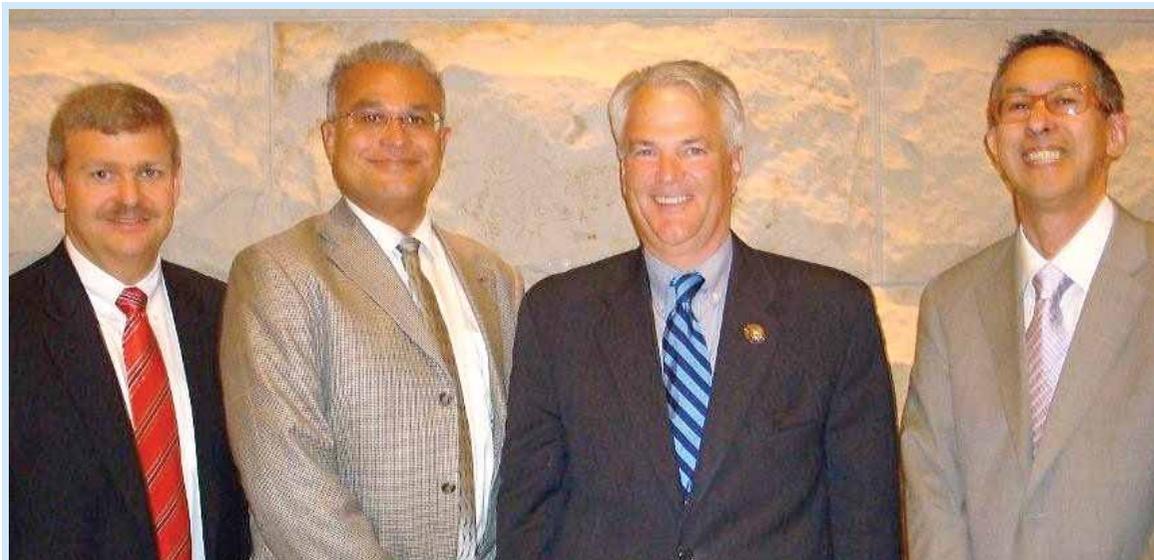


Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY



Schmoozing

Above, UMA board members (from left) Steve Brown and Godfrey LeBron and (far right) Mike Neustadt met with Rep. Mike McMahon, D.-N.Y., during a day of industry discussions on Capitol Hill late last month. At right, Dale Krapf (left) was among UMA board members who meet with Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa., author of pending motorcoach safety legislation. See story Page 13.



'10 engines could boost coach prices by \$15,000

If buying a new motorcoach is in your business plan for next year, be prepared to write a larger check than you might have expected.

Although pricing of 2010 coaches has yet to be announced, the cleaner engines mandated for next year by the federal Environmental Protection Agency will add thousands of dollars to their price tags, possibly as much as \$15,000 in some cases.

However, manufacturers are suggesting that in many cases the new engines will produce better fuel economy that will help offset the higher price tags. Others doubt those claims, contending such talk is little more than sales promotion designed to tout the costly new engines.

The upgraded engines, which

will be introduced on production coaches around the middle of next year, are designed to meet the last of three rigid EPA mandates for reigning in harmful emissions from diesel-powered commercial vehicles.

The EPA also ordered reduced emissions in 2004 and 2007, which added to the cost of new coaches introduced in those years. Motorcoaches sold with the 2007 engines, for instance, were about \$10,000 higher than they otherwise would have been.

Meeting the latest and strictest of the federal clean air standards requires more advanced technologies and more new equipment that will have to be stuffed into already tight engine compartments, both

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

FTA abandons rulemaking aimed at school bus service

WASHINGTON D.C. — The Federal Transit Administration has abandoned plans to write a new rule in response to a federal court decision that it believes could open the door for public transit agencies to take away school transportation work from private bus companies.

In a posting in the Federal Register, the FTA said it was dropping a rulemaking procedure that would have addressed the issue involving Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority and Laidlaw Education Services, but could have nationwide implications.

The Rochester, N.Y., public transit agency and Laidlaw have had a long-standing feud over which one should be allowed to

handle transportation services for high school students from the Rochester City School District.

The decision to drop the rulemaking — that was proposed last November — drew negative comment from the motorcoach industry which has worried the federal court ruling last year chipped away at the upgraded FTA charter rule and hampered private carriers from expanding their school transportation work.

"It is very disappointing," said Ken Presley, vice president of the United Motorcoach Association.

Still, he held out hope the decision was made as part of an effort by the FTA to revisit various actions taken by the agency when it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►

Safety blitzes target coaches

WASHINGTON — Motorcoaches and motorcoach drivers performed measurably better last month during Roadcheck 2009, the largest targeted safety enforcement program of commercial vehicles in the world.

The percentage of drivers and motorcoaches put out of service during the annual inspection blitz — organized by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance — dropped for the first time in three years.

A total of 932 coaches were checked during this year's 72-hour inspection program that is conducted each June in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Of the 900+ coaches that were subject to destination, Level I and roadside inspections, 11.5 percent were put out of service. That was down from a 12.2 out-of-service rate during Roadcheck 2008 and a 12.3 percent rate in 2007, but up from the 9.2 percent rate achieved in Roadcheck 2006.

The percentage of drivers put out of service for various safety infractions during Roadcheck this year was 3.6 percent, compared to 4.5 percent last year, 3.8 percent in 2007 and 2.9 percent in 2006.

Roadcheck '09 was the second inspection blitz conducted in as many months by state and federal safety enforcement officials.

For three weeks in May, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration conducted Operation Safe Student, a "strike force" initiative aimed at motorcoach and school bus operators transporting children during the end-of-school-year field trip season.

The FMCSA says it enlisted state and local law enforcement officials in all 50 states to participate in Operation Safe Student, resulting in roughly 8,700 bus inspections.

That program resulted in 650 buses being put out

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

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Competition for gamblers expands

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The high-stakes battle among New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania for gamblers continues expanding with the opening of another huge slots palace in Pennsylvania and the introduction of legislation that would allow table games in Pennsylvania casinos.

Under a bill sponsored by state Rep. Bill DeWeese, casino operators would pay a \$10 million upfront fee to inaugurate games such as blackjack, poker and craps at their currently slots-only facilities in Pennsylvania.

A similar measure introduced by DeWeese last year failed to reach a vote.

This year, however, the sputtering economy and the state's \$3.2 billion budget shortfall could work in his favor.

"Discussions I have had with the Senate president and House appropriations chairman lead me to believe that our table-games proposal has significantly more momentum," DeWeese said. "I just think that reality is starting to set in. Republicans are telling the governor they are not voting for broad-based taxes."

A Republican state senator,

Tommy Tomlinson, confirmed he has a table-games bill similar to DeWeese's. Tomlinson, whose district includes Philadelphia Park Casino & Racetrack, the state's top grossing slots parlor, said he and Sen. Robert J. Mellow are crafting a proposal.

"We have some working groups looking into it," Tomlinson said. "It wouldn't totally take care of our financial woes but it could create jobs and enhance gaming revenues and help existing Pennsylvania casinos compete with Delaware coming on with table games and sports betting. We already compete with Atlantic City, which has table games."

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell has indicted he doesn't think adding table games would make much of a dent in the state's budget deficit. Still, he said that "if a bill passes, I will take a look at it."

DeWeese's staff has come up with numbers that indicate table games could generate an additional \$200 million to \$300 million a year for the state. Pennsylvania's eight operating slots parlors generated more than \$1.5 billion in revenue in the past fiscal year.

"If it's a \$3 billion deficit and

table games bring in \$300 million -- that's a dent of 10 percent," said DeWeese. "Ed Rendell knows that next year's budget is even more ex-cruciating because of the diminution of money coming from the Obama administration, so we have to plan ahead."

"We have to be very inventive in the next several weeks. ... We have to start making our way to a table-games bill that would parallel the surrounding states."

DeWeese has its critics. State Rep. Paul Clymer, an opponent of expanded gaming, said he doubts there are enough votes to pass it. "This is not a legitimate way to balance the budget," he said. Gaming is a form of regressive taxation that will result in more social costs than benefits, Clymer said.

After years of debate, Pennsylvania voted to legalize gambling five years ago. The state started with slot machines at racetracks and eventually awarded licenses to stand-alone casinos, such as the new Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem, which has 3,000 slot machines.

The casino, which officially opened last month, is built on former Bethlehem Steel property.

Court says injured passengers can sue Greyhound for failing to have seatbelts

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A federal judge has ruled Greyhound Lines could be held liable for failing to put seatbelts on its buses.

In the case, the plaintiffs are eight passengers who were riding in a Greyhound coach that was involved in a rollover just north of Sacramento on Interstate 5.

The passengers, who were severely injured in the incident, claim their injuries could have been prevented had Greyhound equipped its buses with seatbelts.

Greyhound sought to have the case dismissed, arguing that federal law preempted the passengers' state law claims. Specifically,

Greyhound argued that since the federal government does not require seatbelts on buses that any state court action based on the failure to install seatbelts was preempted by the federal government's inaction.

But in his ruling, U.S. District Court Judge Morrison C. England Jr. rejected Greyhound's argument and allowed the plaintiffs' seatbelt claims to go to a jury.

The judge found that the federal government's failure to require seatbelts on buses does not prevent injured bus passengers from pursuing claims based on the failure to install seatbelts.

NTA to promote BusRates on website

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The United Motorcoach Association has secured an agreement with its travel industry partner, the National Tour Association, to post information about BusRates.com on the home page of the NTA website.

The posting is expected to attract NTA tour operator members to the BusRates.com website, as well as consumers who have gone

to the NTA home page looking for charter bus providers.

"This agreement adds real value to all BusRates.com subscribers," said Victor Parra, president and chief executive of the United Motorcoach Association.

In return, BusRates.com will prominently post the NTA logo and description of its services on the BusRates home page, along with a link to a list of NTA members.



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THE DOCKET

Officials expect highway fund to run out of money in August

WASHINGTON — The Highway Trust Fund, which got an emergency \$8 billion cash injection from Congress last summer, is likely to run out of money in August.

Members of Congress and U.S. Transportation Department officials say \$13 billion to \$17 billion will be needed to get the trust fund through the next two years.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told a House appropriations subcommittee last month that the country remains "at risk for another cash shortfall, probably by mid-August," and that USDOT was "working on a plan."

During a Senate hearing last month, Sens. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and James Inhofe, R-Okla., said administration officials had told them the fund will need billions of dollars before August if states are to continue receiving

federal money for road projects.

Specifically, Boxer said she has been told the fund would need between \$5 billion and \$7 billion to keep it afloat through the end of the current fiscal year.

Inhofe said another \$8 billion to \$10 billion will be required in 2010.

USDOT spokeswoman Sasha Johnson confirmed the senators' figures and said addressing the shortfall was "the number one priority for us."

The shortfall was announced less than nine months after Congress authorized transferring more than \$8 billion from the Treasury's general fund to the depleted trust fund, which has been battered by a drop in revenue as Americans drive less, coupled with the planned drawdown of cash in the fund called for in existing highway legislation.

Delay is sought in highway bill

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration stunned almost everyone in Washington last month when it sought an 18-month delay in congressional consideration of the primary highway and public transportation funding bill scheduled to be debated this summer and fall.

One reason everyone was surprised by Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood's call for postponing action on the massive highway bill was because it came on the same day the Democratic party's top House member on transportation issues, Rep. James Oberstar of Minnesota, released a comprehensive blueprint of the six-year highway and public transit funding and legislative package.

Oberstar and his colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee have spent much of the past three years working on their bill, which proposes

fundamental changes in policy, in addition to spending \$500 billion, a 53 percent increase over federal transportation spending in the previous six years.

The White House announcement clearly blindsided Oberstar and his colleagues on both sides of the aisle and undercut their bid to pass the landmark legislation.

To say Oberstar was outraged is putting it mildly, and he and his transportation buddies said the nation couldn't wait 18 additional months to address pressing needs. They served notice they intend to push ahead regardless of the Obama effort to slow the House train.

The administration did find support in the Senate in the person of Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

She contends there are too

many irons in the legislative fire to allow for reasoned consideration of fundamental changes in transportation policy right now.

How this will shake out in the weeks ahead is anybody's guess, but the jousting among Democrats — in the House, the White House and the Senate — should make for interesting political spectacle.

Meanwhile, the only thing left on the table is Oberstar's blueprint for spending half a trillion dollars.

The cornucopia of goodies in the Oberstar plan has gotten strong reviews from interest groups, mainly because it gives them nearly everything they've been asking for: Environmentalists get a new bureaucracy to encourage green projects, public transit agencies get a big influx of cash, high-speed rail enthusiasts get new trains, and states get billions in additional money to build and improve roads, bridges and highways.



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N.C. adopts fuel tax hike

RALEIGH, N.C. — Struggling to cope with dwindling revenue to pay for roadwork, North Carolina has adopted legislation that prevents the state fuel tax from dropping.

The new law, signed by Gov. Beverly Perdue, ensures the current fuel tax of 29.9 cents per gallon will become the minimum rate for the next two years.

Without the change, the tax was expected to drop to 28 cents this month, reducing revenue for highways.

North Carolina's fuel tax is composed of a 17.5-cent flat rate

and a 12.4-cent wholesale component that's adjusted twice annually based on wholesale prices.

With the change, the tax is expected to increase one-half cent, to 30.4 cents a gallon, in January. According to a legislative fiscal note, the change will generate \$67.5 million for roads and bridges through mid-2011.

The two-year tax increase reverses a decision made by lawmakers three years ago to cap the tax. Although popular at the time, the state received nearly a half-billion dollars less in fuel tax revenue.

Tenn. bans texting while driving

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee has become the latest state to outlaw texting while driving. The ban took effect July 1.

Gov. Phil Bredesen signed into law a bill that prohibits individuals from operating a motor vehicle while reading, typing or sending text messages.

Offenders face \$50 fines and court costs up to \$10. Violations would be considered nonmoving traffic violations, which means no points would be added to a person's driving record.

Attempts nationwide to curb the practice of using text-messaging devices while driving have picked up steam in the past couple of years.

Advocates for the ban cite a Nationwide Insurance survey that found one in five drivers "texting" while driving. That number nearly doubles for drivers aged 18 to 27.

In addition to Tennessee, states that have banned texting include Alaska, California, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Virginia and Washington.

Unemployment tax: Where do you file?

ARLINGTON, Va. — It's an old question but one that resurfaces occasionally because states seemingly have become more aggressive on the issue.

The question: How should an interstate motor carrier report and pay tax on its drivers' wages for purposes of unemployment compensation?

Should the carrier pay in its home state?

Or, in the state of a driver's residence?

And, can a carrier be double-taxed?

According to a state laws newsletter published by the American Trucking Associations, the general answer appears to be that a carrier should report a driver's wages in the carrier's own state if the driver performs services in more than one state, the driver performs some services in the carrier's home state, and the driver is dispatched or controlled from the carrier's state.

If the driver actually files for unemployment in his state of residence, that state should recognize the carrier's payments of tax in its own state.

FMCSA overhaul on track

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A rulemaking covering the comprehensive redesign of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration enforcement program is expected to be issued by the end of this year, a top agency official says.

Terry Shelton, acting chief safety director of the FMCSA, told a trucking publication symposium here late last month that the rulemaking for the Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 program should be ready by year end.

Like many federal agencies, the FMCSA is notorious for missing

deadlines.

The revised program, which targets seven safety categories, up from the current four, is undergoing operational testing in six states — Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, Montana and Minnesota.

The testing began in February 2008.

The program "revolves around the data, and you must check the data," said Shelton, referring to new FMCSA Compass system for improving data quality and accessibility.

Nevada alters trip permit law

HENDERSON, Nev. — Nevada has a new law that says commercial motor vehicles, having a gross vehicle weight of 10,001 pounds or greater, must purchase trip permits before entering the state if they do not have a valid Nevada registration.

The requirement does not apply to commercial vehicles apportioned to Nevada under the International Registration Plan. Such vehicles are considered to be registered in Nevada.

The law, which went into effect July 1, requires commercial vehi-

cles to obtain 24-hour temporary registration trip permit before entering or operating a vehicle in Nevada.

Previously, vehicles were able to travel to the first available vendor within the state to purchase a permit.

The state also has new penalties, including criminal penalties, for violations, including violations of vehicle weight rules.

For more information, contact the Nevada Motor Carrier Licensing Team by calling (775) 684-4711 option 1.



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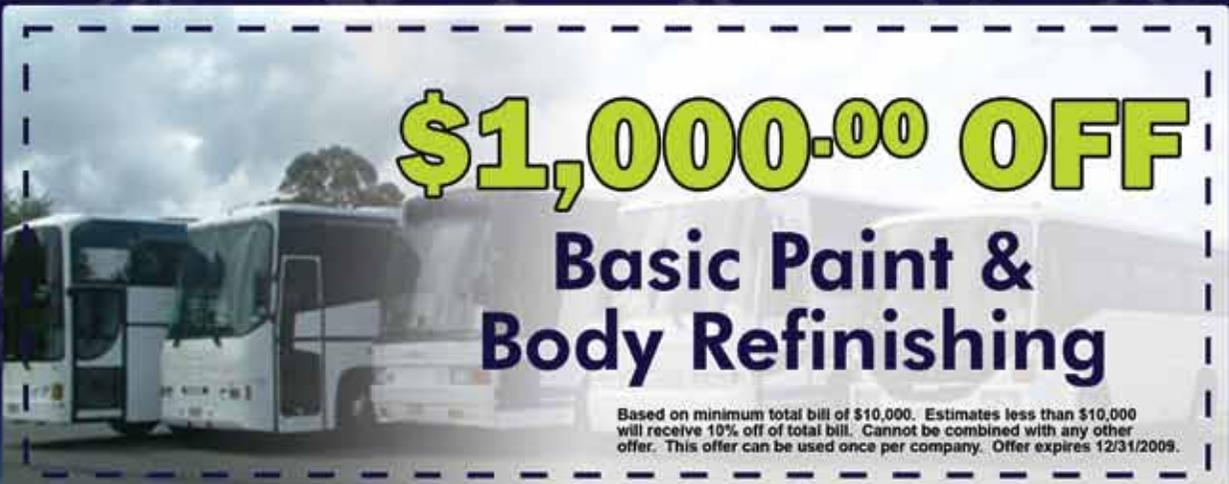
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Safety blitzes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of service, or 7.5 percent, and 225 drivers, or 2.5 percent.

In addition, more than 665 bus companies were contacted for on-site comprehensive compliance reviews in conjunction with the operation.

The FMCSA was unable to supply a breakdown of its figures, indicating what percent of the buses it inspected and put out of service were motorcoaches vs. school buses.

Many states that participated in Operation Safe Student in May did not conduct inspections of coaches during Roadcheck '09 in June, confining their inspections during Roadcheck to over-the-road trucks.

In August, the FMCSA conducted a similar strike force aimed at motorcoaches, resulting in roughly 12,000 inspections and 560 compliance reviews.

That two-week blitz by federal, state and local inspectors resulted in roughly 9.6 percent of the buses being put out of service and 1.8 percent of the drivers.

The FMCSA has stepped up its safety inspections of motorcoach operators in recent years. In 2008, nearly 150,000 bus inspections were performed under its aegis, up from 144,000 in 2007.

Officials say strike forces are just one of several strategies they intend to use throughout the year to ensure motorcoaches, buses and other passenger carriers are operating safely and in compliance with federal regulations.

"As part of our ongoing commitment, the FMCSA and its law enforcement partners are currently conducting strike forces at several of our most popular national parks," noted FMCSA Acting Deputy Administrator Rose A. McMurray.

CVSA also is focusing on motorcoaches with its Roadcheck initiative.

During this year's Roadcheck, CVSA inspectors conducted a total of 57,013 North American Standard Level I (the most comprehensive roadside) inspections of over-the-road buses and trucks, with buses accounting for just over 1.5 percent of the total. The total number of inspections during this year's Roadcheck was almost 72,800.

The overall out-of-service rate this year was 19.6 percent for vehicles (trucks and buses) and 4.3 percent for drivers.

That compares with an overall out-of-service rate of 20.8 percent last year and 21.5 percent in 2007. The driver out-of-service rate fell from 5.3 percent last year and 6.2 percent in 2007.

People

Three major motorcoach industry suppliers have named new top executives.

Tim Myers has been tapped as president of **Alcoa Wheel and Transportation Products**.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company has appointed *Richard Kramer* chief operating officer.

And **Webasto AG** has named *Rolf Haag* as president and CEO of **Webasto Product North America**.

Myers of Alcoa replaces Kevin Kramer, who has been named president of Growth Initiatives, a new unit of Alcoa. Most recently, Myers served as vice president and general manager for commercial vehicle wheels.

Goodyear's Kramer has been serving as president of the North American tire business, and will continue his old duties until a successor is named. Kramer joined Goodyear in 2000.

Haag of Webasto replaces Fred Olson, who has served as interim president and CEO since last October. Prior to joining Webasto, Haag served as vice president of sales and marketing at Feintool US Operations in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Canadian 'hours' book renewed

ONTARIO — Motor Coach Canada has republished its popular handbook that explains the hours-of-service rules for bus and motorcoach drivers in Canada.

The handbook was initially published three years ago, shortly before the new rules went into effect. Since then, more than 8,000 copies have been sold.

"While the demand for this publication was greatest when the industry was transitioning to the new regulations back in 2007, there is sustained interest in this handbook and it warranted a re-

print," said Brian Crow, president of Motor Coach Canada.

Motor Coach Industries again sponsored the driver aid, which is being sold at the same price as when it was introduced.

For more information, go to www.motorcoachcanada.com, click on "publications."

Questions about Canada's hours' rules can be directed to Motor Coach Canada's resident expert, Dave Carroll, director of safety and maintenance. Phone (416) 229-9305 ext. 230, e-mail dave@motorcoachcanada.com.

Swine Flu travel threat low

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Last month, the World Health Organization upgraded the H1N1 flu virus to a Phase 6 Pandemic Alert, which indicates to governments there is swine flu in more than one region of the world.

"Although this move is significant, it doesn't represent an increased threat over recent weeks and isn't expected to have a major impact on travel," says the National Tour Association.

When the World Health Organization updated H1N1 to pandemic

status it did not issue any travel restrictions. Additionally, medical experts have offered no recommendations to restrict cross-border travel to prevent spread of the virus.

The U.S. Travel Association continues to work with the media and U.S. government officials to assure ongoing support for travel as the situation develops. Websites with information on H1N1 include the Centers for Disease Control, United Nations World Tourism Organization Emergency Response Network, and Mexico Tourism Board.

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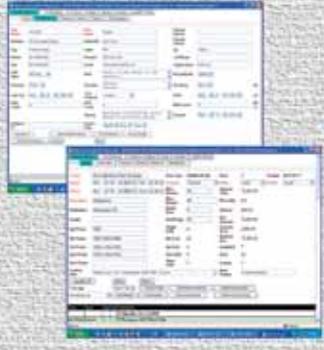


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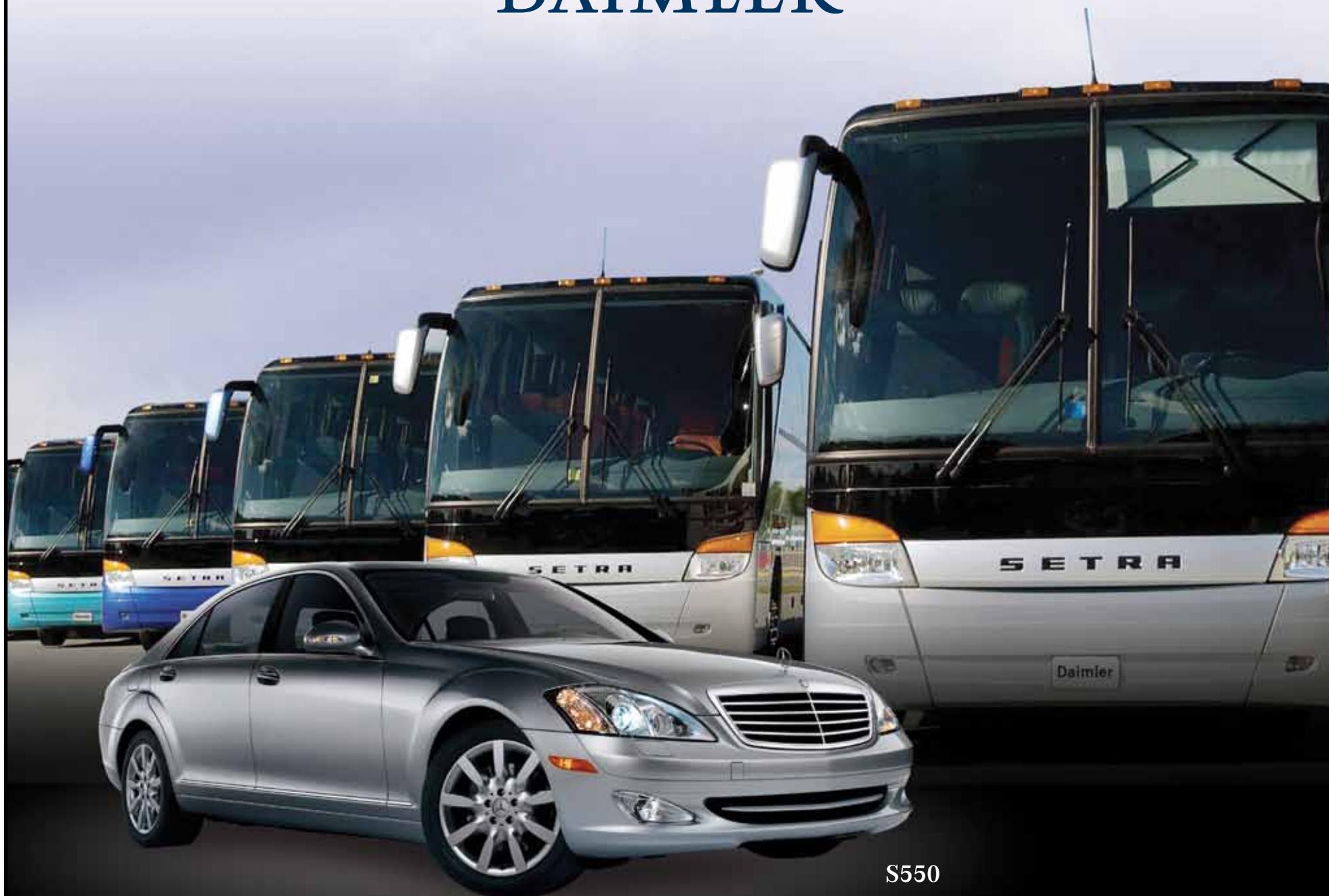
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How public transit money is put to work

NEW YORK CITY — More than 8,200 staffers at New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority earned more than \$100,000 each last year, including dozens who doubled their pay with overtime, according to an analysis of payroll records reported in the *New York Daily News*.

Many of those in the six-figure club were police officers, commuter train conductors, foremen and train engineers whose average overtime ranged between \$79,000 and \$103,000, the report by the Empire Center for New York State Policy said.

"You can't argue MTA workers are poorly paid," said E.J. McMahon, Empire Center director.

The MTA has about 68,000 workers.

New York City Transit, the bus and subway division, comprises the bulk of the workforce but fewer than a dozen of the 100 highest-paid workers are in it, the report found.

Nearly 25 of the highest-paid MTA staffers were on the head-quarter's payroll; more than half of those were police officers, detectives, lieutenants and sergeants in the MTA Police Department.

California grabs \$\$\$

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A state appeals court has ruled that California officials illegally siphoned away billions of dollars from mass transit in the last two years to balance the state budget.

The decision by a panel of judges in the Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento would put the state on the hook for \$2.5 billion in transfers made in the last two years, said H.D. Palmer, a

spokesman for the state Department of Finance.

Nearly \$1 billion more in such transfers is included in the 2009-10 budget under consideration in the legislature.

Palmer said the state would appeal to the California Supreme Court within 30 days.

"You bet we're gonna appeal," Palmer said, adding that the state would ask for a stay of the ruling, which comes as elected leaders grapple with a projected \$24-billion deficit.

Stimulus spending

WEST COVINA, Calif. — Foothill Transit has approved spending \$259,141 in federal stimulus money to buy a pair of automated wheel polishers from an Australian company.

In February, the transit agency put out a request for bids on wheel polishers, and one company responded — Vehicle Inspection Systems of Australia.

Foothill then received a waiver from the Federal Transportation Administration to buy the polishers from a foreign company.

Foothill Transit Board of Directors President Michael De La

Torre said the polishers dramatically reduce the time it takes to buff bus wheels. "It streamlines our operation, upgrades our efficiency and gets buses on the road," he said. "It cuts down time. We're trying to improve schedule adherence."

The polishers also make it easier to identify cracks in the wheels, said Felicia Friesema, a spokeswoman for Foothill Transit.

Small-government advocates questioned the prudence of the purchase.

"If we were to look at the highest-priorities for FTA, I don't know that this would fit," said Tom Schatz, president of Citizens Against Government Waste.

Meanwhile, officers patrolling downtown Salt Lake City TRAX platforms and FrontRunner commuter-rail parking lots now are whizzing around on Segway electric scooters. The agency spent \$7,900 apiece for six of the two-wheeled, upright gadgets, with all of the money coming through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The Federal Transit Administration's rules for disbursing the money required that part of it go to

Transit agency adopts porn ordinance

SALT LAKE CITY — The Utah Transit Authority has adopted an ordinance that will fine passengers if they use its free wireless internet service to visit pornography, gambling and gaming websites.

The fine for the first violation will be \$300 and subsequent fines can be up to \$500.

Passengers on express buses and FrontRunner commuter trains

must be 18 or older to use UTA's free internet service. Those who use it agree to terms and conditions, including accepting UTA's content filter to restrict access to sites deemed offensive. But no filter screens everything.

A UTA spokesman said enforcement would be done by a transit police officer, who would issue a citation. Passengers could appeal.

security, UTA spokesman Gerry Carpenter said, and the Utah agency spent its share on the Segways.

"It's a very quick and easy way for officers to move around downtown and also patrol the parking lots and FrontRunner," Carpenter said.

It's also further evidence of frivolous government waste to critics of the \$787 billion stimulus spending.

"Sounds like they got some fun toys," said state Rep. John Dougall.

"Wouldn't bicycles be more effective? If they're talking downtown Salt Lake, bikes would be healthier and more cost-effective."

T says no cell phones

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the large public transit system known as the T, has extended its ban on cell phone use by bus drivers and train operators to private bus services that contract with the agency.

The agency began cracking down on cell phone possession and use after a Green Line trolley rear-ended another trolley in May, injuring 50 people. The trolley driver told authorities he was texting just before the crash.

The MBTA's new policy calls for termination for a first offense of talking on a cell phone or texting while on duty on a bus or train.

An operator who is found in possession of a cell phone will be punished by a 10-day suspension. MBTA contractors carrying passengers on the commuter rail, paratransit, commuter boat, and private bus services had been issued similar directives.

Operator issues 'idling' appeal

Recently, one of our coaches was on tour and near the end of the day the local guide in Joliet Ill., gathered everyone on board the bus before leaving a museum property to give a talk.

Her presentation lasted for just over a half hour.

She wanted the group to be together in the air-conditioned comfort created by the idling coach as she made use of the PA system.

I wonder if our associate members (tour operators) could be educated or reminded to conduct their tours in such a fashion so as not to have passengers sit on the coach for prolonged periods as the bus idles.

The group just as easily could have congregated outside under a shade tree or in a building that's already open and has A/C and a room to give a talk.

Our driver felt pressured, but since then has promised never to allow that to happen again.

We pressure our drivers every day to keep idling down.

I feel the associate members of our organization should be educated and held to the same goals we are and continually do whatever they can to help keep coaches from idling needlessly.

We are thankful for all (the tour operators) do for us, and I'm just trying to help as well. For more information, go to www.idlefree.org.

—Brian Hagey
General Manager
Hagey Coach Inc.
Souderton, Pa.

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Coach USA/Coach Canada reports profit dip in FY '09

PERTH, Scotland — A “tough economic environment” bit in revenue and operating profit at Coach USA and Coach Canada during fiscal 2009.

For the 12 months ended April 30, the two units of Perth-based Stagecoach Group PLC had combined revenue of \$463.7 million, down 2.2 percent from fiscal 2008 revenue of \$474.3 million. Fiscal '07 revenue was \$451.4 million.

The revenue figures do not include sales by megabus.com, the intercity curbside service that was launched by Coach USA in spring 2006. megabus.com posted revenue of \$35.8 million in fiscal '09, a 217 percent increase from the \$11.3 million in revenue recorded in fiscal '08. Revenue in fiscal '07 was \$4.7 million.

megabus touts growth record

CHICAGO — megabus.com, the leading curbside coach service, says it attracted one million passengers in North America during the past six months.

During the 12 months ended April 30, megabus.com says it grew by 183 percent, and has now carried more than three million passengers since it was launched in April 2006.

“While the public is feeling the effects of the current U.S. economy, megabus.com has fast become the perfect solution for those looking to stretch their travel dollar,”

Fiscal '09 operating profit for Coach USA and Coach Canada, excluding megabus.com, was \$47 million, down slightly from the \$48 million earned a year earlier. Operating profit in fiscal '07 was \$36.6 million.

The operating profit margin for Coach USA-Coach Canada in fiscal '09 was 10.1 percent, unchanged from fiscal '08. megabus.com lost money again in fiscal '09 as the expansion of the service continued. megabus.com lost \$4.7 million in FY '09, versus \$5.8 million in fiscal '07, and a \$2 million loss in fiscal '07.

Stagecoach Group said it was encouraged by the performance of megabus given the environment. It noted that its Midwest division, where megabus.com originated,

said Dale Moser, president and chief operating officer of megabus.com and its corporate parent, Coach USA.

“The rapid rise to three million customers is proof of that.”

Research by megabus.com indicates that 90 percent of its customers have used the curbside service as an alternative to the auto, train or plane.

Some 60 percent of its customers are former car users, 19 percent previously traveled by airline, and 11 percent used to take the train.

National Express snubs FirstGroup takeover bid

LONDON — FirstGroup PLC, corporate parent of Greyhound Lines and First Student (Laidlaw), has made a tentative offer to take over its smaller rival, National Express Group, which owns Durham School Services in the U.S. and Stock Transportation in Canada.

The bid was immediately rejected by National Express.

A combined FirstGroup and National Express would create a huge school bus operation in North America and a giant commuter operation in Britain.

Between them, the two British outfits operate upwards of 75,000 yellow school buses in North America, or 14 percent of the 533,000 buses that FirstGroup estimates carry children to and from school in the United States and Canada.

National Express described FirstGroup's proposal as highly preliminary and on unspecified

terms, and said an internal overhaul currently underway meant it did “not consider it appropriate” to enter into talks with FirstGroup.

National Express has been working with its banks to delay a tightening of the terms attached to its loans, giving it time to explore ways to cut its nearly \$2 billion in debt.

In addition to its North American school bus operations, National Express also carries 320 million bus passengers annually in the UK and transports 164 million passengers on British train services.

FirstGroup is Britain's biggest bus and rail operator, and the largest bus operator in North America.

Despite being rebuffed, FirstGroup said it believes there is “significant industrial and commercial logic in a combination of the two companies.” FirstGroup proposed an all-stock transaction.

delivered “a good operating profit” in fiscal '09, while the relatively new Northeast network had a loss “but is progressing well.”

Coach USA-Coach Canada-megabus.com increased capital outlays again in fiscal 2009, spending nearly \$60 million, up from \$56 million in fiscal '08 and roughly \$44 million in fiscal '07.

Stagecoach said companywide operating profit in fiscal 2009 climbed to \$314.3 million, versus \$282 million in fiscal '08. Revenue

from continuing businesses soared to \$3.43 billion from \$2.88 billion in fiscal '08.

Stagecoach Chief Executive Brian Souter said the company had delivered “strong revenue and profit growth from our greener, smarter bus and rail services despite the challenging economic environment.

“Our bus operations are performing well, with our focus on delivering good value, high quality services. We have made targeted

complementary acquisitions that support our successful organic growth strategy and we have a flexible and successful business model.

“While our rail operations are more sensitive to the macroeconomic cycle, we have acted quickly to protect our businesses. We have delivered a major cost reduction program at our rail franchises and are implementing measures to protect passenger revenue and attract new customers to the rail network.”

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FTA decision

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was run by the Bush Administration, a common occurrence when there is a change in administrations.

"We hope this move by the FTA is simply part of a review of pending rulemakings that was submitted by the previous administration and not an effort to compromise the (charter) rule in place that protects the private sector from illegal competition from federally subsidized operations," he added.

The FTA, which said it took the action after studying formal comments filed by transit agencies, school districts and motorcoach companies, promised to take another look at the issue in the near future.

Laidlaw initially had the school transportation contract, but lost it to the RGRTA when the school district changed its classroom hours and the private carrier was unable to immediately accommodate the students.

The FTA ruled the RGRTA was in violation of the federal charter rule when it became transporting the students, which led to the transit agency and the school district filing a joint suit against

the FTA and others to win the right to transport the students.

A U.S. District Court judge in New York early last year sided with the transit agency and school district in a decision that both the FTA and the motorcoach industry argued was wrong and could damage the charter rule that limits the charter and school transportation work that public transit agencies are allowed to do.

After studying the court action, the FTA announced in November it would conduct a rulemaking procedure to "clarify" the charter regulation in light of the court decision. It said it would adopt a regulation as part of the charter rule that would allow transit agencies to continue to provide the type of school bus service the FTA has historically allowed while simultaneously satisfying the statutory requirements of the charter rule.

Under the current rule, transit agencies can contract to transport school children if they do not alter their regular routes too dramatically and keep the service open to the public.

The FTA said the court decision appeared to create a loophole in the charter rule that allowed transit agencies to completely restructure their routes — setting up

240 express routes in the case of the RGRTA — to serve the schools as long as they permitted the general public to ride.

It maintained that a reasonable person would conclude that the new routes were primarily designed for students and only incidentally to serve non-students.

"Such an interpretation would create a loophole in the statutory and regulatory scheme which would permit FTA's grantees to displace private school bus operators with ease," the agency stressed in its initial announcement of the rulemaking procedure.

The announcement drew more than 230 formal public comments, most of them from transit agencies and school districts critical of the rulemaking effort. Ultimately, their comments led to the FTA abandoning its efforts.

Many of the critics, according to the FTA, appeared to have misunderstood the agency's intentions, thinking instead that it wanted to adopt a new rule that would put broader restrictions on their ability to provide school bus services.

The charge against the rulemaking was led by the American Public Transportation Association, a trade group that represents the public transit industry. Urging the

FTA not to make any changes to the rule, the organization contended that the court case in the Rochester situation was just one decision in more than 30 years and since then transit agencies have not rushed to take advantage of the ruling.

"In short, we believe it would be unwise to let a single 'bad data point' in the long history of the rule drive changes likely to have unforeseen consequences," wrote the group's chief counsel, James P. LaRusch.

Even a congressman got involved.

Oregon Rep. Peter A. DeFazio, an influential Democrat, urged the FTA to exempt from the rule school districts that have their own buses but use public transit to augment their service.

"To take away a school district's ability to provide additional service with public transit is unreasonable, particularly when private companies aren't being harmed as they don't stand to gain additional contracts," he said.

UMA filed a nine-page letter in favor of the rulemaking and supporting the federal charter rule, which was updated last year. "Having felt the brunt of unfair competition for many years, the revised

GM halts truck model used for cutaway buses

DETROIT — As part of its bankruptcy-induced restructuring, General Motors is discontinuing medium-duty truck production.

The Chevy Kodiak and the GMC Topkick models will be discontinued by the end of this month.

The company was unable to find a buyer for the two truck brands whose chassis models are used by a handful of cutaway bus manufacturers in the U.S.

"After four years of working with multiple potential buyers, General Motors has decided to wind-down its medium-duty truck operations," the company announced.

Last year, GM reached a tentative agreement to sell the division to Navistar Inc., but the agreement expired in August without a final deal being reached. Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, also had been mentioned as a possible suitor.

rule is fairer and now requires accountability from publicly and non-publicly funded carriers," the association wrote.

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Surviving and thriving in today's fragile economy

By Dave Millhouser

My Big Boss Pete and I were headed up Interstate 91 towards our largest customer when the mobile phone rang. I punched it up on the speaker phone and a female voice asked: "Would you like to mate on Saturday?"

Pete was impressed.

Sadly, things aren't always what they seem.

The voice belonged to a friend who operates a couple of dive charter boats, and what she needed was a deck hand for Saturday's trip. In this case "mate" is an inflated title for the guy who unties the ropes.

There didn't seem to be a pressing need to explain that to Pete.

These days, a lot of bus folks begin conversations with some form of the old saying "the sky is falling." The economy stinks, business is off, and we should all eat worms. We're cutting expenses and delaying purchases. Almost without exception, they continue with "but we're hanging in there..."

Things may not be what they seem.

It turns out that business is off a little. Charter bookings seem to be coming in later than usual, and things feel worse than they really are. Fuel prices are down, many vendors are offering bargains and there are some good people out there looking for jobs.

Perhaps things aren't awful, just fragile.

A number of line operations are more than holding their own, perhaps because they represent real value to cash-strapped travelers.

Consider a couple of things.

Many of America's most successful companies got their start, or a big boost, during economic downturns. It's tough out there, but anyone can make it in good times. Bad times are both a motivation and an excuse for shedding obsolete practices and expenses.

Tight credit can make it difficult for the good guys to get loans, but it also makes it impossible for the bad guys. Many have wondered how companies could fail, or have

their fleet repossessed, and quickly pop up again. That is not happening often in this environment, and weak competitors may be disappearing.

Having cleverly convinced you there's opportunity out there... what can be done to exploit it?

There's been some downward pressure on prices (heck, you've been doing it to your vendors, so you understand). Some operators counter by offering different levels of service.

Confronted by a competitor's low price, they match it using an older coach. When the customer demurs, they offer nicer equipment at higher prices. This provides an opportunity to illustrate the difference in quality. If the client insists on going cheap, they get the older equipment. Some companies have purchased good, older buses to be able to provide bargain transportation, while still making money.

Advertising revenue is down everywhere and for all mediums, so there may be opportunities to buy more ads for the same dollars (or less) than you have in the past.

Marketing is not the place to pull back in rough times.

If you feel you must reduce your marketing budget, there are some freebies out there you can take advantage of. Offer to speak about travel opportunities at any venue that will have you. Do Power Point or slide shows of trips you've done. Join and participate in social and service clubs. You'll meet folks that charter buses, or know people who do.

Hate public speaking? Send your drivers...they'll enjoy it, and build relationships.

Work up an e-mail list, not to send junk mail but rather to inform (and entertain) people you've already served.

Where it's appropriate, ask drivers and escorts to take digital photos that you can use later on.

Call or contact groups after a trip and e-mail pictures, let them know you enjoyed their business, and remind them of how much fun it was. In some cases send a highlight DVD or CD to customers, after a trip returns. Its small money

and people love it. Try to turn a one-time jaunt into an ongoing relationship by staying in touch.

In the end, most business is about relationships. The people who ride your coaches will be willing to pay a bit more if they feel they are travelling with friends. That's why some of your drivers are frequently requested.

This all makes it sound easy, but it's not. On the other hand, any ground you gain now will pay off big time as things get better.

And please, if you bump into Pete...don't tell him what that phone call really meant. He still looks at me with something akin to awe. At my age, I need that.

Dave Millhouser is a bus industry marketing consultant and freelance writer. Contact him at: dave_millhouser@hotmail.com.



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N.E. Bus Assn. annual meeting marks growth

BOSTON — The New England Bus Association held its annual meeting here late last month, marking another year of growth and conducting a series of educational sessions that appear to be helping spur interest in the organization.

New England Bus, which was founded in 1925, is entering its 85th year of service to the New England motorcoach industry.

Outgoing President Carl Lajeunesse of Peter Pan Bus Lines and Secretary-Treasurer Darril King of Daimler Buses of North America reported the association added 17 new members last year, and an additional 16 so far this year. NEBA now has 54 operator and 95 associate members.

King noted that George Anzuoni of Plymouth and Brockton Street Railway, was attending his 45th consecutive annual meeting.

Flagship Trailways' President Tom McCaughey was elected president of the association, and MCI's Mitch Guralnick stepped into the role of secretary-treasurer.

UMA sets election; to choose first Canadian director

WASHINGTON — The United Motorcoach Association is seeking nominations from its U.S. operator members to fill a half-dozen, three-year elected seats on its board of directors.

And, for the first time, the association is seeking nominations from its Canadian members to fill a newly created board seat that will represent Canadian operators.

Aug. 29 is the deadline for letters of nomination for the director positions.

Two directors will be elected to three-year terms from each of UMA's three U.S. membership regions, plus one director from Canada, which becomes UMA Region IV. The U.S. regions have been modestly realigned, reflecting a shift in the geographic composition of UMA operator members, with Louisiana and Michigan moved to Region I (the West).

Bruce Snow of Post Road Stages and Larry Anzuoni of Brush Hill Transportation were elected to the board.

NEBA has experienced steady growth for the past four years, due in part to increased effort to offer substantial educational content at

Maps showing the realigned regions are printed in the 2009-10 UMA Membership Directory, plus a list of the states comprising each region is included in the association bylaws which are printed in the back of the directory.

All of the U.S. director seats to be contested are the result of expiring terms of incumbent regional coach-operator directors, who may seek re-election.

The directors whose seats are expiring are: Region I (the West): Bill Allen, Amador Stage Lines in Sacramento, Calif., and Gladys Gillis of Starline Luxury Coaches in Seattle; Region II (the Midwest): David Brown of Holiday Tours in Randleman, N.C., and Brian Scott of Escot Lines in Largo, Fla., and Region III (the Northeast): Dale Krapf of Krapf Coaches in West Chester, Pa., and Marcia Milton of First Priority

the annual meeting.

This year's program at the Boston Marriott Long Wharf included Loretta Bitner, division chief for the Commercial Passenger Carrier Safety Division of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. She spoke about the agency's

Trailways in District Heights, Md.

Qualification standards for UMA directors can be found in Article VI of the UMA bylaws printed in the membership directory. Among the qualifications is a requirement that nominees must be a UMA member for at least one year.

Nominations for the regional board directorships, including the new Canadian director, must come from active UMA members who are motorcoach operators. Candidates nominated for the board must represent an active UMA-member company in good standing.

Directors serve without pay but the association generally reimburses directors for travel and accommodations while performing UMA business and/or attending committee meetings and the mid-year board meeting.

Written letters of nomination must state the candidate's name,

activities.

Norm Littler of the American Bus Association, Ken Presley of the United Motorcoach Association and Tim Davis of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance and the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities participated in a panel

company affiliation and home-base location. Nomination letters also must be postmarked or faxed no later than Aug. 29.

Regional UMA Nominating Committees will certify the eligibility of all candidates to produce a list of nominees in each region no later than Oct. 1.

Ballots will be mailed to UMA members by Oct. 15, and must be returned no later than Nov. 15. Winners will be announced in *Bus & Motorcoach News*.

UMA members with questions about nominations should contact the association at (800) 424-8262.

Nomination letters may be mailed to UMA Nominations, 113 S. West St., 4th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314-2824. Or, nominations may be faxed to (703) 838-2950, or e-mailed to UMA President and CEO Victor Parra at vparra@uma.org.

discussion on industry safety moderated by Chris Crean of Peter Pan.

Steven Levy of Sprague Energy spoke on the current status of diesel fuel, and FMCSA program specialist Steven Hanley offered insight into how to survive a USDOT audit.

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UMA directors carry industry message to Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — Members of the United Motorcoach Association board meet with members of Congress last month to build awareness of key industry issues and to advocate for pending legislation and policy changes that could significantly impact the industry.

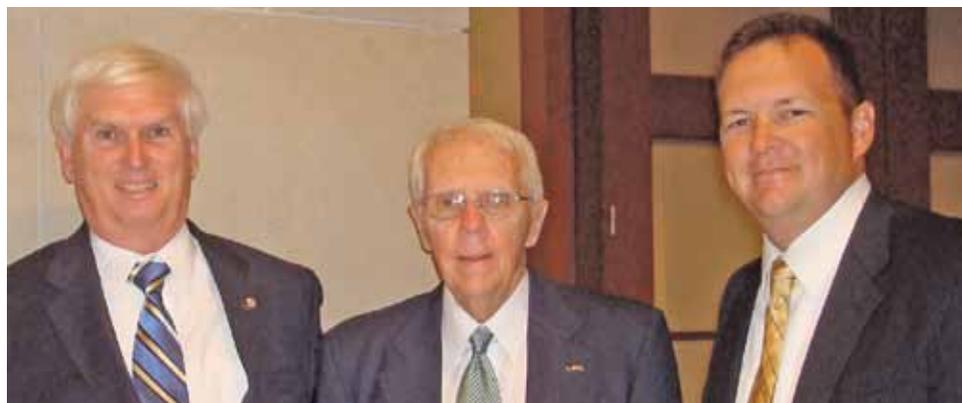
Dubbed "UMA Day on the Hill," the one-day get-acquainted, lobbying and briefing session was held in conjunction with the mid-year meeting of the 20-member UMA board.

"Through these events, UMA is strengthening its presence and influence on the hill," said UMA President and Chief Executive Victor Parra.

"The briefing sessions and UMA-member contacts with their Congressional representatives are vitally important for achieving success on legislative issues," Parra noted.

During their meetings with House members and others, UMA board members focused on four critical issues:

- Preservation of the federal fuel tax exemption for motorcoaches. Motorcoaches have been exempt from full federal fuel taxes since 1978. Board members reminded their congressmen and women that because motorcoaches reduce congestion, alleviate roadway wear, reduce pollution and conserve fuel, the rationale for continuing the federal fuel tax exemption for over-the-road buses and motorcoaches is even more compelling today and it should be preserved.



Rep. John Duncan (at left), R-Tenn., a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, met with UMA board members Ralph Young (center) and Brian Annett.

Currently, motorcoaches pay 7.3 cents in taxes on diesel fuel as a result of an industry-wide 17-cent per gallon exemption from the current 24.3-cent diesel fuel tax.

- Opposition to efforts to weaken or destroy the Federal Transit Administration charter service rule. Federal law and regulations for over 35 years have prohibited public transit agencies that receive federal funding from providing specialized transportation beyond their regularly scheduled service when a private carrier is able to provide that service.

These rules were revised last year at the behest of Congress after a negotiated rule-making process to correct ambiguities in the rule. The revised rule is fair, balanced and provides needed accountability and transparency for all parties to prevent unfair competi-

tion by federally-subsidized public transit operators with private operators.

During the past year, private operators have successfully and cost-effectively provided service to major events such as the Kentucky Derby, NASCAR races, NFL game days and special events across the country. There have been recent efforts to destroy or weaken the charter protections. If these protections are destroyed or weakened, thousands of jobs in the motorcoach industry will be at risk. UMA opposes any effort to weaken or destroy the rule.

- Motorcoach safety. UMA supports occupant protection standards in motorcoaches based on sound science and testing, and urges the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to proceed to enact

such regulations.

UMA also supports a bill introduced in March by Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa., and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, the Bus Uniform Standards and Safety Act of 2009 as a rational approach to addressing occupant protection and motorcoach safety issues. The bill directs NHTSA to prescribe occupant protection systems based on testing and research within three years.

The bill addresses other issues as well, such as window glazing, fire prevention and mitigation, roof strength and crush resistance, smoke suppression; provides a tax credit up to \$45,000 per bus for compliance, and limited small bus assistance; addresses changes to periodic safety reviews, safety audit systems and motorcoach driver training, inspection programs and registration.

UMA opposes measures that would mandate safety solutions without sound research and testing and without providing any assistance to operators.

- Card check. UMA is a member of the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, a business coalition of more than 500 companies and business organizations opposed to the Employee Free Choice Act, otherwise known as card check.

The legislation would allow unions to organize employees through a card check versus a secret ballot election and make other labor law reforms.

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2010 engines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of which will contribute to the higher bus prices.

Most engine builders — Cummins, Detroit Diesel and Volvo — are answering the 2010 directive for reduced NOx emissions with a technology that will clean exhaust gases through a selective catalytic

reduction system, or SCR. The technology uses a urea-based fluid that requires installation of a storage tank and injection device, as well as extra piping and some after-treatment equipment.

Sticking with EGR

Navistar is the only engine builder that passed on the SCR system and, instead, opted to go

with an enhanced exhaust gas recirculation system, or EGR technology, which does not require the use of urea. Instead, the EGR system injects a small amount of exhaust gas into the intake manifold, which dilutes the air and fuel mixture enough to prevent the generation of NOx.

However, Navistar's system is not expected to fully meet the EPA standard, so it will use "credits" gained from its smaller, cleaner engines that have been well below the '07 emissions limits. Navistar is widely believed to be shooting for 0.5 grams per horsepower hour of NOx, the highest level EPA will allow even with credits, instead of the actual mandate of 0.2 grams per horsepower hour that all other manufacturers will comply with using SCR technology.

Navistar's increased exhaust-gas-recirculation system also will generate more heat, which means coach builders using its engine will have to design in additional cooling capacity, just as they did in 2004 and 2007 for the first and second generation of EGR engines.

The new EPA regulations have presented bus manufacturers not only with new technology challenges but left them with far fewer engine options to offer their customers than in past years.

Beginning next year, Caterpillar will no longer make engines for the on-highway bus and truck markets, and Detroit Diesel will limit its engines to only Setra coaches.

'10 engine/coach line-up

As a result, Prevost Car will be using Volvo engines exclusively in its coaches, while MCI says it will offer Cummins and Navistar power plants. Van Hool will use Cummins and possibly another as-yet-unannounced engine, and IC Buses and BCI Falcon will use Navistar.

While manufacturers are still working out the prices for their 2010 models, talk among industry executives is that the new engines could add between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to the price of a new coach.

"No one is willing to confirm that right now, but that's what it is getting to look like," said Roman Cornell, national sales vice president for ABC, which markets Van Hool buses.

Patrick Scully, chief commercial officer for Daimler Buses North America, said it appears the SCR equipment being added to the company's Setra coaches is likely to push up the cost of a new model to the high end of the early projections, \$15,000.

Others acknowledge the new engines will add to the cost of their coaches, but they're not yet sure by how much.

"We haven't heard yet how much the new engines will add to the purchase price of our coaches, but there is no doubt it will increase it, and, unfortunately, that's unavoidable," said Dann Wiltgen, vice president of coach sales at Prevost Car, which is owned by Volvo, the world's second-largest truck and bus builder.

Volvo, however, has announced its over-the-road trucks will carry a surcharge of \$9,600 to cover the cost of its engines, including those built by both Volvo and Cummins.

'There's debate about how well the new engines will perform, including their fuel efficiency, which some manufacturers suggest will be improved enough to offset the higher costs of buying and operating the new engines.'

MCI, which plans on using Cummins engines, but will offer a Navistar as a non-SCR option, said the pricing of its motorcoaches for 2010 has yet to be determined.

Steve Schrier of Navistar said his company is not sure how much its engines will add to the price of motorcoaches, although he said school buses can expect to see a \$6,000 increase. "Pricing is on our radar and we certainly want to do it as soon as possible," he added.

Fuel savings debate

Meantime, there's debate about how well the new engines will perform, including their fuel efficiency, which some manufacturers suggest will be improved enough to offset the higher costs of buying and operating the new engines.

Setra maintains its S 417 luxury motorcoach — that will be powered by the new Detroit Diesel DD13 engine with SCR technology and equipment — will deliver better fuel efficiency than the 2007 models by reducing dependency on exhaust gas recirculation, which will result in less heat generation, reducing fan on-time and its related fuel consumption.

The company said the 2010 engine has been performing well on prototype motorcoaches and trucks that have been on the road for some time and on production

model Mercedes-Benz trucks.

"Daimler Buses will be the best positioned with reliable and proven engine technology," Scully asserted.

Wiltgen was a little more cautious about possible fuel savings. "The expectations are that fuel efficiency will be enhanced and hopefully that will help offset the purchase price of a new coach and the added operational price of using urea," he said.

MCI said the issue appears to be a wash, although it notes that the combined diesel and urea economy of the 2010 engines has yet to be proven. The company anticipates there will be fuel savings, but that savings probably would be offset by the cost of the urea, which would put the operating expenses at break even.

Cornell skeptical

ABC's Cornell said he doubts the new engines will deliver better fuel efficiency, saying such claims appear to be a sales pitch to help market the new engines.

"With the addition of urea, it will cost more and I don't see any fuel savings," he said. "There's too many extra systems being added and I don't see how anyone can equate that to savings."

Cornell said the engines also have the potential for having some initial problems as well, noting there were issues with the 2004 and 2007 engines and there is no reason to believe the newest engines won't have them as well.

"If history repeats itself, we'll have issues with the 2010 engines, too" he added.

Still, there's plenty of evidence that SCR works and delivers better fuel economy. There are an estimated 500,000 trucks and buses running every day in Europe using SCR technology to meet Euro 4 emissions standards. SCR also will be used to meet the upcoming Euro 5 limits. And, SCR is used in Japan as well.

In Europe, where the NOx limits so far have been less stringent than the 2010 U.S. standards, the use of SCR has allowed for engine optimization that, according to one source, paid back 10 percent in fuel economy improvements.

When it's applied in North America next year it will deliver less of a payback but even allowing for the cost of diesel exhaust fluid (urea), one expert predicts it will deliver at least a 3 percent fuel economy improvement.

There are some in the trucking industry who suggest engine manufacturers may be under-promising in the hope they can over-deliver when the time comes.

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Study: '07 diesel engines are 'greener' than required

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Over-the-road buses and trucks with 2007 engine technology run nearly 90 percent cleaner than required by federal emission standards for diesel particulate matter, a new study has determined.

The study, partly funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and prepared by the nonprofit Coordinating Research Council in Alpharetta, also found that other pollutants were cut much more sharply, in some cases 99 percent cleaner than previous engine systems.

The findings could be useful to those bus companies that operate 2007 and newer motorcoaches, and market their buses as being environmentally friendly. In effect, their coaches are much "greener" than the law requires.

"These engines were significantly below the 2007 standards for most pollutants," Jeff White, director of emissions research and development for the Southwest Research Institute, the organization that carried out many of the tests, told a leading trucking publication.

The Coordinating Research Council worked with the Health Effects Institute of Boston, and the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio.

The report is titled "Phase 1 of the Advanced Collaborative Emissions Study" and focuses solely on over-the-road truck and bus engines.

The study examined exhaust emissions "from four 2007 model-year, heavy-duty diesel engines manufactured by Caterpillar, Cummins, Detroit Diesel and Volvo," the report said.

"More than 360,000 of these heavy-duty trucks and buses were sold in 2007 and 2008, which is why this report is so important," said Allen Schaeffer, executive director of the Diesel Technology Forum, an organization that promotes diesel technology.

The report said the research was undertaken "to quantify the reduction in both regulated and unregulated emissions from advanced diesel engines."

The research found the engines far surpassed the main focus of EPA's 2007 regulations, a diesel particulate matter limit of .01 grams per horsepower hour, or g/hp-hr. The engines actually registered .0011 g/hp-hr, which the report said was 89 percent below the 2007 level.

Heavy-duty engine makers added diesel particulate filters to their exhaust systems in '07, and refined their engines' exhaust recirculation systems. The entire package added upwards of \$10,000 to \$15,000 to the price of a new motorcoach and \$7,000 to \$12,000 to the price of a new Class 8 truck.

The study found that other EPA-regulated emissions also were much lower than the '07 standards: carbon monoxide emissions were 98 percent below the standard; non-methane hydrocarbons were 95 percent under

the mandated level, and oxides of nitrogen oxides were 10 percent lower than required.

White said the four test engines were standard '07 power plants similar to what customers bought. "These were all 2007 production engines," he said.

"Ultimately these findings translate into even greater clean-air benefits for local communities than were

previously expected," Schaeffer of Diesel Technology Forum said. "Today's diesel trucks and buses are so clean it would take 60 of today's models to have the same soot emissions as one 1988 model."

Public sector sponsors of the study included the USDOE, the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board. Private-sector sponsors were the Engine

Manufacturers Association, American Petroleum Institute and manufacturers of emission-control equipment.

The study showed that emissions not regulated by the EPA also dropped significantly from 1998 and 2004 engines, years in which EPA instituted tougher emission standards.

Unregulated compounds showed a reduction ranging from 38 percent for inorganic ions to 99 percent for

hopanes/steranes, elemental carbon and dioxins/furans, the report said. Hopanes/steranes and "elemental carbon" are both petroleum byproducts. The EPA classifies dioxins and furans as possible toxic substances.

Bus, truck and engine makers are gearing up for a new set of standards that go into effect Jan. 1, this time mandating a drastic reduction in NOx emissions.

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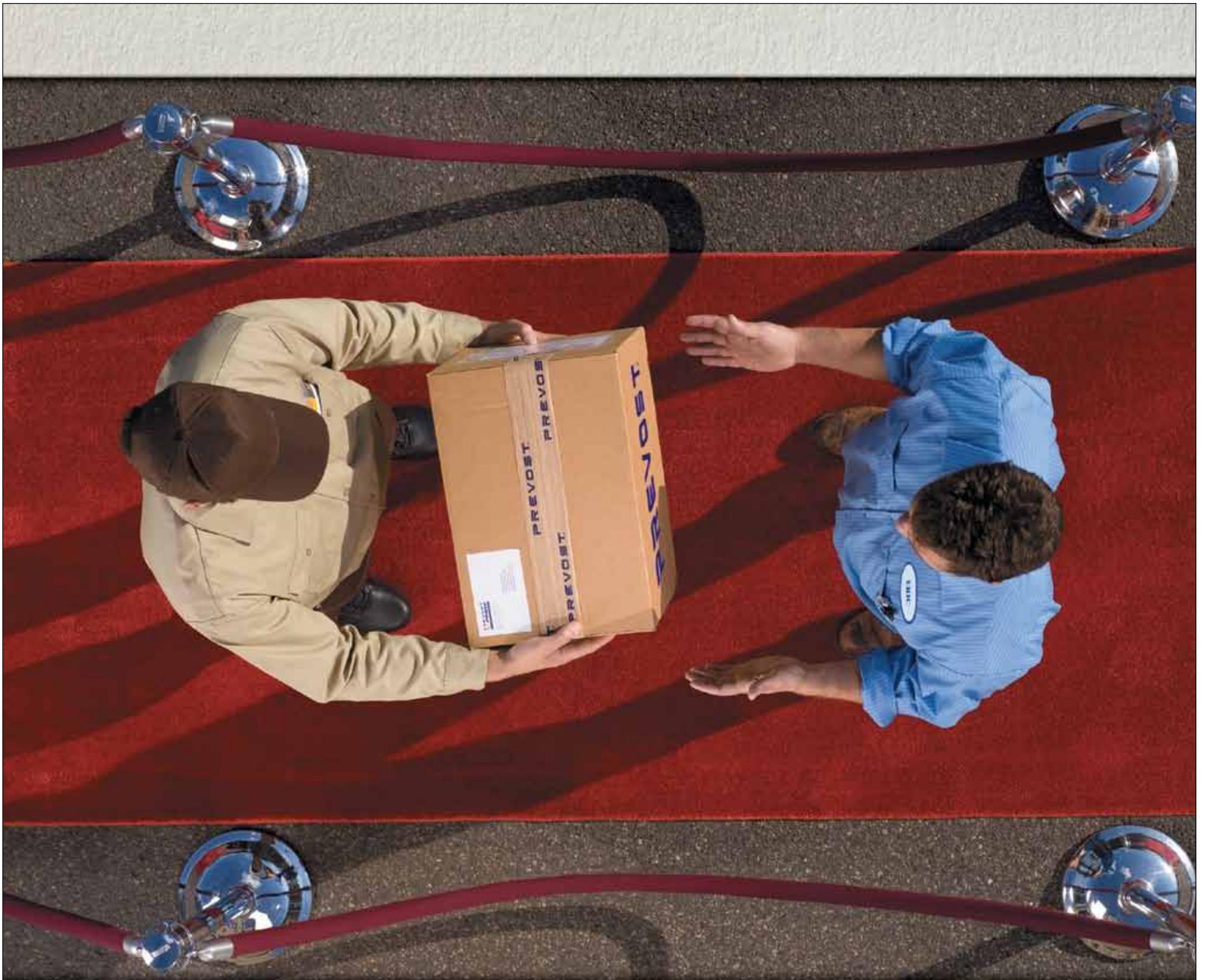
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