

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Special Report: The New Highway Bill

### When the bus safety inspector comes, what grade will you get?

WASHINGTON — So, if you had to rate your company's safety performance, what letter grade would you assign to your operation — an "A" or a "B" or something worse?

How about your competitor across town?

If that seems like a juvenile exercise or waste of time, then you best get over it.

That's because a "simple and understandable (safety) rating system" is coming to the motorcoach industry, and letter grades that allow passengers to compare the safety per-

formance of each and every operator seems a likely possibility.

Such a system is mandated in the federal highway and public transportation law signed by President Obama last month.

Buried deep in the nearly 700-page law is a requirement that the U.S. Transportation Department determine the safety fitness of each passenger carrier it registers, and come up with an easy and straightforward system so bus travelers can compare "the safety performance" of any company they may want to ride.

As proposed by U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., earlier this year and inserted into the highway bill, the system would be similar to the health-and-cleanliness rating system used for restaurants across the U.S. (See March 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The United Motorcoach Association and the Southeast Regional (Motorcoach) Association were the first industry groups to endorse the concept.

Congress has given the USDOT a fairly ambitious timeline for get-

ting the rating/grading system implemented.

Essentially, new operators that receive USDOT operating authority after the law became effective last month are to be assigned their rating/letter grade within two years.

So, in a perfect world, the first companies with letter grades could have them by mid-2014. However, we're dealing with the USDOT and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, meaning delay is probably inevitable.

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### USDOE dices '13 diesel fuel price forecast

WASHINGTON — How about a little good news?

The U.S. Department of Energy expects diesel fuel prices to moderate further next year.

The federal agency says diesel will average \$3.79 a gallon this year, which is 11 cents a gallon less than it forecast this past spring.

The price will continue to fall into next year, says DOE, to an average \$3.58 per gallon during 2013.

The motorcoach industry's main fuel averaged \$3.84 a gallon last year.

The department also has lowered price forecasts for both gasoline and crude oil. Gasoline is expected to average \$3.49 a gallon this year — down 7 cents from the spring forecast.

It will fall even more, to \$3.28 next year, down 23 cents from the June report. Gasoline averaged \$3.53 in 2011.

The declines are largely due to "recent economic and financial news that points toward weaker economic outlooks that could lead to lower economic growth forecasts," the report said.

Both diesel and gasoline were at much higher levels earlier this year, with diesel topping out at \$4.148 a gallon on April 9, and gasoline at \$3.941 a week earlier.

But each fell at least 50 cents per gallon in the subsequent three months. Fuel prices are largely driven by the price of oil, and DOE lowered its crude outlook to \$92.83 a barrel for 2012, down about \$4 from the previous forecast.

Oil will average \$88.50 per barrel next year, down \$8.50 from the June report, DOE said.

### Congress asks for slate of motorcoach safety studies

WASHINGTON — When President Obama signed the federal highway and public transportation law last month, congressional supporters of the measure boasted it would create as many as 3 million jobs, mostly construction workers, highway engineers, and supplier positions.

A close look at the law, however, reveals it also will create plenty of jobs for bus industry safety researchers.

The legislation requires the U.S. Department of Transportation and its agencies, notably the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety

Administration, to conduct at least eight studies or reports related to a wide range of motorcoach industry safety issues.

- There will be research and testing to determine the most prevalent causes of motorcoach fires and the best methods to prevent such fires and to mitigate the effect of such fires, both inside and outside the coach.

- There will be a report assessing the feasibility, benefits and costs of retrofitting motorcoaches with seatbelts, as well as retrofitting them to improve roof strength, to make windows less prone to popping open during crashes to reduce passenger ejection,

and to require electronic stability control systems.

- If the department doesn't issue upgraded performance standards for tires used on motorcoaches then the department must submit a report to Congress explaining why it didn't adopt new, tougher tire standards.

- There will be research and testing on "enhanced occupant impact protection technologies" for motorcoach interiors to reduce injuries for all passengers. Such a study doubtless will focus on using air bags throughout coach interiors.

- There will be research and testing of "enhanced compartmentalization safety countermeasures," in-

cluding improved seating designs.

- There will be research and testing of forward and lateral crash warning systems.

- There will be a report on the feasibility, benefits and costs of establishing a certification system for motorcoach driver training programs conducted by public and private schools, as well as by motorcoach operators.

- There will be a report that assesses the knowledge and skill testing requirements for the commercial driver's license passenger endorsement to determine if improvements should be made to the test and the

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### Highway program driving down road to fiscal disaster

WASHINGTON — To pay for the two-year, \$120 billion federal highway and public transportation bill signed into law by President Obama last month, Congress adopted an unusual — even for it — array of budgetary tricks and financial sleight of hand.

Conservative critics say the bill compromises nearly every budget principle Republicans say they believe in.

"It's a bipartisan budget heist with billions of dollars of budget gimmicks that are likely to infuriate Tea Party activists and other fiscal conservative voters," Stephen Moore, American economic writer and policy analyst, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*.

"In order to avoid confrontation with the Senate and to get the highway pork rolling by July 1, House Republicans caved to Senate Major-

ity Leader Harry Reid on nearly every demand."

Republican reformers in the House had originally sought to give more power and flexibility to the states on road projects, repeal onerous environmental rules that inflate the cost of federal construction projects, and curtail funding for wasteful urban transit projects.

They also wanted the Keystone XL pipeline built and a shortfall in

road funding to be covered by royalties from increased oil and gas drilling on federal lands. Virtually none of these provisions survived.

"Without the drilling money the bill elevates fiscal accounting hocus pocus to new heights," says Moore. "For example, it pays for 27 months of road funding with 10 years of budget savings and revenue measures. Isn't that exactly the trick

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## Pa. Bus Assn. helps operators escape oversight in Philly

HARRISBURG, Pa. — An 18-month effort by the Pennsylvania Bus Association to exempt buses and motorcoaches from oversight by the Philadelphia Parking Authority has come up aces.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett signed legislation last month that exempts vehicles with a capacity of more than 16 passengers from oversight by the parking authority, which primarily regulates limousines and taxicabs in the city.

“The Pennsylvania Bus Association has been very involved with efforts to exempt buses from the Philadelphia Parking Authority’s oversight, particularly since new PPA regulations were published in December of last year,” said Pennsylvania Bus Association Executive Director Elaine Farrell.

“Through meetings and conversations with Dennis Weldon (an attorney representing the parking authority), we were able to forge a very productive relationship and do what is right for the motorcoach industry — exempt buses,” Farrell added.

The issue of parking authority oversight of buses and motorcoaches coming into Philadelphia goes back eight years, when the

state legislature adopted a law that switched over authority of taxis and limousines operating in Philadelphia from the state Public Utility Commission to the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

Politics, no less, was involved in the change.

Because of the way “limousine service” was written in the new law, there was no exemption for buses.

After the parking authority issued operating regulations in 2005, they were declared void because they were never printed in a legal publication for public com-

ment. In January 2011, a proposed rulemaking was legally published, even though the issue had found its way into the courts.

The Pennsylvania Bus Association got very involved after the new rulemaking was published, responding to the proposal. At the same time, the association’s attorney, lobbyist and Farrell began a series of meetings with officials from the parking authority and the state Public Utilities Commission.

In the view of parking authority and PUC officials legislative action would be needed to win an exemption for buses.

So, the Pennsylvania Bus Association initiated a lobbying effort last fall, culminating in House Bill 2390 that exempted buses from parking authority oversight.

Had the legislature not acted, bus operators traveling within Philadelphia would have had to jump through new paperwork hoops, including paying a one-time \$15 registration fee, and have to submit an insurance certificate, loss history and PUC certificate from their home state.

“The bus exemption in HB 2390 completely eliminates any need for

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## Black eye for Texas operators: Roadcheck knocks many off road

AUSTIN, Texas — Among the first results from this year’s Roadcheck, the continentwide truck and bus inspection blitz coordinated each June by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, have been reported by safety officials in Texas and the bus numbers from the Lone Star state aren’t wonderful.

Texas Department of Public Safety inspectors checked more than 8,000 commercial motor vehicles during the three days of Roadcheck 2012 in early June.

While thousands and thou-

sands of trucks were inspected during the 72-hour blitz, only 69 motorcoaches were checked at destination stops across the state.

Capt. Omar Villarreal of the Motor Carrier Bureau of the Texas Department of Public Safety reported a total of 18 coaches were put out of service during Roadcheck for an out-of-service rate of 26 percent.

That is higher than the combined rate for all trucks and buses checked during the June 5-7 inspection period. The overall out-

of-service rate was roughly 22 percent.

It’s unusual for motorcoaches to have a higher out-of-service rate than over-the-road trucks.

A total of 1,763 18-wheelers, buses and other commercial vehicles inspected were placed out of service for a variety of safety violations.

Brakes was the No. 1 mechanical item that caused motorcoaches to be ordered off the road.

The out-of-service rate for motorcoach drivers during the inspec-

tion blitz was 5 percent. Logbook violations did in the four drivers who were put out of service.

A total of 243 truck and bus drivers were placed out of service in Texas during Roadcheck, for an overall driver out-of-service rate of around 3 percent. Again, the out-of-service rate for bus drivers was higher than that of truckers.

In all, the Texas DPS issued more than 2,600 citations and another 23,000 warnings.

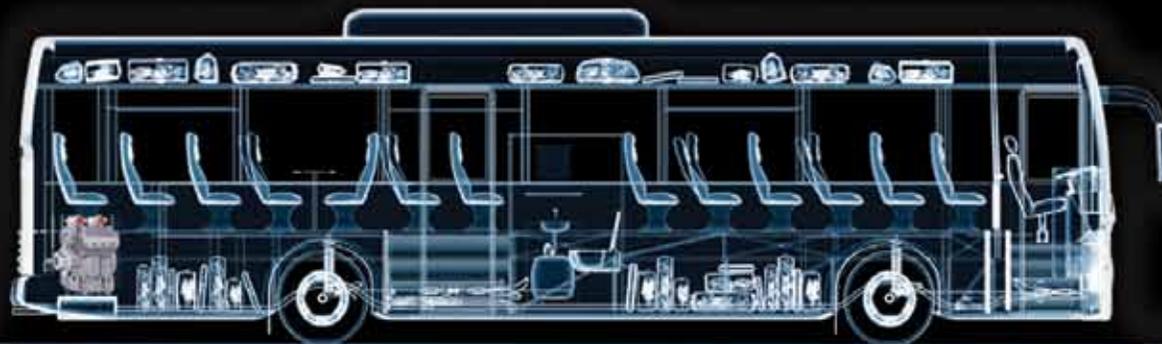
The annual Roadcheck program is designed to reduce com-

mercial vehicle highway fatalities through increased vehicle and driver safety, education and law enforcement activities throughout North America.

Capt. Villarreal said Texas DPS will continue with its Operation Texas Thunder efforts throughout the year. The DPS initiative consists of “surge-enforcement” operations targeted in specific areas where unsafe trucks or buses may be operating, as well as a crack-down on aggressive driving around commercial vehicles.

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# THE DOCKET

## Fatal crash produces slew of safety recommendations

WASHINGTON — The National Transportation Safety Board has formally communicated — to three federal regulatory agencies and four trade groups — the 16 safety recommendations it developed as a result of its investigation of the worst fatal bus crash of 2011.

Nearly half of the recommendations went to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which enforces over-the-road bus and truck safety regulations.

Another three went to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, including a recommendation the agency investigate advanced speed-limiting technology for large commercial vehicles and eventually require that over-the-road trucks and buses be equipped with such devices.

The crash, and subsequent investigation, that prompted the recommendations occurred in the early morning hours of March 12, 2011.

A coach operated by World

Wide Tours of Greater New York rolled over on Interstate 95 in New York City. As it slid on its side, it slammed into a sign post that sheered off most of its roof, killing 15 passengers and injuring 18 others, 7 severely.

The NTSB concluded the driver, Ophadell Williams, was “severely fatigued” when he lost control of the coach and that was the probable cause of the incident. Williams also was speeding.

The coach was traveling at 64 miles per hour, in a posted 50 mph zone, when it left the traffic lanes and began the crash sequence. Forty-five seconds before the crash the coach had been traveling at 78 miles per hour, its maximum governed speed.

The investigation found that Williams did not apply the brakes in the 60 seconds before leaving the travel lanes and striking the guardrail.

Here are the six recommendations that went to the FMCSA:

- Develop and disseminate guidance for motor carriers on how to most effectively use currently available onboard (driver) monitoring systems and develop a plan to periodically update the guidance.

- Upon completion of field operational tests for onboard monitoring systems, determine whether test results indicate that such systems would reduce accidents or injuries, and, if so, require commercial motor carriers to use these systems to improve driver safety.

- Revise federal regulations to require that states retain on the Commercial Driver’s License Information System driver record all convictions, disqualifications, and other licensing actions for violations during the prior 10 years.

- Include Safety Measurement System rating scores in the methodology used to determine a carrier’s fitness to operate in the safety fitness rating rulemaking for the new Compliance, Safety, Ac-

countability initiative.

- Include in the safety fitness rating rulemaking for the new Compliance, Safety, Accountability initiative a structured process, such as the Safety Management Cycle, to be used by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration investigators and their state Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program agents, as an audit tool for investigators to (1) identify the root cause of safety risks found during compliance reviews, and (2) deliver constructive guidance to motor carriers to ensure the promotion of safety management.

- Include information regarding the Safety Management Cycle in your Safety is Good Business motor carrier website.

The NTSB is enamored with the idea of requiring over-the-road buses and trucks have speed limiters that react to posted speed limits.

Such advanced speed limiters either use vehicle location data

matched to a database of posted speed limits, or the devices actually read speed limit signs.

NTSB also had one safety recommendation for the United Motorcoach and American Bus associations, and National Motorcoach Network.

It said UMA, ABA and NMN should alert their members to the circumstances of the March 2011 crash, the existence of the FMCSA’s Safety Management Cycle, and how the safety management process can positively influence carrier safety.

NTSB Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman said her board was “vitaly interested” in the recommendation to bus industry trade groups “because it is designed to prevent accidents and save lives.”

A synopsis of the NTSB report, including the probable cause, findings and a complete list of the safety recommendations, is available at <http://go.usa.gov/dIZ>.

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## Brand USA hits roiling water, CEO exits, senators want info

WASHINGTON — Brand USA, the 14-month-old organization set up to spearhead worldwide promotion of the U.S. as a premier travel destination, has quickly learned the joy of having the U.S. government as a partner.

Six Republican senators have sent a pointed letter saying they're concerned about the organization's progress, spending and transparency.

A spokeswoman for Brand USA told an interviewer the organization believes the concerns raised by the senators "will easily be put to rest once the facts are known."

Brand USA was formed last year as the Corporation for Travel Promotion but with a doing-business name of Brand USA.

It's a public-private entity and, in addition to promoting the U.S. to world travelers, it has the ticklish job of trying to communicate the sometimes onerous U.S. entry/exit policies and procedures to foreign visitors.

The letter from the senators came one week before it was announced that Brand USA CEO Jim Evans had resigned.

Anne Madison, chief communications officer for Brand USA, said the resignation of Evans was unrelated to the senators' inquiries, and that the organization's board and Evans began discussing his departure before the letter was received.

"Conversations between Jim and the board predate the letter," she was quoted as saying. "The two events are completely separate."

Evans is leaving Brand USA barely more than a year after taking the job. He is the former president and CEO of Best Western International; the former CEO of Jenny Craig, and a former senior vice president of marketing at Hyatt Hotels.

Evans is being replaced on an interim basis by Brand USA Chairman-elect Caroline Beteta, the CEO of Visit California and an industry veteran.

A search has begun for a permanent replacement for Evans.

The transition comes at a critical time as Brand USA attempts to shift from a start-up endeavor to securing its place as the nation's leading destination marketing organization.

## FMCSA urges CSA data be checked

WASHINGTON — Time is running out for motorcoach operators to act on a request by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration that operators preview their company data under proposed improvements the agency wants to make to the Safety Measurement System component of its CSA program.

The changes are primarily designed to improve the FMCSA ability to prioritize its workload, but it wants feedback from operators before it fully implements the modifications.

The Safety Measurement System is a key aspect of the Compliance, Safety, Accountability enforcement program introduced by the FMCSA roughly 19 months ago.

The safety agency is recom-

mending bus and truck operators log in and see where they stand based on the refined methodology. The FMCSA says its updated "SMS Preview" gives motor carriers time to take the following actions:

- Improve safety compliance by diagnosing issues and taking action to correct organizational problems, train drivers or take other appropriate measures to improve safety.
- Request corrections to any inaccurate data.
- Provide feedback to FMCSA about refinements they think should be made before the changes are implemented.

The SMS Preview comment period ends July 30.

The FMCSA said it is reviewing

administrative and financial matters are transparent.

"We are concerned about reports of potentially significant waste and misuse of funds at the corporation," the senators wrote.

For example, one allegation is that a media consultant was hired by Brand USA without proper due diligence and bidding.

The senators requested extensive paperwork, including documents associated with the production of a Brand USA launch party held during World Travel Market

the comments it receives and will make any necessary changes prior to implementation.

Carriers can access the SMS Preview through two websites:

- Go to the Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) website — <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov> — and log in with an FMCSA-issued USDOT number and a personal identification number.

- Log in to the FMCSA Portal — <https://portal.fmcsa.dot.gov/login> — and select the "CSA Outreach" link.

Written comments regarding the changes can be filed to the Federal Docket Management System, Docket ID Number FMCSA-2012-0074.

2011 in London, the salaries and benefits of the five most-highly-compensated individuals employed by Brand USA, and an itemized listing of all expenses incurred by Brand USA since its founding, among other things.

Brand USA staff is working to fulfill the senators' requests, Madison said, and Beteta has submitted a preliminary response to the senators.

Brand USA maintains a consumer website at [www.DiscoverAmerica.com](http://www.DiscoverAmerica.com).

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## Grading safety

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Motorcoach operators that were in business before July 2, 2012, are to get their letter grades no later than July 2, 2015.

Congress also mandated that USDOT develop regulations that establish a process for regularly checking on the safety performance of private passenger carriers. The new rules are to include a system of "progressive intervention" to correct unsafe practices.

Once the program is up and running, operators are to have their safety fitness rechecked at least every three years.

Operators that "serve primarily urban areas with high passenger loads," meaning curbside operators, casino shuttles and similar operations, will have annual safety fitness assessments.

The new law also mandates that operators must "prominently display (their) safety fitness information" in terminals, in motorcoaches, on a sign if coaches depart from locations other than a terminal, and at all points of sale for coach services and operations.

Additionally, the USDOT must ask the public for ideas on ways it can improve the accessibility of its safety rating information for motorcoach services and operations.

Fundamental to the entire effort is the goal of making USDOT safety fitness information about motorcoach operators more clear-cut and effortless to access.

"The hope is that a single, federal-assigned consumer rating will cut through the confusion created by third-party ratings," said an industry executive who has closely followed development of the idea.

Who knows, the system might even eventually eliminate the need

for consumer-oriented inspection companies.

Other items in the highway bill (not highlighted in the July 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*) include:

- **CDL notification system.** Motor carriers are required to check the CDL status of their drivers annually. The highway bill presses the FMCSA to move forward with a Driver Record Notification System.
- **Vehicle-to-vehicle communication.** Congress wants to know the status of technology currently being studied that has cars and commercial vehicles talking to each other. There's also technology being studied that has vehicles talking to the infrastructure. Congress wants an update on that as well. The goal is to keep vehicles from bumping into each other by communicating.
- **Exemption study.** USDOT must research the safety impacts of

## People

SAN FRANCISCO — *Mike Waters*, who for the past eight years has been vice president and general manager of **Coach America San Francisco** (also known as **Franciscan Lines and Gray Line San Francisco**), has changed jobs.

Waters has joined **Coach USA-Stagecoach Group** as senior director of business development/West.

In his new position, Waters will be involved in the expansion of **megabus.com** on the West Coast. megabus, a subsidiary of Coach USA, revealed this spring it intends to tackle California for the second time in five years. It pulled out of the market after less

certain exemptions from federal safety regulations.

than a year in mid-2008.

*Greg Rogers*, a senior vice president of Coach America, succeeds Waters as acting general manager of the San Francisco/Franciscan operation.

Coach America San Francisco is one of the Coach America operations being acquired by **TMS-Horizon Coach**. See related story on Page 10.

Waters, a long-time leader and supporter of the **California Bus Association**, was the focus of an article in the May 1 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*, relating how he received a kidney transplant. The donated kidney came from Waters' friend and sometimes competitor, *Tom Giddens*, president of **Pacific Coachways** in Garden Grove, Calif.

- Safety rating reciprocity with Canada is mandated.

## Studies galore

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driving skills exam.

While these studies generally are designed to help policymakers understand complex issues, they also are a tactic used by Congress to stall final decisions on controversial regulations — or as a way to compromise on hot-button issues that otherwise might jeopardize

legislation or thwart industry buy-in.

The later certainly appears to have been the case with the highway bill that emerged from the House-Senate conference committee and became law.

The version of the bill passed by the Senate had a raft of mandates with very short implementation dates. (See June 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The final legislation passed by the House and Senate extends the research period for a number of the safety initiatives, reflecting industry lobbying and allying industry concerns.

One of the most extensive studies will be that involving research on motorcoach fires, and fire prevention and mitigation.

The research and testing will consider flammability of exterior com-

ponents, smoke suppression, prevention of and resistance to wheel well fires, automatic fire suppression systems, passenger evacuations, causation and prevention of fires, and improved fire extinguishers.

Under the law, the research and any new rules or standards that may result from it must be completed within three years.

It should be noted that the agencies of the USDOT are notorious for

missing congressional deadlines.

Three-year deadlines frequently stretch to a decade or longer at the hands of agency bureaucrats.

Laws like the highway bill contain no incentive for getting projects done on time or early, and no penalty for delays other than some future administrator, who probably wasn't around when the law was adopted, possibly incurring the wrath of a representative or senator at a hearing.

## Road funding mess

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ObamaCare used for financing and that Republicans denounced?

And, as Marc Scribner, transportation specialist at the Competitive Enterprise Institute notes: "This just makes the funding problem even worse two years from now when a new highway bill has to be passed. It's just a bunch of phony pay fors."

Highway bills are supposed to be financed with taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, but because Congress wanted to spend so much more than is collected and didn't want to cut spending or raise fuel taxes, Scribner calculates the bill is a \$20 billion raid on the general fund (which is already \$1.2 trillion in deficit) to pay for the highway and public transit spending programs in the measure.

Of course, it makes the deficit worse.

The bill "saves" more than \$3 billion by raiding various non-transportation trust funds with unspent dollars.

For example, it raids the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund of nearly all of its \$3.6 billion, and transfers revenue raised from tariffs on imported automobiles into the collapsing Highway Trust Fund.

At the same time, the law spends about \$8 billion on obsolete transit projects (less than 3 percent of trips are taken on mass transit), thanks to an alliance between big city Demo-

crats and suburban Republicans.

Worst of all, say critics, is a \$9 billion pension gimmick. The bill "saves" \$9 billion by reducing the required corporate contributions to pension funds.

This will raise income-tax revenues for the government because pension contributions are tax deductible. So, businesses will have fewer tax deductions under this scheme and pay more tax.

But, the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation estimates these corporate pensions are \$26 billion underfunded already. They should be contributing more, not less to the fund.

Guess who is on the hook for underfunded pensions? Taxpayers.

"It's bipartisan spending raids like this that convince voters that there ain't a dime's worth of difference between the two parties," says Moore. "Polls are showing that many voters don't think it matters which party wins Congress or the White House in 2012."

House Republicans on the Senate-House conference committee that negotiated the highway bill were under enormous pressure to go along with the sending and financing plan put together in the Senate.

During the final weeks of the negotiations, road-building and other industries dependent on highway programs identified House Republicans as the main obstacle to passage of a bill.

A coalition of industry groups launched radio ads in the congressional districts of four House negotiators. "With billions of dollars at stake, and thousands of good paying jobs, it is time for Congress to take action," the ads said. "Will your congressman be part of the problem, or part of the transportation solution?"

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to lawmakers urging them not to give up on a comprehensive bill. To do so would mean "the economic growth potential of infrastructure investment would be squandered and job losses would likely continue in the coming months and years," wrote Bruce Josten, the chamber's executive vice president.

Meanwhile, the situation isn't going to get any better in the years ahead.

The Congressional Budget office has issued new estimates on how much federal transportation funds are going to be reduced by proposed federal fuel economy standards.

The projected drop in revenue will exacerbate Congress' difficulty in finding enough money to maintain and expand the nation's highway and public transportation system.

According to the CBO, the proposed fuel economy standards could result in a \$57 billion drop in tax revenue going to federal transportation programs.

New CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) standards, proposed by the National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2011, would tighten fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles manufactured from 2017 to 2025. That includes cars, sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, minivans and crossover utility vehicles.

By 2025, the proposed standards are expected to raise the average fuel economy of the new vehicle fleet from 34.1 mpg — the average anticipated for 2016 and beyond under current standards — to 49.6 mpg.

In its report, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the proposed CAFE standards would gradually lower gasoline tax revenues, eventually causing them to fall by 21 percent.

CBO estimates that such a decrease would result in a \$57 billion drop in revenues credited to the Highway Trust Fund by 2022, a 13 percent reduction. The full 21 percent reduction in gasoline tax revenues, however, would not occur for about 30 years.

Another challenge looming for fuel tax collectors may be the advent of natural gas-powered trucks — of all sizes, including over-the-road trucks.

More and more observers are of the opinion that there may soon be a significant shift of interstate truckers to the use of natural gas — mostly liquefied natural gas — in place of diesel fuel in their rigs.

If that does happen, it will pose

a large challenge — a series of challenges — to fuel tax administrators.

Most states and the federal government tax LNG and compressed natural gas, although some states, and most of the Canadian provinces, don't tax either one, or tax one but not the other.

But, since these fuels have not been widely used on the highway, there is probably little or nothing in the way of administrative apparatus — reporting forms, rules, taxpayer guidance, and so forth — to allow fuel taxes on gaseous fuels to be collected efficiently.

And there are a number of special problems connected with LNG and CNG: What's the point of taxation going to be in practice? How will fuel transport — most of it, in the absence of pipelines, by truck — going to be regulated?

Will the tax rates on LNG and CNG reflect the energy content of those fuels, both of which contain fewer BTUs than diesel? What's a gallon of CNG?

While natural gas-powered motorcoaches have been around for 15 years, they have not been adopted by private motorcoach operators for a variety of reasons, including the significant cost differential, weight, luggage-bay space displaced by the large fuel tanks, the relative dearth of fueling stations, facilities and infrastructure requirements, and the absence of incentives.

# How did the industry get behind the safety eight ball?

By Dave Millhouser

"You're really old...and still alive," replied my friend, who wanted me to teach him scuba diving, when I asked him why he thought I would make a good diving instructor.

He knew I'd been doing it for years, and also figured I'd work cheap.

Contrary to what you might think, there are a number of areas where the diving and motorcoach industries are remarkably similar, but there also is one dramatic example of something divers got right we could learn from.

In ye olden days (before aging artifacts like me did it), diving was perceived as dangerous. Industry leaders quickly figured out that if they didn't deal with that perception and regulate themselves, then government would do it for them, and the results might not be pretty.

They developed teaching standards, and agreed among themselves not to equip untrained divers.

In addition to federal maintenance regulations on scuba tanks, they developed more stringent rules that they self enforce. The dive industry even came up with a

private "clearing house" for sharing information on accidents, so safety is continually improving.

As a result, the industry suffers little interference from government entities.

We should learn from that.

"Currently," a wizened motorcoach executive pointed out, "our industry is facing (a mountain of) mandates; many of which are safety items that have been around for decades. How did the industry allow consumers/legislators/regulators to get ahead of it on many of these?"

It's reasonable to conclude that some of the regulations proposed for the industry are silly, and that some go too far. But many also are useful things that can protect both our customers and our businesses.

We are a safe industry but a couple of things have happened.

With the 24-hour news cycle, accidents have become highly visible, creating graphic impressions. Everyone who loses someone in such an accident wants it to "mean something," and starts advocating for more rules.

And, the dirty little secret is, we could be safer.

My guess is we got where we are by resisting changes we thought would add cost, while making little

difference. Sometimes we're perceived as fighting improvements, rather than developing new safety initiatives.

We are in a low-margin, extremely-competitive environment.

The truth is that safety does cost, and we rightfully worry our customers can't afford everything.

Another truth is that, as technology improves, things once prohibitive become possible. As the public's perception changes, some of these things become absolute necessities.

Science and testing matter, but we also need to be quicker, enthusiastically embracing the good "stuff" so we can argue convincingly against ineffective concepts.

One example is seatbelts. For years we resisted them, talking about "compartmentalization." We asserted loudly, with no good science to back up our claims, that passive restraint was better because it didn't depend on passengers to do anything.

What we failed to do (and I'm part of the "we") is proactively pursue new safety initiatives. It's clear that seatbelts (if buckled) do save lives in accidents.

Would improved methods of compartmentalization do it better,

for less money? We don't know because we didn't explore it. We offered no alternative, and now we're going to have seatbelts; not lap belts (that ship sailed a long time ago), but lap-and-shoulder belts.

There are similar things on the horizon. We, as an industry, will have far more impact on the process if we are seen as being proactive, rather than reactionary.

We need to be finding and adopting genuine improvements before they are foisted on us in Rube Goldberg fashion by well-intended regulators reacting to pressure and headlines, and victims whose opinions are colored by emotion.

A number of manufacturers are installing new safety technology as standard, and more is coming. Many of these innovations were born in Europe. Why don't more safety innovations originate here?

It's not enough to say their coach industry is stronger because a lot of this stuff is relevant to trucks. Let's compete in this arena, instead of having it flow in from overseas.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Administrator David Strickland has said: "We rely on the continued leadership of safe-

ty practitioners across the country to help tackle the most dangerous driving practices." We need to live up to those expectations.

Once we're seen to be serious about safety, then we'll be trusted when we resist specific, ineffective changes. Operators should be insisting manufacturers build safer coaches and manufacturers should be pushing safety options on the operators.

Common wisdom can be contradictory. On one hand, we applaud folks who fight through adversity, never give in, get knocked down and get back up repeatedly (and we ARE fighters).

On the other hand, a definition of insanity is to "do the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result."

I'm going with that Great Philosopher Kenny Rogers...who said: "You got to know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em."

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



Dave Millhouser

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## Letter to the Editor

In response to the article, "Listing of 'safe' operators includes dubious carriers" in the July 1 issue, I want to thank you for recognizing the hard work Transportation Safety Exchange has done to provide a free list of TSX-approved point-to-point motor carriers to the public so they can easily make informed decisions about which carriers they choose to ride.

As you know, TSX is an industry-pioneering rating organization that inspects, monitors and reports the safety performance of motor carriers in the ground transportation industry. And because we truly believe in our vision of making the roads safer, we decided to offer the point-to-point service free of charge to the general public.

This free listing displays the TSX-approved operators (easily identifiable by the prominent, full-color, TSX-approved logos next to their company names):

However, in an effort to ensure that there is no confusion in discerning between the TSX-approved carriers and those carriers that are not approved, we have already implemented a change to make that even more clear.

Now, any motor carrier that is not TSX approved will be prominently designated as "Not Current-

ly TSX Approved."

I am disappointed the headline and much of the early portion of article includes comments about inclusion of "dubious carriers" and statements TSX did no vetting of the carriers.

When I was first alerted to this issue on June 15, 2012, at 1 p.m. by your representative, I explained that this was a system error and that our policy is to include only motor carriers in good standing with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration in the TSX point-to-point motor carrier listing. Corrections were made within 90 minutes of our discussion, an action of which you were aware, and noted in the article.

I believe it was unfair of you to portray this process error that was quickly corrected, and provide the impression that the information presented was flawed.

This portrayal detracts from the mission we share with the United Motorcoach Association of helping the public and the industry identify the safer point-to-point operators.

As for the assertion the free list of TSX-approved point-to-point motor carriers lacks detailed information on individual motorcoach companies, I'd like to remind you

that TSX comprehensive reviews are investigations performed by TSX (a private company) for motor carriers to allow us to form an overall assessment about the safety management controls and procedures used by the motor carrier.

The resulting detailed information gleaned from these investigations is necessarily confidential between TSX and the motor carrier.

Our subscribers have told us that the safety information on motorcoach carriers that FMCSA provides through its various web sites is overwhelming and confusing, particularly to those who are not part of the transportation industry.

TSX has made identifying TSX-approved motor carriers simple and user-friendly. The TSX approval is the standard of excellence in the industry.

We at TSX continue to be committed to a higher standard for ground transportation safety. We are very excited that free TSX point-to-point motor carrier listing provides user-friendly and valuable information. I encourage everyone to visit the free listing of TSX-approved point-to-point motor carriers on the Transportation Safety Exchange web site: [www.GetThereSafely.com](http://www.GetThereSafely.com).

—Patrick Labriola, president  
Transportation Safety  
Exchange  
[plabriolatsx@tsxcr.com](mailto:plabriolatsx@tsxcr.com)

## Lessons from the \$21-million cell phone call

A recent edition of *Today's Trucking* reported the case of Coca-Cola, which was sued successfully for \$21 million after one of its sales reps was involved in a crash in Texas that injured a 37-year-old woman. (See June 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The injured woman's lawyers convinced a jury that even though

Coca-Cola had a cell phone policy for company drivers, it was "vague and ambiguous" and it wasn't enforced.

The moral of the story is, if you operate commercial vehicles in the U.S., be aware that plaintiffs are watching and waiting to sue employers in cases of distracted driving crashes related to cell

phone use.

Having a written cell phone policy is not enough; it has to be unambiguous and rigorously enforced.

The Coke case showed that written policies aren't necessarily sufficient to change employee driving behavior or protect employers from risk and liability.

## John Stossel on buses, rules

Let's say you wanted to get from New York City to D.C. this evening.

You could take the government-supported train system, which would cost you \$153 or more, or you could take a bus, which gets no government subsidies, for...\$19.

Cheap buses started about 15 years ago, when immigrants in Chinatown figured out that they could out-compete with Amtrak and Greyhound on price by picking passengers up from the curb, and running everything without expensive bus stations.

Since then, bus companies have seen booming business.

They are now, as CATO transportation expert Randal O'Toole puts it: "The nation's fastest growing transportation mode."

He adds: "They do so with almost no subsidies. Intercity buses are safe and environmentally friendly, suffering almost 80 percent fewer fatalities per passenger mile than Amtrak and using 60 percent less energy per passenger mile than Amtrak."

Sounds great!

But yesterday, my state passed two new bills that impose a slew of regulations on the buses. State Sen. Daniel Squadron, who sponsored the regulations, says they are necessary because the buses create a "Wild West atmosphere."

One transportation blogger sums up some of the new regulations. Each bus will need a permit, and "will have to apply (and reapplied every three years) under a process that can take up to 150 days.

The state DOT will have to do a traffic study for every single bus stop, and "consult" with (government agencies) if the proposed stop would "overlap" with an existing (government) facility."

"Overlap!"

Competing with government services? Can't have that!

Another rule says that a bus company must notify the government about its schedule in advance. That will make it impossible to adapt on short notice.

"One of the great advantages of buses is to be able to respond, in a short time frame, to changes in demand. Big holiday weekend for the colleges? Throw on a few more bus runs. Slow business to the beach in the winter? Cut a run here and there. No more."

And that condemnation of the regulations comes from a lefty blogger (who also complains that I "can be obnoxious") yet he still concludes: "The people drafting (the bill) are either clueless about how buses are run, or want to make it impossible to run a curbside bus operation in the city, or both."

Exactly.

That's why I wrote *No They Can't: Why Government Fails, but Individuals Succeed*. Government kills innovation. Reagan had it right when he said:

"Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

*John Stossel is host of Stossel on the Fox Business Network.*

Operators need to go above and beyond just having a written policy — they must measure and manage compliance with their cell

phone-use policy and deal strictly with drivers who don't comply.

*From MCC News published by Motor Coach Canada.*

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## Navistar adds urea-based aftertreatment to engines

LISLE, Ill. — In a dramatic shift, Navistar International Corp. announced it will introduce heavy-duty diesel engines that use urea-based liquid aftertreatment to control emissions.

Navistar said it will introduce a 13-liter engine with the new technology, which it is calling “In Cylinder Technology Plus,” early next year, to be followed by 11- and 15-liter engines.

The engines supposedly will meet 2010 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emissions regulations without use of emissions credits, and position the company to meet greenhouse gas rules in advance of 2014 and 2017 requirements.

The announcement marks a major change for the engine, bus and truck manufacturer.

The use of urea-based aftertreatment to control nitrogen oxide emissions moves Navistar toward the selective catalytic reduction, or SCR, technology used by every other medium- and heavy-duty diesel engine maker.

Until the new power plants are ready, Navistar will continue building and selling vehicles with engines that are compliant with

USEPA rules, either by using earned emissions credits, paying noncompliance penalties, or both.

The move was announced in the wake of Navistar’s difficulty in gaining EPA approval for its 13-liter engine using advanced exhaust gas recirculation, or EGR, technology as an aftertreatment.

The new urea-based technology “will leverage the investment and advancement we’ve made in clean engine technology while providing immediate certainty for our customers, dealers, employees and investors,” Chairman and CEO Daniel Ustian said.

Navistar’s advanced exhaust gas recirculation method to exhaust aftertreatment has been in trouble and a source of controversy for more than three years.

Navistar fielded 2010-certified engines, using its advanced EGR, that didn’t quite meet the EPA regulation’s absolute limit for NOx, but had been able to comply with the rules by using emissions credits.

Early this year, when the credits started running out, the USEPA said it would allow Navistar to continue selling heavy-duty engines by means of paying noncon-

## Prevost Car unveils ‘customer portal’

SAINTE-CLAIRE, Quebec — Prevost has introduced a new website, called the “Customer Portal,” that provides Prevost operators with access to a range of resources, tools and information — at one location.

Among other things, the website provides quick access to parts identification and ordering, warranty service, service locations, technical publications, emergency roadside assistance and an interface with Prevost’s proprietary Liaison telematics system.

The secure website can be accessed at <https://www.prevostcar.com/liaisonlogin>.

performance penalties of about \$1,900 per engine.

But in June, a federal judge threw out that arrangement in a suit brought by competitors, and Navistar has had trouble trying to certify a 13-liter engine that meets the absolute NOx limit of 0.2 gram, compared to 0.5 gram it’s producing now. (See July 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Navistar’s medium-duty engines continue in production under EPA credits that are good into 2013, a company spokesman has said.

The company has reported two straight quarters of huge financial

losses, and its stock price has steadily fallen. The stock price rebounded some on reports Navistar would offer Cummins engines in 2013, according to published reports.

Outside pressure from investors, legal entanglements, financial woes and product problems have harmed Navistar’s ability to manage its business and sell trucks. High warranty costs have caused many of its losses, executives have said.

Up to now, offering Cummins engines and/or switching to SCR were not options because top executives at Navistar declared they

would not build vehicles using SCR.

More recently, Navistar has overhauled its top truck and engine management.

In addition to its International brand commercial and military trucks, Navistar also builds IC Bus brand school and commercial buses, Monaco RV brand of recreational vehicles, Workhorse brand chassis for motorhomes and step vans, and MaxxForce brand diesel engines. It also is a private-label designer and manufacturer of diesel engines for the pickup truck, van and SUV markets.

function. Users can map vehicles and display relevant vehicle/location information.

The Communicate tab allows for pre-set and customizable text messages to be sent to drivers.

The Customer Portal links directly to other resources: the Prevost webinar site, Prevost contact info for the field service and parts sales teams, the Prevost parts catalog and ordering sites, the online warranty system, Prevost technical publications and wiring diagrams, and the Prevost service provider locator.

The portal can be accessed in English or French.



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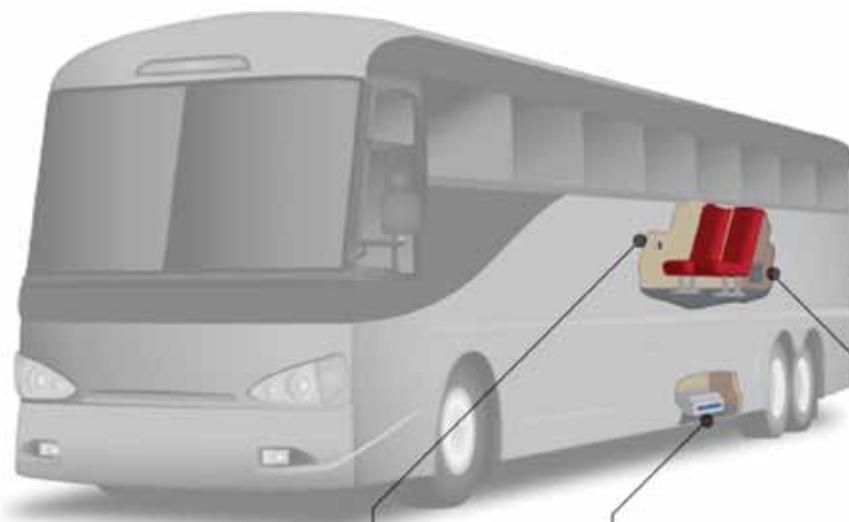
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# 12 former Coach America operations will get new name

WASHINGTON — The 12 former Coach America companies being purchased out of bankruptcy by subsidiaries of Transportation Management Services and its owner, Frank Sherman, will operate under the name Horizon Coach Lines once the acquisitions receive regulatory approval.

When that approval will happen remains, however, up in the air.

That's because a complaint filed by a former driver for one of the companies being purchased by TMS and Sherman has stalled consideration of the deal by the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

A second complaint, filed by a

public transit agency in California, also is being considered by the board.

Under federal law, the board must provide its stamp of approval to ground transportation acquisitions that have a value of more than \$2 million.

The board's rules provide,

though, that if complaints are filed against the deals it must institute "a proceeding" to consider the complaints, as well as determine the merits of the application seeking its approval.

Meanwhile, the board has granted "interim" approval of the TMS and Sherman purchases to

avoid having the companies limp along in limbo while the board process runs its course.

TMS and Sherman had filed documents with the board, asking for the interim approval, saying the delay in board consideration could injure the businesses and interfere with their operations.

The board agreed and granted an interim OK.

The 12 companies being purchased by subsidiaries of TMS/Sherman — that will eventually have their names changed to Horizon Coach Lines — are:

**America Charters Ltd. of Winston-Salem, N.C.** America Charters operates roughly 200 buses and has a staff of 319 drivers. It operates primarily in North and South Carolina and Virginia.

**American Coach Lines of Jacksonville, Fla.** It operates 48 coaches and has 54 drivers.

**American Coach Lines of Miami.** It operates 154 buses and has 166 drivers.

**American Coach Lines of Orlando, Fla.** It operates 166 coaches and employs 304 drivers.

**Coach America Phoenix** (formerly Arrow Stage Lines). It operates 27 buses and has 35 drivers.

**Blackhawk-Central City Ace Express of Golden, Colo.** It operates 57 buses and has 116 drivers.

**Coach USA Los Angeles** (formerly California Charter) of Long Beach. It operates 191 buses and has 241 drivers.

**Coach America San Francisco** (also known as Franciscan Lines and Gray Line San Francisco). It has 78 buses and 84 drivers.

**Coach America San Diego.** The business was shut down for financial reasons at the end of April. It still owns 38 buses, however.

**Gulf Coast Transportation of Houston.** It has 133 buses and 103 drivers.

**CUSA K-TCS** (formerly known as K-T Services) of Las Vegas. Like Coach America San Diego it, too, was shut down in April for financial reasons. It still has 22 buses.

**Midnight Sun Tours of Lake Worth, Fla.** It has 53 buses and 61 drivers.

In addition to the former Coach America units that will be rebranded Horizon Coach, TMS and Sherman plan to give the same name to all of the motorcoach companies it currently operates.

The largest TMS operation to be impacted by the name switch is Cabana Coaches of Opa Locka, Fla. Cabana, which primarily operates contract services, including shuttles for Carnival Cruise Line, has a fleet of 60 buses and 90 drivers.

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# Purchase of Coach America units by Coach USA is delayed

WASHINGTON — Approval of the purchase of nine Coach America companies by nine subsidiaries of Coach USA has hit a speed bump at the U.S. Surface Transportation Board because of a complaint filed by a disgruntled driver.

Surface Transportation Board rules require that it consider all challenges to acquisitions that fall within its purview, meaning final approval of the deal has been delayed.

Coach USA and its parent company, Stagecoach Group, filed an application in late May for Surface Transportation Board approval to buy nine Coach America subsidiaries that went into bankruptcy when their corporate parent, Coach America Holdings Inc., sought bankruptcy court protection in January.

Earlier in May, a deal was reached with Coach America Holdings' creditors for Coach USA/Stagecoach Group to acquire the nine operations.

But after Coach USA/Stagecoach Group filed its application, asking for Surface Transportation Board approval, a former driver for Midnight Sun Tours, a company owned by Coach America but not one of the companies being acquired by Coach USA/Stagecoach Group, filed a protest with the board.

In his filing, the driver, Michael Yusim of Delray Beach, Fla., said no sales involving Coach America subsidiaries should be approved by the Surface Transportation Board until complaints he filed against Midnight Sun Tours are resolved by the U.S. Department of Labor and the federal bankruptcy court in Delaware.

Yusim alleges Midnight Sun Tours discriminated against him and another driver for having accurately reported their hours of service. His complaints are pending before the Department of Labor.

In a response to Yusim's protest, Coach USA attorney David Coburn told the Surface Transportation Board that because Coach USA/Stagecoach are not trying to buy Midnight Sun Tours, Yusim's complaint should have no bearing on Coach USA's application and should be denied.

The Surface Transportation Board will eventually consider Yusim's protest, Coach USA's reply, and rule. But, until then, the board's final approval remains in limbo.

Meanwhile, Coach USA has revealed additional details of its planned purchase of the Coach America subsidiaries, and told its stockholders the acquisitions will

enable it to expand its U.S. operation at a reasonable price and accelerate growth of its megabus.com operation.

Coach USA/Stagecoach Group is paying \$134.2 million to buy the nine Coach America companies.

In 2011, the nine operations produced total revenue of \$164.4 million and an operating profit of \$13.3 million, for an operating return of 8.1 percent. The nine companies had a 2011 EBITDA of \$24.6 million.

The nine companies represented 36 percent of total Coach America revenue in 2011.

By comparison, the existing, combined Coach USA/Coach Canada/megabus operation had total revenue of \$498 million during the year ended April 30, an operating profit of \$31.4 million, and an operating margin of 6.3 percent.

The composition of the revenue of the nine Coach America companies looks like this: Contract business, \$76 million, or 46 percent; charter business, \$55 million, or 33.5 percent; scheduled service/line run/commuter business, \$18 million, or 11 percent; sightseeing/tour, \$8 million, or nearly 5 percent, and airport/casino shuttle, \$7 million, or 4 percent.

Here are mini-profiles of the nine companies being acquired by Coach USA/Stagecoach:

**All West Coachlines of Sacramento, Calif.:** 2011 revenue, \$7.8 million; number of buses 37; 38 fulltime and 11 part-time drivers; mainly charter work with some contracts.

**American Coach Lines of Atlanta:** 2011 revenue, \$12.4 million; number of buses, 96; 150 fulltime and 42 part-time drivers; 60 percent charter work, some contract and transit revenue.

**Dillon's Bus Service of Hanover, Md.:** 2011 revenue, \$33.8 million; 177 buses; 149 fulltime and 31 part-time drivers; mostly contract with some charter work.

**Kerrville Bus Co. in San Antonio/Dallas:** 2011 revenue, \$20.3 million; 87 buses; 65 fulltime and 55 part-time drivers; mostly scheduled service with some charter and casino work.

**K-T Contract Services Elko (Nev.):** 2011 revenue, \$22.4 million; 113 buses; 128 fulltime and 16 part-time drivers; mostly mining contracts.

**Lakefront Lines of Cleveland, Ohio:** 2011 revenue, \$35.7 million; 172 buses; 160 fulltime and 243 part-time drivers; mostly

charter work with some contract and line-run revenue.

**Pacific Coast Sightseeing Tours & Charters of Anaheim, Calif.:** 2011 revenue, \$10.8 million; 59 buses; 52 fulltime and 18 part-time drivers; mostly charter, sightseeing and tour services. Some airport business.

**Powder River Transportation Services of Gillette, Wyo.:** 2011 revenue, \$10.3 million; 64 buses; 58 fulltime and 16 part-time drivers; mainly mining contracts.

**Raz Transportation of Portland, Ore.:** 2011 revenue, \$10.9 million; 61 buses; 65 fulltime and 17 part-time drivers; mix of charter and contract work.

Several of the operations being acquired will either figure in or be integral to megabus' expansion into the Southwest and California. These include Pacific Coast Sightseeing, All West Coachlines, Kerrville Bus and American Coach Lines.

Dillon's and Lakefront could have roles in supporting existing megabus operations, and Raz would play a role if megabus expands into the Pacific Northwest.

Coach USA also has an option to buy 85 additional Coach America motorcoaches for \$25.6 million.



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# City's crime wave may be hurting tourism in Chicago

CHICAGO — Efforts to reinvigorate Chicago's tourism and convention industries could be damaged unless the city quickly defuses the violent crime wave that has exploded in its neighborhoods and nicked the downtown, according to the city's top convention and tourism official.

"We hope this sunsets quickly because all the good work we're

doing regionally, nationally and internationally, if this is not contained in a reasonable period of time, it will have an impact," Don Welsh, president and chief executive of Choose Chicago, said at a meeting with the Chicago Tribune editorial board.

News reports of several unprovoked attacks by youths in the Michigan Avenue corridor and of

the surge in homicides in some impoverished Chicago neighborhoods are triggering concerned calls to Choose Chicago, the newly restructured, not-for-profit agency that combines the city's convention bureau and its office of tourism and culture.

The issue has gained national attention in *The New York Times* and other media.

"There are inquiries that are coming in from meeting planners that are saying, 'Hey, I'm reading about what's taken place in your city. Is your city safe?'" Welsh said.

His organization received five to six such calls in the last few weeks, at this point seeking information, not cancellations, he said at the meeting.

Later that day, Welsh down-

played the inquiries, saying the calls came over a period of six weeks and "if anything, it's dissipating a little bit. It's not omnipresent; it's a bit of a nuisance."

According to the latest United Motorcoach Association Membership Survey and Industry Assessment, Chicago is the fourth-most-popular motorcoach destination in the U.S. (behind Washington, D.C., New York City and Orlando, Fla.).

Chicago police have put more officers on patrol along the Magnificent Mile and its surrounding areas in the wake of the mob attacks. This includes officers who are normally assigned to other parts of the city.

The city has seen its homicide rate increase by 37.8 percent in the first six months of this year, to 259 killings.

The office of Mayor Rahm Emanuel says that overall crime is down 10 percent so far for the year.

"We are actively working to implement strategies to continue to lower this number," Sarah Hamilton, the mayor's spokeswoman, said. "More and more people are coming to Chicago. ... They understand that these incidents are isolated to gangs, and visitors are not at risk."

Choose Chicago officials are referring people to a crime map on the city's website.

The crime issue is rearing its head as the city completes an overhaul of its McCormick Place convention business aimed at becoming more competitive with lower-cost cities, and beefing up resources to market the city.

For fiscal 2013, which began July 1, Choose Chicago has a budget of \$24.4 million. The budget is up significantly from just three years ago, when it was \$13.2 million.

Visitation levels were 43.6 million in 2011, up from 39.2 million in 2010 but still below 46.3 million in 2007.

## Philly oversight

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

bus owners going into Philadelphia from paying a registration fee, submitting the required documents, and the like," said Farrell.

"This was the final step in exempting buses permanently from under the control of the Philadelphia Parking Authority and back under the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission." Farrell also noted that "99 percent" of the bill exempting buses dealt with taxi and limousine issues. "We appreciate the Philadelphia Parking Authority's generosity in allowing us to be a part of this bill to exempt buses," she said.



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# Baltimore opens convenient motorcoach parking lot

BALTIMORE — The city of Baltimore has opened its first parking facility dedicated exclusively to motorcoaches.

Located on the property of the famous B&O Railroad Museum at 1100 James St., the facility was created to allow motorcoach operators to park and rest while their tours take in sights around the city, including such destinations as the Inner Harbor, the National Aquarium and the Maryland Science Center.

Drivers can relax, eat or check out the B&O Museum for free.

The parking lot is at Pratt and Lombard streets just west of the Inner Harbor, where motorcoach drivers can drop off tourists or groups, park their coaches and use the lounge area inside the facility.

They can take advantage of free WiFi and cable television; get a bite to eat from vending machines, or order something to be delivered.

The parking lot's entrance is on Arlington Street, accessible from Washington Boulevard.

The facility is open seven days

## Record number of '11 visitors in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON — The District of Columbia had a record 17.9 million visitors in 2011, which tops the district's previous record of 17.4 million visitors in 2000.

Data from the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Travel and Tourism Industries show the nation's capital had 1.8 million overseas visitors in 2011, a 4.1 percent increase over 2010.

When added to the 16.1 million domestic visits in 2011, the nation's capital welcomed more visitors than ever last year according to Destination DC, the district's convention and tourism corporation.

According to the latest *United Motorcoach Association Membership Survey and Industry Assessment*, the district is the No. 1 motorcoach destination among UMA members. New York City is No. 2 and Orlando, Fla., No. 3.

More than half of the sales tax revenue generated by the city is attributed to visitor spending, according to estimates by IHS Global Insight. Annual tax revenue generated by visitor spending totals \$662 million.

According to Destination DC, there is more than \$8 billion of development currently under way in the district, including more hotels, dining, retail, museums and attractions.

After the federal government, the hospitality industry is the second-largest employer in the district.

a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Reservations can be made by calling (410) 385-5848. Lavatory dump service is available.

In announcing the parking lot, the Parking Authority of Baltimore City said the facility assists Baltimore's no-idling policy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For years, the city has required trucks, tour buses, RVs and motorhomes to reduce idle times. It has a fine system that can reach \$500 for those idling in city neighborhoods.

To develop the facility, the Parking Authority worked with Visit Baltimore and the Maryland

Department of Transportation.

As one driver told the Parking Authority: "It's nice to see a metro city doing something for drivers. I hope other metro cities take a lesson from you."

Parking rates are \$5 hourly; 12 hours, \$25, and 24 hours, \$35.

Here's a link with more information:

[www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/Quasi-Agencies/ParkingAuthority/MotorCoachParkingFacility.aspx](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/Quasi-Agencies/ParkingAuthority/MotorCoachParkingFacility.aspx).

Or, contact Brian Thompson, assistant manager of lots, Parking Authority of Baltimore City, (443) 573.2809, or by email at [Brian.Thompson@BCParking.com](mailto:Brian.Thompson@BCParking.com).

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## Tourism Cares workers target Old Sacramento in September

BOSTON, Mass. — Old Sacramento, a historic district in California's capital city, will be the site this fall of a Tourism Cares volunteer restoration initiative.

The project is expected to involve hundreds of travel and tourism professionals who will travel to Sacramento to spend a day working to rejuvenate the historic aspects of Old Sacramento.

Volunteers are being asked to arrive in Sacramento on Sept. 27 and work all day Sept. 28. Registration is available on the Tourism Cares website at [www.TourismCares.org/volunteer](http://www.TourismCares.org/volunteer).

"Volunteers will be greeted by an enthusiastic, appreciative and welcoming Sacramento tourism industry as they do important restoration and general refurbishing", said Bruce Beckham, executive director of Tourism Cares.

"This is meaningful work that

will help our colleagues in Sacramento continue to proudly interpret the history and culture of their city."

Travel industry volunteers will paint, landscape and rebuild areas in Old Sacramento, a National Historic Landmark District and State Historic Park located along the Sacramento River.

The district, which is the historic jumping off point for the California Gold Rush of 1849, depicts the era with museums, historic attractions, shopping, dining and entertainment.

Work also will be done at Fort Sutter and other sites around the district.

Tourism Cares is a nonprofit that works to preserve the travel experience for future generations by awarding grants and by organizing volunteer efforts to restore tourism-related sites.

## Fleet Financing adds finance officer

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Fleet Financing Resources plans to step up its motorcoach financing program with the hiring of an experienced industry finance executive.

Chris Park, a former finance manager for Motor Coach Industries Financial Services, has joined Fleet Financing Resources as senior finance officer.

In his new position, Park will be working with vendors and operators to secure financing for new

and used buses and other commercial vehicles.

Headquartered in south Florida, Park will be responsible for growing the company's equipment finance portfolio across the U.S.

During his years at MCI Financial Services, Park worked with multiple motorcoach sales teams that funded over \$70 million annually.

Prior to that, he was a portfolio manager, credit analyst and sales

manager for The CIT Group.

"A seasoned veteran with 16 years in the commercial vehicle finance industry, Chris Park will bring a unique depth of knowledge to FFR," said Dave Reynolds, president and CEO of Fleet Financing Resources.



Chris Park

## Cruise seminar offered to tour operators

MIAMI, Fla. — One of the United Motorcoach Association's newest associate members, Norwegian Cruise Line, is conducting its second-annual Tour Operator Seminar late next month aboard the ship *Norwegian Jade*.

Jodi Ann Danyluk, program manager of emerging markets for the cruise line, will host the semi-

nar that will be conducted during the *Norwegian Jade's* eight-day cruise from Venice, Italy, beginning Aug. 25.

The Seminar at Sea will provide information on special offers, exclusive terms and conditions, internal changes, and why Norwegian says it is "leading the way for groups."

Norwegian Cruise Line specializes in what its calls "freestyle cruising," which is characterized by having no fixed dining times; relaxed attire; more dining options; relaxed disembarkation; more entertainment and activity options; upgraded staterooms, and additional amenities for balcony, suite and villa guests.

The cost for the Seminar at Sea cruise is: Balcony cabin, \$862.66, and Ocean view cabin, \$757.66 (based on availability). The price includes the cost of the cruise, tax and gratuities, and the seminar.

For more information, contact Danyluk by office phone at (215) 513-1499, cell phone, (215) 272-6762, or email at [jdanyluk@ncl.com](mailto:jdanyluk@ncl.com).

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**29-Aug. 1 Georgia Motorcoach Operators Association/Alabama Motorcoach Association Joint Annual Meeting and Marketplace, Marriott Evergreen Conference Resort, Stone Mountain, Ga.** Info: Got to [www.alabamamotorcoach.org](http://www.alabamamotorcoach.org), or [www.gamotorcoachoperators.org](http://www.gamotorcoachoperators.org).

### AUGUST 2012

**16-18 NTA Tour Operator Conference/Contact, San Diego.** Info: <http://businessbuilder.ntaonline.com>.

**16-19 National Association of Motorcoach Operators Annual Conference, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside, Norfolk, Va.** Info: [www.namocoaches.org](http://www.namocoaches.org).

**21 Bus Association of New York State Americans with Disabilities Act Training, 74 State Hotel, Albany.** Info: Call (877) 699-7222 or (518) 383-4621, or email [bany@BANYbus.org](mailto:bany@BANYbus.org).



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