

## Consumer marketing campaign adopted by operators

DENVER — The grass roots effort to develop a nationwide consumer marketing campaign aimed at promoting motorcoach travel took a major leap forward here last month with the adoption of key campaign elements.

More than two-dozen coach operators from across the U.S., who had contributed at least \$2,000 each to help launch an industry-wide marketing drive, traveled here to aid in the selection of a slogan, catch phrases, graphics and other essential campaign elements.

The operators were joined by representatives from the industry's three largest coach suppliers, the industry's two largest trade associations, and executives from a leading operator marketing group and a major destination — all of whom had contributed to the partnership set up to develop the marketing campaign.

After viewing competing consumer advertising and awareness campaigns created for the industry by a group of branding, advertising and design specialists, the opera-



Industry marketing campaign will use catch phrases, bus wraps and bold graphics to target specific audiences.

tors and associates voted by a 90+ percent margin to adopt a campaign that uses catchy phrases displayed

with bold graphics to grab attention, and adopts a newly coined word as the basis for a unique slo-

gan designed to amuse, intrigue and build consumer familiarity with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ▶

## Chinese-built coach launched in U.S.

SANTA ANA, Calif. — U.S. bus and coach operators have a new motorcoach to consider, one with a price tag that will make it hard to ignore.

A California company that specializes in importing and modifying foreign-made automobiles to meet U.S. safety and emissions standards has begun importing motorcoaches from eastern China and converting them for sale in the U.S.

G&K Automotive Conversion has set up a subsidiary, Greenkraft Inc., that's bringing in the 45-foot coaches, installing Cummins and Allison power trains, and distributing them from its 140,000-square-foot facility in Santa Ana.

The coach is called the Ankai, and it's manufactured by Anhui



The Ankai motorcoach is being distributed by a California company that specializes in automotive imports.

Ankai Automobile Co. Ltd., which says it's the only authorized partner of Daimler AG in the Asia-Pacific region.

The coaches Anhui Ankai builds in China are based on Setra designs and technology, and marketed with a Setra nameplate. Setra, of course, is one of three

Daimler bus brands. Anhui Ankai proudly highlights its connection to Daimler and Setra on its website, touting the partnership with Daimler/Setra and its coaches' "technical heredity from Germany."

Anhui Ankai coaches marketed in the U.S. are being sold under the

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## Texas moves to work out evacuation, driver issues

AUSTIN, TEXAS — The bad feelings that flared between Texas state government and motorcoach operators — who complained they were not paid on a timely basis for the evacuation of thousands of hurricane-threatened Texas residents last year — appear to be on the mend.

Texas officials say they have set aside special funds to help pay for emergency transportation expenses during this year's storm season and have taken other steps to avoid a repeat of billing issues and mistreatment of drivers.

The action was applauded by motorcoach industry executives

who called it a "step in the right direction" and expressed hope such steps will spread to other states that use motorcoach operators to transport residents during emergencies.

Last year, dozens of operators from throughout the country complained they had to wait for months to be paid for the transportation work they did in Texas for hurricanes Ike and Gustav.

Additionally, many of their drivers returned home with alarming stories of how they were mistreated by the state, including being turned away from food lines,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ▶

## Prisoners continuing to ride unescorted on intercity lines

MINNEAPOLIS — The U.S. Bureau of Prisons' practice of transferring federal inmates unescorted on intercity buses has surfaced again with investigations by a television station here and in Dallas.

The new reports featured a U.S. Senator, city police chief, bus passengers and spokespersons for bus companies criticizing the practice, saying it was an abuse of the public

trust and disregarded public safety.

The issue of federal inmates being sent cross country unescorted on line-run buses surfaced four years in a report by a San Diego television station. (See June 15, 2005 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

At the time, Greyhound Lines complained about the practice and wrote to the Bureau of Prisons, asking that it be halted. It wasn't.

In '05, investigators for the San Diego TV outlet weren't able to find out how widespread the practice was or how many prisoners had decided to use their solo bus rides as an opportunity to escape.

This time, however, reporters were able to uncover those numbers.

The Minneapolis station found that the federal Bureau of Prisons

has transferred more than 89,000 prisoners unescorted during the past three years.

And at least 178 inmates escaped, failing to report to the prison where they were being sent.

One of the most notorious escapes during this decade was that of Dwayne Fitzen, who had been sentenced to 24 years in federal prison for conspiracy and distribu-

tion of cocaine. Fitzen, known as "Shadow" and a member of a biker gang, slipped off a bus in Las Vegas in 2004 and escaped.

U.S. Marshals have yet to apprehend him and consider him armed and dangerous.

In 2005, the Bureau of Prisons told Greyhound it allowed for unescorted prison transfers because it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ▶

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## NTA announces revisions to China inbound program

LEXINGTON, Ky. — The National Tour Association has announced changes to the China Inbound Program, including new requirements for tour operators that participate to the program, to assure Chinese group leisure travelers to the U.S. “have a safe and quality vacation experience.”

The changes were announced after a fatal motorcoach crash Jan. 30, that killed six Chinese group leisure travelers on a highway about 30 miles south of Hoover Dam in Arizona.

“As the Chinese group leisure travel market continues to grow in the United States, NTA and its partners felt it was important to take next steps in improving the visitor experience,” said NTA President Lisa Simon.

The new criteria for participating in the program is backed by the China National Tourism Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce, she said.

NTA’s China Inbound Program was created to assist NTA tour operators in working with Chinese travel agencies to organize and market packaged group leisure tours to the United States.

NTA said that among the new criteria, participants are required to use suppliers and contractors that are sufficiently licensed and who maintain up-to-date registration and insurance in compliance with applicable laws.

Tour operators also must review crash data, safety ratings and safety records of motorcoach subcontractors and make sure they are properly licensed in the state of operation, it said.

## Pilot, Flying J chains to merge

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Pilot Travel Centers and Flying J have agreed to a merger that would combine two of the largest U.S. truck stop chains and provide a framework for Flying J to emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The privately held companies announced last month they had reached a preliminary agreement to combine Flying J’s 270 and Pilot’s more than 300 travel centers.

Under the deal, Pilot will provide \$100 million in debtor-in-possession financing, helping Flying J’s pay off its creditors. The arrangement is subject to bankruptcy court approval.

The combined company is expected to be headquartered at Pilot’s offices in Knoxville, Tenn. Flying J is based in Ogden, Utah.

Flying J filed for bankruptcy in December but kept operating. It is

Additionally, the criteria include a special rule that says any shopping activities must be done without coercion at reputable shopping facilities with quality products.

“To remain an approved operator with the China Inbound Program, all participating companies must reapply to affirm they meet these new criteria.”

The NTA has developed a document outlining “best practices” for working with the China inbound market, including details in six areas of activity — tour operator and supplier qualifications; itineraries and visitor experience; tour pricing and tour advertising; payment, refunds and deposits; crisis management; and continuing education.

The January crash that killed the six Chinese travelers and injured nine others is still under investigation. State investigators suspect the driver was impaired by drugs or alcohol at the time of the incident.

The United Motorcoach Association, a travel partner with NTA, welcomed the changes.

“This makes perfect sense,” said Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association.

“With our BusRates.com logo/link now on the NTA website, this should spell more business for BusRates.com subscribers, particularly given you can link directly to the SAFER database to check the company’s safety record, insurance and if they have proper operating authority.” (See July 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

one of the 20-largest private companies in the U.S. with annual sales of more than \$16 billion.

“After a careful and exhaustive review of the alternatives available, we have concluded that a merger with Pilot represents the best possible outcome for Flying J, our creditors, our customers and our employees,” said Crystal Call Magelet, Flying J’s chairwoman.

“We look forward to working closely with Flying J and its employees during the Chapter 11 emergence process, and as we take the next steps of a new beginning for both of our companies,” said Jimmy Haslam, Pilot’s chief executive.

Pilot is the nation’s largest operator of travel centers and largest seller of over-the-road diesel fuel. It has truck stops in 41 states and had ’08 sales of \$16 billion.

## Greyhound revenue drops but profits remain

ABERDEEN, Scotland — Greyhound Lines remains profitable and continues to generate cash despite a steep slide in revenue during the three months ended June 30, its Scottish-based parent company announced last month.

FirstGroup PLC, which owns Greyhound and is the largest operator of private school buses in North America, said the weak U.S. economy and increased unemployment had resulted in Greyhound revenues dropping 20 percent during the April-June period from year-ago levels.

“By utilizing the highly flexible

operating model, we have successfully reduced services to match demand and protect revenue per mile (at Greyhound),” FirstGroup said in a statement released at its annual meeting here.

In addition to taking “swift action” to reduce overhead at Greyhound, FirstGroup said it also had identified “further opportunity for cost reduction.”

Early this past spring, FirstGroup announced a companywide cost reduction program designed to save 200 million pounds, or roughly \$326 million. Much of the savings was to be achieved through

job reductions, which are continuing, the company said.

Last year, FirstGroup cut Greyhound mileage by 7.6 percent and trimmed jobs.

For its school bus operation, FirstGroup said it had achieved a contract retention rate of more than 95 percent during the current bid season, and it was seeking more contracts.

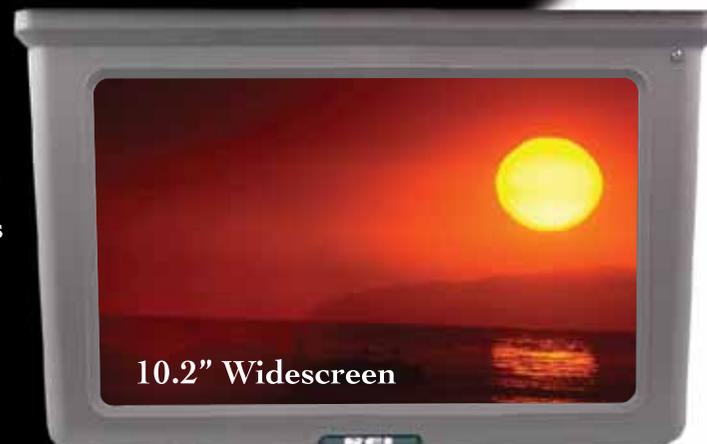
FirstGroup’s operations in the United Kingdom turned in a “solid performance” despite the weak economy. The U.K. bus division reported passenger revenue growth of 4.2 percent during the quarter.

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# THE DOCKET

## Board nominee pitches NTSB recommendations

WASHINGTON — Deborah Hersman, President Obama's nominee to lead the National Transportation Safety Board, told a Senate committee last month that other federal transportation agencies should voluntarily adopt the board's recommendations and, if they don't, Congress should order them to.

"One of the best ways for those recommendations to be implemented and not ignored is for Congress to pay attention to them," Hersman said during testimony before the Senate Com-

merce, Science and Transportation Committee.

Hersman, a former staff member for the commerce committee and currently a member of the NTSB, singled out the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for not implementing more NTSB recommendations to improve commercial vehicle safety — even though she acknowledged the number of truck-related fatalities "has remained relatively flat since [FMCSA] has been created."

For example, Hersman said NTSB has pushed FMCSA to

adopt mandatory electronic onboard recorders and more stringent medical and drug-testing standards.

Hersman called NTSB "the safety conscience and compass for the transportation industry."

The board does not have the power to issue regulations or sanctions, however.

During the same committee session, Polly Trottenberg, who has been nominated for U.S. Department of Transportation assistant secretary for policy, said USDOT was looking for ways to

further help states fund large projects such as the Hudson River Tunnel between New York and New Jersey.

Trottenberg, executive director of Building America's Future and a former Senate staff member, said using stimulus money and other funding for "these very large, transformational projects that often straddle different states... is going to be a big priority."

Top members of the panel signaled even before the hearing began that they expect Hersman and Trottenberg to be confirmed.

## Can Oberstar road bill survive Obama detour?

WASHINGTON — Perhaps the No. 1 guessing game in Washington these days is how long House Transportation Committee Chairman James Oberstar can keep his six-year highway and public transportation reauthorization bill alive in Congress.

With the Obama White House having set up a formidable roadblock to the bill, and a pair of well-placed senators siding with the administration, Oberstar and his colleagues on the House Transportation Committee seemingly are left spinning their wheels.

Oberstar, a Democrat from Minnesota, unveiled his propose bill in late June, but the Obama administration stole his thunder, announcing it wants the reauthorization process shelved for 18 months while it focuses on other issues and legislation — climate change, healthcare, defense spending and a host of other topics. (See July 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Still, Oberstar has plenty of allies outside Congress, as well as in the House, who oppose the administration's bid to extend the existing transportation law beyond its Sept. 30 expiration date, and are pushing back.

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association, for example, is running ads in Capitol Hill publications touting Oberstar's bill. Transportation for America, a coalition of 300 groups that includes the AARP and a host of public transit and environmental advocacy groups, is pushing for action now.

The American Association of

State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Association of Port Authorities also have praised Oberstar's bill.

Some political analysts suggest the move by the Obama administration may be more than a simple delay because they're busy with other issues and to find a more stable revenue stream to finance highway construction. They suggest the administration also wants to take the lead in overhauling transportation policy.

### Mandate for EOBRs

Should the Oberstar bill survive the administration's delaying tactics, it contains a number of commercial vehicle safety-related regulations, including mandatory electronic onboard recorders.

The bill's specific language "requires the Secretary (of Transportation) to prescribe regulations to require all commercial motor vehicles used by a motor carriers subject to the Secretary's hours of service regulations to be equipped with EOBRs."

An EOBR rule has been in the works at the USDOT for more than five years, with a proposed rule issued early in 2007 that would have required only companies with a history of serious hours-of-service violations to install the devices.

A final rule that was expected to go even further was put on hold after the Obama administration took office in January and ordered all federal agencies and departments to stop any pending regulations until they could be reviewed by incoming staff.

## Study: Traffic congestion to remain major problem

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — The Texas Transportation Institute, which has studied traffic congestion in the U.S. for nearly three decades, says the current slowdown in roadway traffic is a temporary lull and not a long-term trend.

Traffic congestion improved slightly in 2007, as higher fuel prices and then the onset of the economic recession took travelers off the nation's highways and roads.

However, experts at the institute say roads will become more clogged once the economy picks back up.

The institute's 2009 Urban Mobility Report outlines critical steps that should be taken to improve traffic, including adding capacity in critical corridors.

According to the study, traffic is adversely affecting America's 439 urban areas, and has gotten worse. In 2007, Americans had to drive 4.2 billion hours more and spend an extra 2.8 billion gallons of fuel as a result of congestion.

This resulted in congestion "costs" of \$87.2 billion, a rise of more than 50 percent over the previous decade.

The slight decline in traffic, primarily during the second half of 2007, caused the delay per traveler, or the number of hours of extra time commuters spend during rush hours, to dip.

"This change would be more hopeful if it was associated with something other than rising fuel prices... and a slowing economy," the report said.

For those who insist that increased public transportation is the best solution for congestion, the in-

stitute's study seemed to throw cold water on that idea.

The report found that 75 percent of travel time and congestion cost savings produced by public transportation systems were concentrated in just six cities, with New York City capturing half of the nationwide benefits.

In other words, increased public transportation will only help congestion in certain corridors in densely populated areas.

To address impending issues, the report recommended:

- Get as much service as possible from what we have. In other words, low-cost improvements can go a long way with public support and rapid deployment. These include quickly removing crashed vehicles, timing traffic signals so more vehicles see green lights, improving road and intersection designs, or adding a short section of roadway.

- Add capacity in critical corridors. The report suggests adding more road lanes, new streets and highways, new or expanded public transportation facilities and larger bus and rail fleets.

- Change usage patterns. Things like flexible work hours, internet connections or phones allow employees to choose work schedules that reduce travel during "rush hours."

- Provide choices. Solutions such as different routes, travel modes or lanes that involve a toll for high-speed and more reliable trips, allow travelers to customize their travel plans.

The full report can be downloaded at [mobility.tamu.edu](http://mobility.tamu.edu).

## Site explains new FMCSA safety plans

TEXARKANA, Texas — A trucking industry consulting and training services company has set up a website designed to help truck and bus operators learn about and understand the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 initiative.

Vertical Alliance Group Inc. of Texarkana said its website will help companies adapt and proactively prepare for the federal safety initiative. The website is [www.CSA2010.com](http://www.CSA2010.com).

CSA2010 is a major FMCSA program designed to improve the effectiveness of the agency's compliance and enforcement efforts. Its goal is to achieve a significant reduction in large truck and bus crashes, injuries and fatalities, while maximizing the resources of the FMCSA and its state partners. (See July 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

CSA2010 will grade motor carriers and individual drivers in seven areas, or BASICs, and their scores will determine what action the FMCSA will take to bring the carrier and its drivers into compliance.

The CSA2010.com website contains a wide assortment of information, some from the FMCSA, some from state departments of transportation, and some from carriers who have gone through the initial test phase of the CSA2010 assessments.

On the site, users will find extensive information about how the FMCSA will assess carriers under the initiative, as well as the consequences that both carriers and individual drivers could face if found out of compliance.

Kirk Lohse, director of marketing for Vertical Alliance Group said CSA 2010 is incredibly comprehensive in its scope. "Prior to CSA 2010, only about 8 percent of motor carriers nationwide were reviewed each year. Under this new initiative, all carriers and drivers will be assessed and there are strict penalties for being out of compliance."

By educating themselves about the initiative, companies can minimize fines, interventions and corrective action plans, said Lohse.

## Diesel prices don't reflect reality

Despite the nationwide decline in diesel fuel prices, some analysts say the prices have yet to reflect the full impact of falling crude oil prices, record diesel fuel surpluses and the weak demand for fuel resulting from the recession.

Diesel prices have been edging lower for several weeks, with the national average around \$2.55 a gallon.

Still, the decline hasn't reduced the price of diesel to the level it was in March, when the average price dipped to \$2.017 per gallon, even though demand for the fuel is the weakest it has been in years.

One analyst suggested that be-

cause Wall Street traders have been propping up the price of crude oil, diesel prices have not fallen to the level they should.

Analysts say investors began moving money into the oil markets in late spring when they believed they saw signs of recovery in the global economy.

The investors, it turns out, were wrong and the economy has remained weak, meaning there is no actual demand to sustain higher crude prices.

"What it is, it's sentiment about what the economy is going to do," said one analyst, noting that as optimism about the economy has

waned, so have crude prices.

Crude oil has fallen back to around \$65 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after reaching \$73 in early June.

Diesel prices should continue to slide if crude prices drop. However, despite the severe recession that has produced diesel fuel surpluses, diesel prices are hostage to refinery, economic and market forces that go beyond demand, analysts say.

In other words, the supply-demand fundamentals of the marketplace are exceedingly weak for diesel, and they have been for months.

## ExxonMobil to develop algae-based biofuels

IRVING, Texas — ExxonMobil has formed an alliance with Synthetic Genomics to research and develop biofuels using photosynthetic algae.

Under the initiative, ExxonMobil expects to spend more than \$600 million, including \$300 million in internal costs and providing more than \$300 million to SGI. The company will work with SGI to create advanced biofuels that are compatible with diesel fuel and gasoline.

"While significant work and years of research and development still must be completed, if successful, algae-based fuels could help meet the world's growing demand for transportation fuel while reducing greenhouse gas emissions," said Michael Dolan, senior vice president of ExxonMobil.

"Among other advantages, readily available sunlight and carbon dioxide used to grow the photosynthetic algae could provide greenhouse gas mitigation bene-

fits," said Emil Jacobs, vice president of research and development at ExxonMobil Research and Engineering Co.

"Growing algae does not rely on fresh water and arable land otherwise used for food production. And lastly, algae have the potential to produce large volumes of oils that can be processed in existing refineries to manufacture fuels that are compatible with existing transportation technology and infrastructure."

## Registration system stuck

WASHINGTON — The dysfunctional Unified Carrier Registration system has failed to agree on a revised fee structure that it can recommend to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The Unified Carrier Registration Agreement board met last month to reconsider the system's 2010 fee structure and was unable to come to agreement.

Revising the fee structure has been a hot potato since the UCRA board recommended in February that the FMCSA adopt a huge increase in UCRA fees for next year. (See March 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.) Private-sector members of the UCRA board opposed the fee hike.

The FMCSA declined to go

along with the recommendation and sent it back to the UCRA board with a bunch of questions and for reconsideration. The FMCSA is charged by law with setting UCRA fees.

The UCRA board has been debating the issue for nearly two months and last month it met by phone and essentially agreed to disagree. With the American Trucking Associations leading the opposition, the board was unable to agree on a new recommendation for fees.

That leaves the FMCSA with the original fee proposal put forth by the board in February. Now, the FMCSA will have to proceed with a fee rulemaking without new guidance from the UCRA board.

## Michigan conducts UCRA blitz

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan State Police conducted a weeklong enforcement blitz last month, checking for Unified Carrier Registration.

Those bus and truck operators found not to be in compliance face a fine of up to \$500 and/or 90 days in jail. Lack of registration is considered a misdemeanor.

The fees collected under the

program are used for commercial vehicle safety and enforcement programs. The state police said enforcement of the registration would continue after the weeklong check.

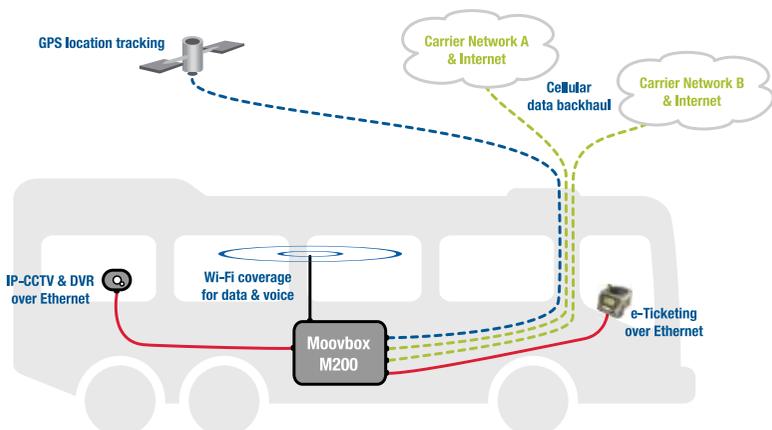
Michigan companies can register for the program by calling (517) 241-6030.

Operators in any state, including Michigan, can also register by going to [www.ucra.in.gov](http://www.ucra.in.gov).

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## Texas gets in gear

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

being refused medical treatment, being forced to sleep in their hot buses, and having to go without showers.

This year, things should be dramatically different, according to Ted Maddry of the Texas Office of Emergency Management.

He said the state moved to correct the problems for a variety of reasons, including meetings it had with a newly formed committee of operators and threats by some of them not to take part in future emergency evacuations unless improvements were made. (See May 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Perhaps the action most welcomed by the operators came from the Texas legislature, which finally agreed near the end of its recently concluded session to allocate \$62 million to the state Disaster Contingency Fund. The account, which had not been funded for the past several years — despite pleas from Gov. Rick Perry, can be used to help pay for evacuation costs.

“Having the fund is going to help us prepare and protect Texans immediately without concern about where the money is going to come from,” noted Katherine Cesinger, a spokeswoman for the

governor.

State officials offered the operators a mix of excuses for the slow payments last year, including the depleted disaster fund, not having enough people to process the large numbers of vouchers they received and slow payments from the federal government, which was responsible for paying a portion of the bills.

In addition to possibly resolving the money issue, Maddry said the state also agreed to make more information on billing procedures available to the operators and to help them set up training on how to file the necessary paperwork to get paid. A number of operators complained last year that their vouchers were sent back to them several times because they were filled out incorrectly or were missing information.

“I can guarantee you if the operators fill out the forms properly, they’ll get paid,” he stressed.

Maddry said the state responded to the driver complaints by hiring a private contractor to manage staging areas where drivers and buses assemble for inspections and before being dispatched for evacuations. The contractor will be responsible for providing the drivers with food, shelter, shuttle service to stores and other services.

North Carolina Motorcoach Association President Jim Harris, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Southeastern Regional Emergency Evacuation Advisory Committee that met with

**‘I can guarantee you if the operators fill out the forms properly, they’ll get paid.’**

Texas state officials, said the actions taken by the state appear promising.

“It certainly is a step in the right direction because that was the intent all along — working together and having it work for everyone involved,” he said. “I hope all of the other states will be cooperative and make it uniform because we all learn from one another.”

The advisory committee was a product of the Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators meeting in Orlando last January, just prior to UMA Motorcoach Expo 2009, where many operators voiced their complaints and talked of not going back to Texas this year. Its goal was to work to im-

prove relations with hurricane-prone states such as Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida and others.

Linda Morris, executive director of several state motorcoach associations and who helped facilitate the state meetings, agreed that Texas appears to have taken a positive turn in working with operators and drivers.

“We’ve come a long way and I think the advisory committee has made a big difference by opening a dialog,” she emphasized.

Meantime, Texas is in the process of adding additional motorcoach operators to the list of more than 200 holdovers it has from a year ago.

Maddry said contracted operators who take part in evacuations this year would be paid a daily flat rate of \$2,232 (\$93 per hour for a 24-hour period), plus another \$3.15 per mile for deadhead movements and \$4.15 per mile when passengers are onboard.

He said details of the contract and information on how to apply should be on the internet any day.

Operators can view the information by visiting [www.cpa.state.tx.us](http://www.cpa.state.tx.us), click on “State Purchasing” near the top of the page and then clicking on “Electronic State Business Daily,” which is listed under

## People

Daimler Buses North America in Greensboro, N.C., announced the appointment of Juan Lepe as West Coast regional sales manager. Lepe



Juan Lepe

will oversee sales of Setra S 417 motorcoaches, along with Sprinter shuttle buses, to the private bus industry on the West Coast.

“Juan comes to our team with a strong background in the bus and motorcoach market with a specialized focus on sales and marketing,” said Tom Chezem, vice president of motorcoach sales for Daimler Buses North America.

Lepe, a Chicago native, has worked in the bus and motorcoach industry for 14 years, with the last 11 years being on the West Coast where he represented Prevost Car. He is a graduate of Rockford College with a degree in business administration.

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# Express Transportation of Orlando becomes Trailways member

FAIRFAX, Va. — Express Transportation of Orlando, Fla. is the newest member of the Trailways Transportation System.

The company, which has a satellite office in Miami, has changed its name to Express Trailways and joins First Class Trailways of St. Petersburg and Endeavor Trailways of Miami to

expand the central and south Florida for Trailways.

“Florida is a very important tourism and transportation market, and we are pleased to have the expertise our new member brings to us in that region,” said Trailways

President Gale Ellsworth.

C.W. Newman, Express Trailways vice president, said he and company founder Marcello Machado expect their Trailways affiliation to boost company marketing and operations.

Founded in 1993, Express Trailways began services with three vans that provided Orlando transportation services to inbound South American visitors. Today, the company operates a fleet of 22 motorcoaches; three coaches are

based at the Miami office.

Express Trailways provides convention shuttles, school and other charters, overland tours, and inbound visitor services.

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

## IRP web training on fees, mileage

Arlington, Va. — IRP Inc., the repository of the International Registration Plan, is conducting three training webinars on IRP fees and estimated distance.

The dates are July 28, Aug. 13 and Oct. 15. All of the one-hour sessions will begin at 2 p.m. eastern time.

Industry attendees are welcome. IRP-affiliate members from industry may sign up for free; for others the charge is \$100.

Registration is at <http://www.irponline.org/education/>.

## Motorcoachified cons

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was the low-cost option.

The bureau says the transfers are for convicts moving from one minimum security prison to another, or heading to halfway houses or prison camps.

“Inmates assigned to either camps or halfway houses do not present a significant risk to the community,” said Traci Billingsley, a spokeswoman for the bureau.

“Although, I don’t have specific data regarding cost savings, we know the savings is substantial,” said Billingsley. “To transfer these types of inmates using BOP staff, or U.S. Marshals services or contract services would result in a large, unnecessary cost to the government and ultimately the taxpayer, especially given the minimal security requirements of these offenders.”

So, it seems certain the practice will continue — despite renewed protests by Greyhound and others. Potentially dangerous convicts will go right on riding next to unsuspecting bus passengers and bus companies seemingly won’t know about it.

And prison officials will continue to surreptitiously drop off their charges at bus stations and stops hours before the buses are due. They will do this so other passengers won’t see the prison authorities and become suspicious.

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## Worries mount about cap-and-trade bill

WASHINGTON — The drive by Democrats in Congress to create a cap-and-trade system to limit carbon emissions has become one of the most contentious issues being debated in the current session.

While there remains some doubt whether or not Congress will be able to pass a climate-change bill that will clear both houses, one thing is certain: If a bill does pass, diesel fuel will become more expensive.

And that possibility has become a key during Senate debate.

Of course, that's part of the whole idea behind cap and trade: Raise the cost of carbon-based energy to encourage investment in cleaner energy and promote more efficient use of energy, with the long-term objective of slowing global warming and decreasing U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

There are lots of arguments for and against this idea, all of which are being debated at length on Capitol Hill as Congress considers the climate-change legislation.

But the possibility of a steep jump in diesel prices isn't likely to win the legislation much support among motorcoach operators.

Petroleum suppliers have said diesel fuel could go up by as much as 88 cents a gallon under the cap-and-trade bill passed by the House.

Of course, many in the motorcoach industry support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve fuel efficiency. After all, coaches that are more fuel efficient cost less to operate and reduce the industry's carbon output.

Many operators have taken their own steps to reduce fuel consumption by educating drivers to be fuel conscious, and reducing idling and using more fuel efficient tires.

Beyond that, however, the industry's hands are tied. Motorcoach operators don't build engines and they don't refine fuel. But they do pay the price of any increased fuel cost due to climate-change legislation.

The chairman of the Senate

Environment and Public Works Committee, Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., said her committee will draft its own legislation.

However, she supports the cap-and-trade approach, and has challenged the prediction of steep increases in fuel prices.

Meanwhile, ground transportation lobbyists continue to push for changes to the proposed climate-change legislation, saying it must:

- Address the need to improve highway infrastructure to reduce carbon output

- Contain provisions for carefully monitoring the proposed carbon trading markets to assure transparency and to prevent excessive speculation

- Preempt regional, state and local carbon laws to prevent a jumbled patchwork of laws that impede transportation efficiency

- Provide oil refiners with appropriate free carbon allowances for fuel production to help offset significant price increases for refined products

## Proposed health care bills may threaten small firms

WASHINGTON — The health care reform legislation currently working its way through the U.S. House notably sets forth a hefty penalty for small businesses that do not provide health insurance to their employees.

The Senate's version of health care reform also contains a provision for small business to provide coverage, but gives small firms a choice in the matter.

The House bill, which hopes to extend health coverage to most of the country's 46 million uninsured, comes with a price tag of more than \$1 trillion over the next decade and aims to eventually cover 97 percent of legal residents.

In addition to higher taxes on the country's wealthiest population, the House plan calls for more granular accounting of small business health insurance coverage of employees.

According to the House's pro-

posed plan, small businesses with payrolls of less than \$250,000 would be exempt from penalties, those with payrolls ranging from \$250,000 to \$400,000 would be responsible for health care coverage or face a small penalty, and businesses with more than \$400,000 in payroll would be liable for an 8 percent penalty for failure to provide health insurance.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved its version of health care reform legislation by a 13-10, party-line vote.

The Senate bill mandates that businesses with more than 25 employees either provide health care insurance for workers or pay the U.S. government \$750 per year per full-time employee.

The bill also would create an interactive exchange where small businesses and individuals could interact to purchase health insurance.

Financing of the Senate bill has yet to be addressed by the Senate Finance Committee, and financing is the key issue.

For these reasons and others, there is strong motivation for small bus operators and other small businesses to cast a discerning eye towards Washington these days as the universal health care bills make their way through the House and Senate.

While the outcomes and effects of the proposed health care reform remain to be seen, the momentum for government-mandated health care has picked up pace with President Obama calling on Congress to "buck up" and pass health care reform legislation before its August recess.

## To the Editor

In recent editions of your magazine, we believe that National Interstate Corporation (Nasdaq: NATL) and our insurance subsidiaries, specifically National Interstate Insurance Company, may have been inadvertently portrayed in an unfavorable light, including a recent mention of an SEC shelf registration that simply allows certain shareholders to fulfill stock registration related procedures.

I have received questions and concerns from several of our customers and business partners regarding our financial stability that were based on impressions they

gained from reading the magazine.

However, rather than focus on specific articles, I would like to provide some straight-forward facts.

National Interstate is celebrating its 20th year in business. Since our inception we have been a leader in our markets and our results have consistently outperformed the property and casualty insurance industry as a whole. We have always maintained a strong and conservative balance sheet, especially in regards to our investments and claims reserves.

Our financial strength was recently confirmed by A.M. Best

with an 'A' Excellent rating, stable outlook.

National Interstate began exclusively as a passenger transportation insurer and we have since expanded our product offerings to other areas including trucking and specialty personal lines. Today we believe that we are the largest writer of insurance for passenger transportation companies and one of only a few insurers who have consistently remained in this market.

We offer both traditional and captive programs providing superior customer service including claims expertise that can only be achieved through the consistency that we have demonstrated throughout our 20-year history.

I am fortunate to lead a financially stable and growing insurance company. We believe our strong and loyal customer base, along with our employees and shareholders, have benefited from the financial stability that National Interstate has maintained throughout our history.

We continue to support our insurance markets with the innovative, cost effective products that our business partners have grown to expect from us.

To see how we can help you with your insurance needs or to contact us, please look us up at [www.nationalinterstate.com](http://www.nationalinterstate.com).

—Dave Michelson  
President and C.E.O.

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# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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# Thinking about adding Wi-Fi? Here's what to consider

By Dave Millhouser

On curves ahead / Remember, sonny / That rabbit's foot / Didn't save / The bunny / Burma-Shave

In ye olden days, bus passengers depended on road signs for entertainment and information as they cruised the highways. Burma-Shave's signs added an element of fun and a bit of wisdom to travel.

Times and technology have changed, and many coach operators offer several forms of entertainment to help time pass pleasantly. Stereos, satellite radio and video systems all have found a home in our industry, to the point where customers expect them.

A new wrinkle is the addition of WiFi (wireless internet) service. For the uninitiated, this jewel allows your customers to access the internet from their laptop computers while the coach is frolicking down the road.

The beauty of WiFi service is that it allows passengers to fill their time as they see fit — working, communicating or just surfing the web. For some, its productive

time, for others a pleasant distraction. No one is forced to watch a movie they don't like or listen to music that doesn't fit their taste.

The WiFi hardware cost is pretty reasonable (in the world of coach options).

Depending on whistles and bells, the range is \$5,000 to \$10,000 per coach. The actual "stuff" is small, and generally easy to install, no problem even in smaller buses.

Essentially it is a little broadcast/receiver that communes with WiFi-enabled computers, and then talks to the internet via a different, more powerful radio hookup.

Once the system is installed, the hardware requires minimal maintenance, but you'll pay monthly for the service itself. Generally the provider will use either cell phone towers, satellite, or a combination that switches as needed. The more comprehensive the system, the more you'll pay.

Some things to consider (aren't there always?): You'll buy the hardware and service as a package. Like cell phones, some services

have geographical areas where they are stronger.

Pick one that excels in the areas you travel most. This is critical if you're crossing international borders. If your system has a lengthy conversation, which isn't apparent at the time, with a foreign system, hefty roaming charges may turn up. This is true of cell phones, too, but the phones usually have a visual way of knowing you've left home.

If you can't be absolutely sure you're not transporting minors, you're going to need a "porn filter." Rough, tough coal miners can handle anything, but you don't want to be accused of providing a child with an inappropriate biology lesson, just because the child sat next to the wrong adult, and took a peek at the computer screen.

It might be wise to have a policy requiring web surfers to use headsets if they're accessing sound files — to assure their neighbors' privacy.

You'll want a good "disclaimer," too, for folks signing onto your service, so you're not stuck for any

identity or data theft on what is, necessarily, an unsecured network. You don't want to be responsible for one passenger stealing another's credit card numbers, or some hacker tailgating your coach, in a VW microbus, sucking up your customers' info.

One major coach operator discovered WiFi was a huge selling point to student and business travelers, but to be really effective it had to provide 110-volt current to run battery chargers. This company is in the process of retrofitting a number of coaches, but it would have saved money by having the inverter installed at the outset.

Before investing in a system, think about what sort of services you provide. Line-run passengers and commuters love WiFi because they're generally travelling alone, and are looking to fill their time constructively. Charter-and-tour folks may not want or need constant internet access. They're a "group" and may prefer group entertainment.

Students are a mixed bag. They COULD be using their computers



Dave Millhouser

to do schoolwork, but many aren't going to bother.

In other words, before you make the leap, poll your clientele to see how much internet access means to them, and equip your fleet accordingly. TRY to make this a service you can charge for.

Since your driver shouldn't use Wifi while driving, Burma-Shave can still help:

Proper / Distance / To him was bunk / They pulled him out / Of some guy's trunk / Burma-Shave

And if you're travelling on a coach with WiFi try: <http://www.fiftiesweb.com/burma1.htm>.

Dave Millhouser is a bus industry marketing consultant and freelance writer. Contact him at: [dave\\_millhouser@hotmail.com](mailto:dave_millhouser@hotmail.com).



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## Chinese coach

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Ankai name.

George Ziegler, director of sales and marketing at Greenkraft, said coach operators will be impressed with the Ankai and its 56 seatbelt-equipped leather seats, LCD video screens, air suspension, back-up monitor, engine compartment fire-suppression system, aluminum wheels and other amenities.

"Fully loaded, the coach will sell for \$325,000," said Ziegler.

A base model, with steel wheels and cloth-fabric seats, lists at \$295,000.

All coaches will have 410-horsepower Cummins ISM engines and Allison B-500R transmissions. Ziegler said many of the Ankai's chassis components, including axles and steering, are made by ZF. Michelin tires are standard.

The coaches have anti-locking braking systems, with disk front brakes and drum brakes on the rear axles. The air conditioning system is roof mounted.

Cutaway drawings of the Ankai indicate it uses true monocoque construction, with underside frame members anti-corrosion treated. It comes with a kneeling system, rear lavatory, auxiliary heater, and two-year warranty.



It has a curb weight of 35,000 pounds and a GVWR of more than 46,000 pounds.

Initially, parts and service are available at the Greenkraft/G&K Automotive facility in Santa Ana. Ziegler said a service network is being established.

The driving force behind the introduction of the Ankai to the U.S. market is George Gemayel, president and founder of G&K Automotive, a 30-year-old company that specializes in modifying foreign-built vehicles, ranging from autos to motorcycles to ATVs, to meet USDOT and USEPA requirements.

Gemayel became something of a legend four years ago when he brought 1,026 European-version smart cars into the U.S. and con-

verted them for sale as legal U.S. vehicles.

Until then, the Mercedes-built smart car, available around the world for years, appeared doomed never to be available in the U.S. Mercedes had vowed it wouldn't bring the smart car to the U.S. because of our big car/SUV/pickup truck culture.

Two months after Gemayel sold his first conversion smart car, Mercedes flip-flopped and announced it would sell an Americanized version of the smart car in the U.S. That happened last year and the smart car has been a big seller.

Three years ago, Gemayel got the idea of trying to repeat his success with the smart car by importing Chinese-made buses and trucks.

## RV maker plans shuttle bus

NAPPANEE, Ind. — A leading maker of recreational vehicles, Gulf Stream Coach Inc., has introduced a line of shuttle buses called Gulf Tran.

Gulf Tran cutaway buses will be available in three models built on Ford E-350, Ford E-450 and Ford E-550 chassis.

They will be showcased for the first time next month at Bus-Con in Chicago.

"We are excited to be entering the shuttle bus industry," said Brian Shea, president of Gulf Stream's motorized division.

"We are receiving extremely positive feedback from the dealers and suppliers about the prospect of having Gulf Tran supply bus

vehicles... We have added several high-quality employees to our roster and expect to immediately have an impact at the BusCon show in September.

"Attention to detail, innovative product and strong customer service will continue to be our focus."

Gulf Tran said it is in discussions with prospective dealers to carry the new shuttles.

"Every dealer we have been in contact with has shown a tremendous interest in our entrance into the shuttle bus industry and selling our products," said Claude Donati, vice president of the motorized division. "We plan on having the best dealers in the United States represent our Gulf Tran products."

With an in-house staff of mechanical and emissions engineers, plus experienced technicians, mechanics and assemblers, and partnerships with design and tooling companies, Gemayel figured his team could convert Chinese buses and trucks to U.S. standards.

So, he began working with Anhui Ankai Automobile Co. and its affiliate, Anhui Jianghuai Automobile Co., which makes trucks. Both companies have their manufacturing operations in Hefei, an

eastern Chinese city 80 miles west of Nanjing and 270 miles west of Shanghai.

Gemayel has a 10-year agreement with Anhui Ankai to distribute buses in the U.S. and a 25-year agreement with Anhui Jianghuai to market trucks. Distribution of the trucks is scheduled to begin next year.

Meanwhile, says Ziegler, Ankai coaches are ready for test drives and buyers. For more information, go to [www.greenkraft.com](http://www.greenkraft.com).

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## Pa. Bus Assn. elects board

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Three new members have been elected to the board of the Pennsylvania Bus Association and seven members have been re-elected. All will serve two-year terms.

Dale McMichael was elected as a bus operator member. He joined Executive Coach of Lancaster, Pa., as an investor nine years ago and became vice president three years ago.

He has an undergraduate degree in physics/math from Goshen College, a master's in materials engineering from the University of Notre Dame, and an MBA from St. Edwards University. He was employed in the semiconductor industry for 14 years before joining the family business.

Jay Oakman was elected to the board to represent PBA associate members. He is an account executive for ABC Companies. Oakman

has a degree in political science and religion from Hampden-Sydney College in Hampden-Sydney, Va. He joined ABC in 2003.

Linda Mauzy was elected to the board to represent travel supplier members. She is group marketing manager for Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands region.

The following individuals were re-elected to the board:

- David Benedict of David Tours & Travel in Philadelphia
- Patrick Cole of Cole Transportation in Spring Mills, Pa.
- Mike Fleischhauer of Greyhound Lines in New York
- Brian Kurtz of Elite Coach in Ephrata, Pa.
- Sue Anderson Nicklin of Anderson Coach in Greenville, Pa.
- Dennis Warner of Red Lion Bus Co. in Red Lion, Pa.
- Tammy Wolf-Baker of Wolf's Bus Lines in York Springs Pa.

## MCI refocuses customer support

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — Motor Coach Industries announced a revamping of its after-market support division with the establishment of what it calls "customer solutions teams."

The goal, says MCI, is to "further assure total customer satisfaction throughout the life cycle of its coaches."

Ken Russell, vice president of aftermarket customer support, said MCI has restructured positions within its Pro Support Division "to improve our operational speed and effectiveness to provide fast solutions to problems when an inevitable mechanical failure or ordinary wear-and-tear situation occurs."

The customer solution teams

## Industry personality Bob Beard announces retirement

TEMPLE HILLS, Md. — Bob Beard, who spent 30 years driving for Trailways and Greyhound and then became one of the industry's best-known personalities, has announced his fifth — and final — retirement.

"As I gingerly approach my 76th birthday, I just have to try again (to retire)," Beard said in an e-mail to friends and colleagues.

During the nearly 20 years since his first retirement from the industry in 1990, after spending 27 years at Trailways and 3 more at Greyhound, Beard created several new careers for himself.

He wrote a book, *Square Wheels on the Interstate*; he became curator for bus collectibles and artifacts displayed at the headquarters of Trailways Transportation System in Fairfax, Va.; he wrote articles and took countless photographs for industry publications (including *Bus & Motorcoach News*); he became a tireless worker for and promoter of the Museum of Bus Transportation, which named him to its board; he co-founded an association of interstate bus drivers and edited its magazine; he served as chairman and convention staff member of the Trailways Retirees Association; he became a member of the editorial advisory board of BusRide, and he functioned as an internet watchdog for many individuals in the industry.

As he often observed, "I need to find a job so I

can rest up from this retirement."

In recent months Beard came to realize his busy schedule and the 300-mile roundtrip drive from his suburban Washington, D.C. home to the Museum of Bus Transportation in Hershey, Pa., was getting to be "a bit much for me."

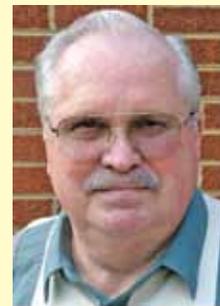
"It has been a great bus ride because I do not believe there is another retired driver in North America who has come to know so many fine bus people, and have so many of you know me — by name," said Beard.

"As I fade into the background, if a 300-pounder can actually fade, I beg to remind you to care for that bus museum. It's... a real showcase display for the public and it's an all-volunteer endeavor... Without you, it can't and won't be."

Tom Collins, president of the museum, said the museum directors accepted Beard's retirement announcement "with great reluctance."

"We will miss Bob greatly," Collins said.

For information about the Museum of Bus Transportation, go to [www.busmuseum.org](http://www.busmuseum.org). To contact Beard, e-mail him at [squarewheels@verizon.net](mailto:squarewheels@verizon.net).



Bob Beard

have been organized into four regions and 14 territories. The territories are covered by technical solutions and parts solutions managers. MCI also is assigning its call center parts service representatives to specific customer accounts to improve accountability

and provide more personalized service.

A "customer assurance team" with "senior expertise" has been formed to support the customer solutions teams.

Dan Besserer has been promoted to executive director, customer

solutions, and is responsible for overseeing the regional teams. Besserer formerly was a fleet support manager in MCI's public-sector division.

Go to [www.mcicoach.com](http://www.mcicoach.com) to view the customer solutions teams by region.



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## Marketing campaign

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

term “motorcoach.”

The slogan: “Get Motorcoachified.”

As the marketing experts explained, it is critical for consumers to realize that the word “motorcoach” exists, means something specific, and begin using it.

Using the word “get” in front of motorcoachified is a “call to action” for the consumer to find out more or to experience motorcoach travel first hand.

Placing the extension “ified” at the end of motorcoach is a fun way of expressing what happens when an individual experiences motorcoach travel, the marketing consultants explained.

And, finally, motorcoachified is a word the industry campaign can own.

“This newly coined word, we’ve invented, is catchy and differentiates our message from all the noise the consumer is assaulted with every day,” said Scott Kessler of Matchbox Studio Inc. in Denver, Colo., which coordinated development of the branding campaign and its elements.

### Building a brand

Essentially, what the marketing campaign aims to do is build widespread consumer awareness of the many advantages of motorcoach travel, just as campaigns by RV dealers and manufacturers, plus those by dairy, pork, beef and cotton producers, boosted those industries.

Few could have imagined that when the dairy industry adopted the deceptively simple “Got Milk?” campaign, it would rise to such incredible popularity and visibility.

While it’s not likely anyone harbors illusions that “Get Motorcoachified” will achieve the iconic status of “Got Milk?,” the marketing gurus point out that neologisms, or made up words, like “Google” have become commonly used and accepted over time.

The motorcoach industry faces much tougher marketing hurdles than did the RV and agriculture-related industries. With recreational vehicles, milk, beef and cotton, everyone knows what they are. Few Americans know what a motorcoach is, what the word means, and most importantly what it means to travel via motorcoach.

“The majority of North Americans are not aware that motorcoaches exist as a convenient transportation option,” Kessler told the two-dozen operators and others who came to Denver on their own nickel to participate in the two days of strategy sessions.

Therefore, said Kessler and his partner, Lisa Conner of Matchbox

Studio’s Denver office, the motorcoach brand message “must be delivered in a clear, concise and creative manner.”

### Where’s the money?

And just as significantly, the motorcoach industry doesn’t have anywhere near as much money as the RV, milk, beef and cotton industries, which have pumped millions of dollars into their marketing efforts.

To overcome these and other challenges, the marketing strategists recommended the industry adopt coordinated campaign elements consisting of:

- A catchphrase
- Motorcoach full-wrap designs
- Motorcoach back-wrap designs
- Consumer-facing website architecture
- Graphic and other elements that easily translate to other formats, such as display advertisements or direct-mail pieces

Matchbox Studio and the outside designers, writers and advertising professionals it drew into the process of developing the campaign came up with elements that are highly adaptable and scaleable, will work across different motorcoach designs and configurations, and will easily translate to other mediums besides bus wraps.

Additionally, the campaign needed to have enough flexibility to accommodate different headline modules that speak to specific key features and benefits of motorcoach travel, such as being “green,” convenient, comfortable, readily available, usable by large groups, and able to go everywhere.

### Using the No. 1 asset

Given the dearth of money available for an industry marketing effort, the campaign relies heavily on the industry’s most valuable asset — the tens of thousands of rolling billboards that are motorcoaches.

A full-wrap design for motorcoaches is the visual starting point for the campaign. However, realizing that operators will be reluctant to give up the valuable real estate on the sides of their coaches for an industry marketing campaign, the designers have come up with a design that works just as well as a back-of-bus wrap that permits operators to pick their messaging, even their color, and run with a single catch phrase of their choice, covering whatever benefit resonates with them and their market. (Sample catch phrases are shown on page 13.)

“This campaign’s typographic design, by intention, is about the words,” said Kessler. “The words themselves make up the design, by virtue of being bold, dynamic and ‘lapel-grabbing.’”



“This is a highly scalable, flexible, organic and fluid approach that affords each motorcoach operator the ability to choose the messaging that resonates with their particular demographic and region, and run with it,” Kessler added.

“Vehicle wraps can stay fresh and relevant by simply cycling through different messages over time, without disconnecting from the established brand’s look and visual formatting on the motorcoaches.”

Most importantly, the campaign was developed to appeal specifically to the consumer’s point of view, Kessler noted.

### Fall kick off

The “Get Motorcoachified” campaign will be launched this fall once the graphic designs are finalized and arrangements are made with the industry’s fleet image vendors to translate the campaign designs to actual bus wraps and supply them to operators.

The campaign was developed for the industry by the Motorcoach Council, an organization launched 18 months ago by a small group of operators from across the U.S. who thought it was past time for an industrywide initiative aimed at promoting public awareness of the motorcoach industry and motorcoach travel.

The largely all-volunteer effort has moved at a deliberate but steady pace, marked by such milestones as raising \$250,000, primarily through \$2,000 contributions from operators who are dubbed “founding partners.”

The Tennessee Motorcoach Association gave the council \$25,000 and the North Carolina Motorcoach Association sent a check for \$10,000.

Other large partners include the United Motorcoach and American Bus associations, International Motor Coach Group, and the industry’s large manufacturers. Motor Coach Industries was a catalyst for launching the council.

Heather Horton, spokeswoman for the council, said the campaign adopted by the council partners is a witty marketing approach designed to contrast with the serious nature of traffic and surface congestion and the overall hassles of traveling by other modes — plane, train or auto.

“The campaign’s diverse slogans and bold, dynamic typographic design emphasize the words themselves, while the simple — yet vibrant — iconic graphics were intentionally designed to ensure visual scalability and adaptability across different mediums — from vehicle wraps, to print and web/interactive media channels,” said Horton.

### Retaining the spirit

The council’s chairman, Todd Holland of Ramblin Express of Denver and Colorado Springs, noted the council chose to utilize the backs and sides of the industry’s existing coaches to officially launch the industry-wide promotion because it is a cost-effective strategy that embodies the grassroots spirit of the effort.

“Our highly visible and readily available coaches present a unique opportunity for promotion by their very size and the fact that they are ubiquitous,” said Holland.

“The rolling billboards touting green messages, luxury messages, anti-gridlock messages and the like are what distinguish this campaign from all others and will enable our messages to rise above the din con-

sumers hear all day,” added council board member Eron Shosteck of the American Bus Association.

“The bus wraps will generate consumer awareness instantly, and the slogan is almost incidental to the head-turning quotient of a compelling visual,” said Shosteck. “A wrapped coach rolling down the highway should create traveler interest in motorcoaches — amplified.”

The council’s campaign gives operators the freedom to retain their own branding and identity while participating in the program. Operators will be able to purchase a full-coach bus wrap, a rear bus wrap, a bumper sticker or a door panel decal.

The campaign’s flexible approach affords operators the ability to choose a decal color and message that resonates with their particular demographic and region, said Horton.

### Having an impact

The council doesn’t expect coach operators to wrap their entire fleet, said Holland. But wrapping even a handful of coaches will make a dramatic impact on U.S. travelers via the power of numbers.

Bumper stickers and rear bus wraps will be an affordable way to make a powerful impression without burdening the operator’s bottom line, he added.

“This effort is truly a cut above anything our industry has attempted thus far,” said Victor Parra, president and chief executive of the United Motorcoach Association.

“It’s creative, unique and edgy,” said Parra. “Moreover, the entire campaign is financially realistic and feasible. It utilizes our most visible asset... the motorcoach.”

Along with bus wraps, the council is developing a consumer website, [www.GetMotorcoachified.com](http://www.GetMotorcoachified.com), that is scheduled to go live later this summer. The web portal will focus on consumer awareness and education of the many benefits of motorcoach travel.

The website will not be a “bus broker” site, nor have as its primary function a detailed listing of service providers and operators.

However, the website will list companies participating in the campaign (those that have purchased graphics of any kind related to the “Get Motorcoachified” campaign). And it will include the ability for a visitor to easily locate the specific bus company they may have seen wrapped in the campaign graphics, as well as the functionality to locate an operator by company name, state, zip code or via a map location.

To learn more about the council and campaign, go to [www.motorcoachcouncil.org](http://www.motorcoachcouncil.org). To Get Motorcoachified, become a council partner.

# Get Motorcoachified

*Industry marketing campaign uses slogans, bold graphics to target consumers*

DENVER — For more than a dozen years there has been periodic talk of developing a nationwide marketing campaign designed to bolster consumer awareness of the motorcoach industry and attract more people to motorcoach travel.

Come fall, those motorcoach operators who have advocated such

an initiative will have a chance to participate in a grass-roots campaign that will promote the industry and its diverse transportation products.

Last month, a group of volunteer operators who have been raising money and working for two years to develop a consumer out-

reach program unveiled the first phase of their marketing campaign.

The initial thrust of the campaign utilizes the industry's most valuable asset — its 40,000+ rolling billboards known as motorcoaches — to display boldly designed slogans and catch phrases aimed at building consumer interest

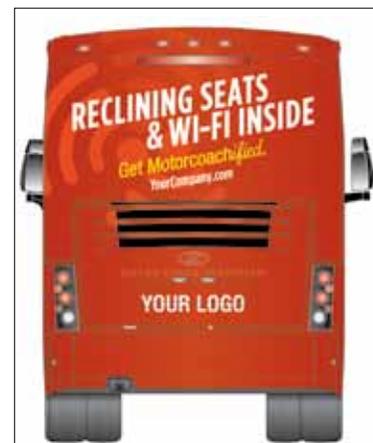
and awareness, and drive potential customers to a website to learn more about motorcoach travel.

The campaign implores consumers to "Get Motorcoachified."

That is, to experience motorcoach travel first hand, with its comfort, convenience, surprising luxury, state-of-the-art technology,

environmental efficiency, and welcome simplicity.

The campaign employs a diverse assortment of catchy phrases and slogans, and marries them to bold, dynamic typography. The phrases and slogans are designed to speak directly to various target audiences.



Back bus wraps are expected to be the most popular element adopted by motorcoach operators that chose to participate in the consumer marketing campaign. The campaign leaders chose to utilize the backs and sides of the industry's existing motorcoach fleet to officially kick off the promotion because it is a cost-effective strategy that embodies the grass-roots spirit of the effort and offers the greatest potential for widespread industry participation and buy-in.

# The promise of onboard streaming entertainment

By Jim Baker

For years, audio-visual entertainment on public transportation was often limited to long-haul journeys and reliant on VHS equipment with suspect (and very small) CRT displays.

Fortunately, this is technology of the past, and more up-to-date

systems utilize hard-disk playback and flat-panel displays that make the viewing experience considerably more pleasurable.

Passenger vehicles such as buses and coaches also are being fitted with digital video broadcasting reception, using terrestrial or satellite signals, and equipment from providers such as KVH.

But surely the technology that underlies cellular networks is theoretically getting fast enough to deliver multimedia to vehicles. Or, is it?

In the past few years, we've seen mobile broadband offerings gradually increase in speed. It wasn't so long ago that 300 kb/s was considered fast; now the mobile operators are talking about

networks capable of 3.6 Mb/s and even 7.2 Mb/s download speeds. The truth is that the actual throughput measured to a laptop over these networks is on average less than 1Mb/s. That is hardly rocket speed, and a long way short of the technical specifications used by AT&T and Sprint and Verizon.

So, it's unlikely cellular net-

works could be used today for streaming live video and audio to passenger transport without aggregating multiple cellular connections from multiple providers to create a 'fatter' pipe to the vehicle, and seamlessly switching between different networks as a vehicle moves in and out of coverage areas.

This method of intelligently combining different data networks is where products like Icomera's Moovbox cellular broadband gateway help bring high-speed communications to passenger vehicles where network performance is less than stellar.

Meanwhile, what does the future hold? Verizon announced in February it would accelerate its commitment to the next generation of cellular data networks known as LTE (long-term evolution).

A joint venture between Sprint and Clearwire has seen live deployments of WiMAX in several cities.

In terms of streaming multiple live channels of video and audio over the internet to passenger transport, 2010 is shaping up to be the year where the rubber hits the road.

*Jim Baker is chief marketing officer of Icomera.*

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# Va. Tech study says DriveCam reduces risky driving

BLACKSBURG, Va. — DriveCam's driver risk management program reduced the number of risky driving events by 52.2 percent and 37 percent for two separate fleets, according to a study conducted by Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

The study, sponsored by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, monitored 100 long- and

short-haul trucks over a 17-week period. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the safety benefits of a commercially available, driver-behavior management system, according to the FMCSA.

The DriveCam system integrates in-cab video, driving performance management software and driver counseling to reduce poor driving. It

is used in the motorcoach industry.

For four weeks, the DriveCam event recorders recorded safety-related events. During this time, the feedback light was disabled, and safety managers did not provide feedback to drivers.

During another 13-week period, the feedback light was enabled, giving safety managers access to the re-

corded safety-related events.

"Both carriers significantly reduced the mean frequency of recorded events/miles traveled from baseline to intervention," said Jeff Hickman, lead researcher at Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

"The results prove that the combination of onboard safety monitoring and behavioral coaching were

responsible for the significant reduction in the mean frequency of events/miles traveled at both carriers," Hickman added.

"The ultimate result of reducing risky driving events is the reduction in claims costs, which provide significant dollars straight to the bottom line," said DriveCam CEO Brandon Nixon.

## Navistar: Engine tests on schedule

WARRENVILLE, Ill. — Navistar says it is on track with final testing of its exhaust gas recirculation MaxxForce engines to meet 2010 emissions standards.

The company said it "will be prepared for a successful engine launch in the months ahead."

At least three North American motorcoach suppliers plan to use the Navistar MaxxForce engines — BCI, MCI and IC Buses.

"We are on track with our strategy of 2010 emissions compliance through the use of our EGR-only solution and are ahead of schedule in some cases," said Jack Allen, president of Navistar's North American truck group.

Navistar said it has "completed rigorous testing and analysis in both its engine labs and field test units during the last 18 months," including cold-weather testing in northern Minnesota earlier this year.

Final validation testing at high altitude and high temperature is being conducted in Nevada and in mountainous regions of Colorado.

## Volvo is selling '10 SCR trucks

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Volvo Trucks North America has begun selling heavy-duty trucks that meet the tougher U.S. emissions standards slated to take effect next year.

As of the middle of June, Volvo customers had placed orders for 50 trucks using selective catalytic reduction technology to meet the new standards, Volvo said.

"Several customers have expressed an interest in placing SCR-equipped vehicles in their fleets ahead of 2010," said Scott Kress, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Volvo Trucks. "This gives early adopters the opportunity to gain familiarity with the technology."

The trucks will meet the 2010 regulations using SCR, which Volvo said boosts fuel efficiency and reduces carbon emissions.

Volvo Trucks is a sister company of Prevost Car and Nova Bus.

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