potential fuel economy improvements, and helpful data outputs.

The upgraded J4500 air system speeds coach rise times and has fewer connections, meaning greater reliability, says MCI.

Combined with the MCI "dynamic suspension system," the air system allows lower kneeling and faster recovery.

To test the new systems on the J4500, MCI used the Bosch automotive test track near South Bend, Ind., where an independent team simulated nearly one million miles of driving.

Additionally, MCI has nine J-coaches, featuring the ZF and Bendix systems, in field tests with larger operators across the U.S.

The first production models with the new systems and components are expected to roll off the assembly line in September.

MCI D-series coaches are to get the same system, but without the independent front-wheel suspension.

The other MCI rallies and test drives will be June 11 at the Sands Resort & Casino in Bethlehem, Pa.; June 26 at Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Ga., and July 8 at AT&T Park in San Francisco.

Each event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Learn more at www.mci-coach.com.

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Summer semester begins July 30!

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Coach operator, Bieber, obtains \$5.5 million credit line

KUTZTOWN, Pa. — Carl R. Bieber Inc./Bieber Transportation Group, a 68-year-old motorcoach company based here, has lined up \$5.5 million in new financing.

Griffin Financial Group, an investment banking firm headquartered in Reading, Pa., and Veritas Financial Partners, a financial service firm based in Boca Raton, Fla., announced the line of credit for Bieber will be used to refinance existing indebtedness and for general ongoing working capital needs.

Veritas Financial Partners provided the credit, which is collateralized by Bieber's account receivables and equipment.

The Bieber operation uses a variety of names, including Bieber Tourways, Bieber Tours and just plain Bieber.

Griffin said it managed a competitive capital raising process to replace Bieber's senior credit facilities. The investment banking firm said it obtained multiple financing offers, negotiated terms with the prospective lenders, and was successful in securing financing collateralized by Bieber's fixed and other assets, to satisfy the company's existing lenders and to provide Bieber with the ability to

fund its growth and capital needs in the coming years.

Ultimately, Griffin selected Veritas Financial Partners as its senior lender for the transaction, which closed last month.

Bieber, which was established in 1946, provides line runs, charters, tours, limousines and shuttle services for individuals and corpo-

rate customers.

It has a fleet of close to 55 motorcoaches, plus around a dozen smaller vehicles, including vans and limousines.

Griffin said that despite difficult economic conditions, Bieber's existing business has remained profitable and growth had been consistent.

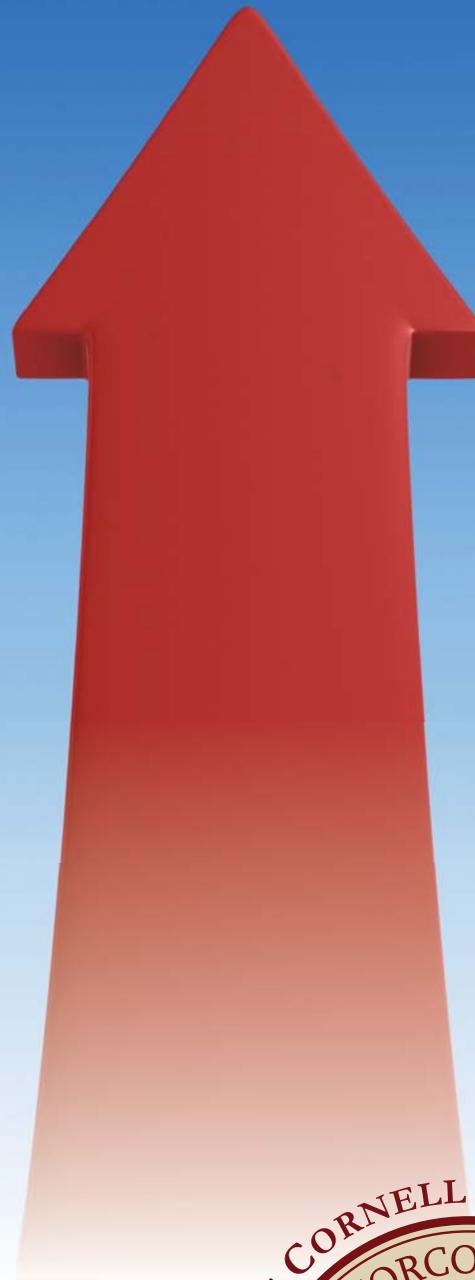
"However, as a result of the prolonged economic downturn, a constrained operating line of credit and meaningful capital spending needs, the company faced a serious liquidity problem.

"Bieber engaged Griffin as its exclusive investment banker in order to seek a new lending partner that would replace and consoli-

date its existing senior credit facilities and provide it with increased liquidity and working capital to support its growth and capital needs," Griffin added.

Veritas Financial Partners specializes in providing financing to middle-market businesses. Its commitments typically range from \$2 million to \$10 million.

Take YOUR Business to the Next Level



Prevost facility near Quebec City is open 24 hours

Saint-Nicolas, Quebec — Prevost has expanded the hours of its service center in Saint-Nicolas, which is a suburb of Quebec City.

The facility is open round the clock, from 7:30 a.m. Monday to 2 a.m. Saturday; it remains closed the rest of Saturday and all day Sunday.

The service operation has seven repair bays which handle everything from routine maintenance to retrofits and comprehensive accident repairs for all makes and models of motorcoaches, transit buses, motorhomes, and other conversion vehicles.

Other services include electrical hookups and a wastewater dump station. A controlled-access fence is operational after hours and monitored by a nighttime security patrol.

Guillaume Charron, branch manager of the Saint-Nicolas facility, said, "These expanded hours will open a new level of support to customers in this area and those who travel through Quebec."

The center is at 850, chemin Olivier, Saint-Nicolas. The phone number is (866) 870-2046.

The *Bus & Motorcoach Academy's Clarence Cornell School of Business* will help increase your business and operational knowledge...*helping you take YOUR business to the next level.*
Summer semester begins July 30!



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Greyhound 'mobile museums' will mark 100th anniversary

DALLAS — Greyhound Lines is 100 this year, and the pioneering intercity operator is marking its anniversary with a multi-city, cross-country mobile museum tour that gets underway May 29 and continues to just before Christmas.

The Greyhound "Centennial Tour" will be comprised of two separate tours, each with a bus that has been transformed into a traveling museum, moving from the East to the West Coast, making one-day stops in 37 cities.

Inside the museum buses visitors will find a timeline of historical events, featuring touch screen displays, as well as various items from different eras that are designed to bring back memories for some people and enlighten others about the nation's largest intercity motorcoach company.

The two buses also will feature a variety of videos, including

Greyhound television advertisements that have been seen through the years, and a 35-minute feature film the company produced in 1956 called "Freedom Highway."

The film, which can still be found on the Internet, stars an extremely fetching, 25-year-old Angie Dickinson; 15-year-old Disney star Tommy Kirk; western balladeer and actor Tex Ritter; handsome Marshall Thompson, and other familiar character actors.

The movie was co-produced by Greyhound and Academy Award-winning short subject director Jerry Fairbanks. The very 1950s film won a special award from the Freedoms Foundation.

Greyhound customers, bus nuts, and employees, as well as industry buffs, in each city where the tour stops will get a chance to see the museum buses when they make a day-long stop at the local Greyhound terminal.

The mobile museums also will be on display at public venues each week during the tour, such as Six Flags theme parks, the U.S. Capitol, museums and parks, sports venues, and during the State Fair in Texas.

"This tour is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for much of the public to see Greyhound's history brought straight to them," said Kim Plaskett, Greyhound director of marketing.

"Not only are we showcasing our company's rich heritage, but the exhibit will also feature a modern flair, echoing the efforts Greyhound has been making to transform intercity bus travel today."

Along with the traveling mobile museums, Greyhound also will feature coaches from its historical fleet, such as the Scenicruiser and the Hupmobile, which was the first vehicle used by company founder Carl Eric Wickman to transport miners from Hibbing

to Alice, Minn.

Wickman charged customers 15 cents one way and 25 cents round trip during that first year, 1914.

Here is the latest information for the mobile museum tours, showing terminal locations and dates the buses will be at those terminals:

South Tour

Boston: May 29
New York City: June 7
Philadelphia: June 14
Washington, D.C.: June 21
Richmond, Va.: June 28
Raleigh, N.C.: July 1
Jacksonville, Fla.: July 12
Orlando, Fla.: July 19
Miami: July 26
Tallahassee, Fla.: Aug. 2
Atlanta: Aug. 9
Nashville, Tenn.: Aug. 16
Birmingham, Ala.: Aug. 23
New Orleans: Aug. 30
Houston: Sept. 6
Austin, Texas: Sept. 13

Dallas: Sept. 13-Oct. 22
Arlington, Texas: Oct. 11
El Paso, Texas: Nov. 15
Phoenix: Dec. 6
Las Vegas: Dec. 13
Los Angeles: Dec. 20-21

North Tour

Cleveland: June 28
Columbus, Ohio: July 1
Cincinnati, Ohio: July 12
Indianapolis: July 19
Chicago: July 26
Milwaukee: Aug. 2
Minneapolis: Aug. 9
Kansas City, Mo.: Aug. 16
St. Louis: Aug. 23
Memphis: Aug. 30
Little Rock, Ark.: Sept. 6
Shreveport, La.: Sept. 13
Dallas: Sept. 13-Oct. 22
Denver: Nov. 1
Seattle: Nov. 15
Portland, Ore.: Dec. 6
San Francisco: Dec. 13
Los Angeles: Dec. 20-21

For Sale: NOVA Low Floor Transits, Setra 217HDH and MCI E4500s



ESCOT Bus Lines in Florida has (2) 1999 model year, and (2) 2000 model year, good running, 40 foot, **NOVA Low Floor** transit buses for sale. 34 seats + room for 20-30 standees, ADA ramp, Series 40 engine, B400 Allison trans, Carrier HVAC, Twin Vision destination signs. These buses have been owned and operated by Escot in contract service since 2008, ideal for a parking lot or game day shuttle where moving a high volume of passengers quickly is needed. **\$15,000 each or \$55,000 for all four.** Spare parts also available.



ESCOT also has (1) 1998 model year, good running, 45 foot, **Setra S217HDH** for sale. Series 60 Engine, B500R Allison trans, 59 passenger seats. Escot has owned and operated this bus since new, 633,000 miles. **\$30,000.** Spare parts also available.



ESCOT also has (4) 2002 **MCI E4500** coaches for sale. Series 60, B500, aluminum wheels, 665,000-735,000 miles, Escot has owned and operated all since new. **\$109,000 each.**

Call Brian at 727-545-2088

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6 televisions, DVD player, PA system, restroom with running water, tons of luggage space. Recently spent over \$15,000 on making the bus perfect, with receipts. All service has been recently done. Good rubber and brakes, everything works great and this is a turn key bus ready to make lots of money.



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Calendar

JUNE 2014

7 Museum of Bus Transportation Spring Bus Fling, Museum of Bus Transportation, Hershey, Pa. Info: (717) 566-2001 Ext. 119.

12-14 The Bus History Association 2014 Annual Convention, Country Inn & Suites at Mall of America, Minneapolis. Info: www.bus-history.org.

16-19 Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association and Pennsylvania Bus Association Joint Annual Meeting, Industry Expo and Sales Retreat, Sands Bethlehem (Pa.) Info: www.pabus.org or www.gnjma.com.

18-21 New England Bus Association 2014 Annual Conference, Hilton Mystic, Mystic, Conn. Info: mitch.guralnick@mcicoach.com.

24-25 UMA Capital Hill Days, Washington, D.C. Info: Ken Presley at UMA, email kpresley@uma.org, or call (800) 424-8262.

JULY 2014

13-16 Joint Annual Meeting of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina Motorcoach Associations, Richmond Marriott, Richmond, Va. Info: www.scmotorcoach.org, www.ncmotorcoach.org, or www.vamotorcoach.com.

23 Florida Motorcoach Association Education and Compliance Meeting, Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort, Orlando. Info: FMA@buses.org.



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For more information: USA 336-393-3929 Canada 418-883-3391 www.prevostcar.com

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Looking to put a new MCI or Setra coach through the paces? Race on down to a speedway or stadium near you, and join the MCI Reliability Rally. Our big spring-summer test-ride event is your best chance to get a look at what's new:

- ▶ **The best-selling MCI J4500, introducing our upcoming, tight-turning ZF axle, independent front suspension, and Bendix braking with available adaptive cruise control.**
- ▶ **The luxurious, custom-tailored Setra S 417 with second door and club corner.**
- ▶ **The latest, greatest pre-owned coaches, priced to sell.**
- ▶ **Supplier showcase, featuring system updates and maintenance tips from key vendors.**
- ▶ **Lunch, giveaways and prizes.**

Plus, our top technical troubleshooters, parts reps and other MCI team members will be on hand to answer your questions, lead educational sessions and more. This event has something for everyone, from business owners to drivers and technicians. So bring your team, mark your calendars, and start your engines!



Great turnout!

Join MCI at one of these Reliability Rally locations:

Texas Motor Speedway, Ft. Worth, TX
Wednesday, April 30

Chicagoland Speedway, Joliet, IL
Thursday, May 22

Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, MA
Wednesday, June 4

Sands Casino Resort, Bethlehem, PA
Wednesday, June 11

Atlanta Motor Speedway, Hampton, GA
Thursday, June 26

AT&T Park, San Francisco, CA
Tuesday, July 8



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