

## Olympics dispute lingers long after Winter Games

A bitter dispute between the organizers of the 2010 Winter Olympics in British Columbia last February and a Florida transportation management company is holding up payment of millions of dollars to dozens of U.S. charter operators, some of which could be forced out of business if they don't get paid soon.

The operators are among the 58 from the United States that sent

500 motorcoaches and 1,000 drivers to the Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Vancouver to help shuttle the thousands of athletics, spectators and others who attended the two international events.

Most of them have been waiting for their money for as long as five months, raising concerns about their being able to continue in business and touching off talk about possible lawsuits.

The operators reportedly have been paid between 75 and 80 percent of their money and the remaining funds have become the center of the dispute between the Vancouver Organizing Committee, commonly known as VANOC, and Gameday Management, the Orlando-based company the committee hired to direct the transportation operation.

While not directly involved in

the quarrel, the operators are caught in the middle because Gameday passed on the job of rounding up most of the U.S. motorcoaches to International Trailways, which signed individual contracts with each of the 58 operators.

### He said/she said

VANOC maintains it has paid all of the approved claims for the transportation work to Gameday,

and says operators that have not been paid fully should direct their claims to Gameday, not the committee.

Gameday insists VANOC still owes it a substantial amount of money, which it needs to settle with Trailways and the operators.

"VANOC was not and is not a party to the individual bus provider contracts and accepts no

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## Navy vet rounds out industry knowledge

WALDORF, Md. — You would think operating nuclear submarines or giant war ships would satisfy just about anyone's obsession with driving.

Not so with Linwood Whitters.

The retired Navy lieutenant commander had a childhood dream of getting behind the wheel of a motorcoach.

"It's just something I always wanted to do ever since I was a kid," he said.

Whitters, who retired from the Navy 10 years ago, fulfilled his long-time goal in 2007 when Keller

Transportation of Waldorf hired him as a driver. He did such an outstanding job that within a year he was selected to be the company's safety and training manager.

"Now I know that's quite a career switch from someone dealing with nuclear weapons to the motorcoach industry, but it really has been worth it," he said.

Whitters has broadened his knowledge of his safety and training responsibilities, as well as the motorcoach business in general, by becoming one of the latest graduates of the Bus and Motor-



Linwood Whitters dreamed big — motorcoach big

coach Academy sponsored by the United Motorcoach Association.

Whitters completed the five

courses necessary to earn the Accredited Passenger Transportation

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## Feds propose belt mandate for new buses

WASHINGTON — In just over three years, all new motorcoaches sold in the U.S. will be equipped with lap-and-shoulder safety belts for passengers under a rule proposed by the federal government last month.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced the much-anticipated rule, saying it would help prevent passenger ejections during collisions.

The rule is to take effect three years after the USDOT wraps up a comment period; makes any modifications based on comments it receives, and gets the final rule drafted and published.

"We're committed to making sure that motorcoach travelers reach their destinations safely," said LaHood. "Seatbelts save lives, and putting them in motorcoaches just makes sense."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which authored the proposed rule and has been conducting motorcoach safety studies, including crash testing, for the past three years, said wearing lap/shoulder belts could reduce the

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## Operator, MCI tangle over indemnification issue

PHOENIX — A lawsuit stemming from a bus rollover that killed 9 people and injured 44 others near Mexican Hat, Utah, more than a year and a half ago has led to a legal clash between a bus manufacturer and a motorcoach operator.

Motor Coach Industries of Schaumburg, Ill., and Busco Inc. of Norfolk, Neb., which does business as Arrow Stage Lines, are facing off over a disputed provision in a bus purchase contract. The contract clause is designed to protect the coach manufacturer from legal recourse if one of its buses is in-

involved in an accident caused by the operator.

The unusual fight stems from a civil damage suit filed in Maricopa County Superior Court here last year by the families of the passengers who died in the accident and those who were injured.

Both MCI, which manufactured and sold the coach, and Busco Inc., which bought and operated it, were named in the initial suit.

The accident occurred in January 2008 in southeastern Utah near the Arizona state line when the charter coach ran off the road and

rolled down an embankment while returning a group to Phoenix from a three-day ski trip in Colorado.

The National Transportation Safety Board, which investigated the accident, said the 71-year-old driver, who survived the crash, appeared to be at fault. The coach was on a long slope that ended in a slight curve. The NTSB calculated the bus was traveling at 88 miles per hour when it left the road.

"The probable cause of this accident was the driver's diminished alertness due to inadequate sleep resulting from a combination of

head congestion, problems acclimating to high altitude and his sporadic use of his continuous positive airway pressure sleeping device during the accident trip," the agency said in its final report on the accident.

The NTSB also cited — as a contributing factor to the severity of the accident — the lack of passenger seatbelts.

Lawyers for the victims said they reached a partial and undisclosed settlement with Busco several months ago, but legal action

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# Trustee named to oversee MTR Western, Berg bankruptcy

SEATTLE — A federal bankruptcy judge has named an independent trustee to oversee bankrupt motorcoach operator and investment fund manager Darren Berg's bus companies and personal assets.

Appointment of the trustee was requested late last month by both Berg and the investors in seven Berg-run mortgage-investment funds — also now in bankruptcy.

Berg said in a statement he provided *Bus & Motorcoach News* that he had favored the appointment of a trustee since he filed for personal bankruptcy protection.

At the same time, investors in real estate funds that had been managed by Berg said a trustee was needed because there is "compelling evidence of fraud and dishonesty" by Berg.

In court documents, attorneys for Berg's investment-fund creditors also maintained that a court-appointed trustee was needed because some of the \$200 million they invested "was used for purposes having nothing to do with the funds, including a lavish lifestyle for Mr. Berg."

Berg, founder of MTR Western

coach company and the Meridian Group investment conglomerate, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in late July, but has retained control of his personal assets, including five bus-related companies. (See Aug. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

If Berg remained in control of the bus companies, his most valuable assets, there was "definite risk" he could divert revenue from them to pay his personal expenses and lawyers, reducing the companies' ultimate value to creditors, attorneys for the creditors argued.

Bankruptcy Judge Samuel Steiner agreed to appoint a trustee only after lawyers for Berg and his creditors stipulated Berg could keep any income he has earned or will earn after entering bankruptcy.

In his statement, Berg suggested he will need cash — "a lot of cash" — to pay his attorneys.

Berg's base annual salary from the bus companies is \$180,000, said Richard Birinyi, one of his attorneys. Berg's other assets include two software companies, a home on Mercer Island, two boats, and two

airplanes.

Judge Steiner named Seattle bankruptcy attorney Diana Carey as trustee of Berg's personal bankruptcy. She will be monitoring the operation of Berg's companies, including MTR Western.

One of the creditor lawyers, Alan Smith, said there was "very little chance" the trustee would retain Berg to run the companies.

Berg refuted that statement. "Alan Smith...doesn't know the first thing about what he's talking about when he makes this

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# Prevost operators discover D.C. can be very costly

WASHINGTON — A number of operators of Prevosts have been on the receiving end of an unwelcome surprise this summer when they've sent their coaches to Washington.

Even though the operators have purchased District of Columbia trip permits before entering the city, they have gotten costly citations anyway.

The reason? You're not going to believe it; well, maybe you will.

When a Prevost operator applies online for a trip permit, the

District of Columbia system automatically converts the brand of coach listed on the permit from Prevost to Volvo.

So, when the driver of a Prevost is stopped, and a D.C. police officer checks the permit, it says Volvo, instead of Prevost. The cop then writes a ticket because he or she thinks the permit is not for the correct vehicle.

Volvo, of course, is the parent company of Prevost. But Prevost coaches are still Prevost coaches — everywhere, that is, except in

the District of Columbia where they are Volvo coaches.

Industry trade associations and individual operators have been trying for weeks to get the situation corrected, but about all they've gotten for their efforts have been emails saying the situation is being worked on — plus, an all-to-familiar bureaucratic response.

Instead of alerting D.C. police to the issue, or accelerating a fix, district officials are providing guidance for appealing the tickets.

The following email, written

by a D.C. official, will give you an idea of what those trying to get the system fixed have been up against:

"Thanks for the opportunity to address this issue. I conducted an internal investigation and forwarded your inquiry to Ms. Cassandra Claytor, Chief Hearing Examiner — as a heads up for review. Ms. Claytor will assign your contestation to a Hearing Examiner. Citizens may contest parking tickets by mail or by appearing at a walk-in hearing within 60 calendar days of the ticket issue date.

"If tickets are not contested or paid within 30 calendar days of receiving the ticket, a penalty equal to the fine will be added, and the opportunity to have a hearing will be relinquished.

"Please write in to contest the tickets and include your vehicle registrations. Recommend attaching our correspondence. Thanks much."

As one frustrated coach industry executive observed: "This is just another example of the insanity in

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# THE DOCKET

## Tax exemptions: Confusion reigns

WASHINGTON — A leading authority on state taxation is urging motor carriers to educate themselves about state sales tax exemptions, and to be alert for changes, including the expiration of exemptions.

Robert Pitcher of the American Trucking Associations says many motor carriers believe — incorrectly — they're entitled to a sales tax exemption on their vehicle purchases as a matter of federal law.

The United Motorcoach Association reports getting lots of calls from operators who think there is a federal law that exempts them from sales taxes.

"This is certainly not the case," says Pitcher in the latest issue of a newsletter he edits for the ATA.

"Whether to grant an exemption and, if one is granted, and how broad it will be, are issues for each state to determine for itself," he explains.

That aside, state sales tax exemptions for motor carrier rolling stock are widespread, and exemptions for parts and repair labor purchased by carriers are also common.

In most states, however, to legally claim an ex-

emption, a carrier must first obtain a certificate of exemption from the state. This typically involves an application to the state, and some delay.

"Unless the carrier presents an appropriate exemption certificate, a retailer is not supposed to sell an otherwise taxable item tax-free," Pitcher points out.

The issue of state sales tax exemptions resurfaced recently in a notice issued by the Nebraska Department of Revenue.

"What the Nebraska notice points up is that exemption certificates are often issued only for a certain term, and expire at the end of it," notes Pitcher.

"In Nebraska's case, all the certificates of exemption the state has issued for the past several years will expire October 31 this year, and carriers who want to keep their tax-free status in Nebraska must reapply for certification," he points out.

"Other states will of course have other rules on this, but it would be a good idea for carriers that expect to make tax-exempt purchases in several states to keep track of their status in this respect."

## Vehicle towing is taxable in New York

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York operators that offer towing services probably should be collecting sales taxes for those services.

In an advisory opinion, the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance has held that the service of towing and transporting disabled motor vehicles is subject to the state sales tax.

The tax applies, says the department, whether or not the service provider goes on to repair the vehicle it has moved.

Although the transportation of property is gener-

ally exempt in New York, the opinion notes, moving a disabled vehicle is considered part of the taxable service of vehicle maintenance, even if the transportation is subject to a separate charge.

There are some exceptions, however. For example, the sales tax does not apply to a charge for simply moving a vehicle from place to place, when this is not connected to vehicle maintenance, and when it is not connected with the delivery of the vehicle from seller to buyer, which is considered part of the sales price.

The advisory opinion is No. TSB-A-10(25)S.

## Feds move to next phase of safety system upgrade

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has released individual safety assessments for interstate bus and truck companies as part of its new Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 initiative.

The assessments are available on the CSA "data preview" website. The agency is strongly urging operators to visit the website, <http://csa2010.fmcsa.dot.gov>, to get familiar with how the new system works and preview their data.

CSA 2010 is the new safety measurement system being implemented by the FMCSA, replacing the current SafeStat program.

This latest milestone on the road to implementing CSA 2010 allows carriers to see where they stand in each Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category based on roadside data and investigation findings.

Each motor carrier's BASIC (Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category) assessments are visible only to them and to enforcement staff until December, at which time the assessments will be made available to the public.

Enforcement agencies will begin using the assessments later this year to prioritize the agency's enforcement and compliance assistance workload.

The FMCSA says it is providing motor carriers with this early look at the new system so they can see their performance data, identify unsafe behaviors, and address safety compliance issues right away.

The FMCSA recommends that motor carriers verify and update their motor carrier census data, in particular the number of vehicles and vehicle miles traveled on their MCS-150 form, and take the necessary steps to correct unsafe driver and/or company safety practices.

FMCSA also has reiterated its commitment to stick to its schedule for implementing CSA 2010. It said that before the end of the year, warning letters will go to carriers that do not make the grade, and roadside inspectors will start using the new data system to identify carriers for inspection.

The program will be fully implemented state-by-state throughout 2011 as states get up to speed.

As of mid-June, 11,000-plus motor carriers had logged into the CSA 2010 website to review their safety performance data. That leaves several hundred thousand truck and bus companies that have not — carriers that could be in for a rude awakening come December when the system goes live, enforcement officials say.

## Pa./N.J. bridge fix may include tolls

LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP, Pa. — One of the last toll-free bridges across the Delaware River would charge commercial vehicle tolls of \$4 an axle under a plan to seek private investors to rebuild and operate the Interstate 95 Bridge that connects Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The \$310 million proposed rebuilding project calls for three lanes in each direction, plus auxiliary lanes and a wider median. Cars are expected to pay tolls of \$1 to \$2.

Nearly 60,000 vehicles a day cross the bridge. Delays and congestion are commonplace.



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## Driving record fees are hiked in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY — As part of a state budget agreement, Oklahoma motor vehicle records will now cost \$25 each — the highest fee for such records in the nation.

And one Oklahoma motorcoach operator says the new higher fee is an abomination.

“It is the most abusive, outrageous, purposeless increase I can imagine,” said Michael Kraft of KrafTours in Tulsa.

Did it occur to anyone, Kraft asked, that many of the people who need a copy of their motor vehicle record might be out-of-work commercial vehicle drivers, and \$25 is a substantial amount of money.

“It is abusive in the extreme,” Kraft asserted.

With the passage of Senate Bill 1556, Oklahoma motor vehicle records are going from \$10 to \$25. An additional fee of \$2.50 remains for online sales by NIC Inc., the company that operates the state’s website. The online charge was not raised.

The bill now goes to Gov. Brad Henry, but the increase was part of a budget agreement completed last month between the governor and legislative leaders.

Charges for motor vehicle records vary widely nationwide, according to a compilation of rates by public records publisher BRB Publications Inc.

Rhode Island charges \$19.50. New Mexico provides copies of the records for free, although it does charge \$4.95 if they are ordered online.

More than 20 states charge extra fees for online access to the records.

Michael Sankey, president of BRB Publications and author of several books on motor vehicle records, said a handful of states increase the fees on those records each year.

It’s a money-making deal for states because the actual costs for motor vehicle records are far lower than what most states charge, he said.

The higher Oklahoma fees mean the state could make more than \$30 million a year selling motor vehicle records to insurance companies, data brokers, employment verification firms and individuals.

In the past five years, Oklahoma has brought in about \$13 million each year for selling those records, according to records.

## Sen. Murray opponent picked for November

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Republican real estate investor Dino Rossi and Democrat incumbent U.S. Sen. Patty Murray won Washington state’s Senate primary election last month, as the tea-party movement that has energized voters in Nevada and Kentucky failed to overcome Washington’s traditional

blue-state leanings.

In Washington’s so-called jungle primary, the three-term senator had 46 percent of the vote, while Rossi, a former state lawmaker, outpolled several more conservative Republican candidates, with about 34 percent. The two will face off in the November general election.

The primary was of interest to motorcoach operators across the U.S. because of Murray’s efforts to weaken the federal charter service rule. She pushed through a provision last year that allows the public transit agency in Seattle to engage in charter service. (See June 15, July 1 and Aug. 1 issues of *Bus &*

*Motorcoach News*.)

Under Washington’s primary system, candidates are pitted against one another regardless of party affiliation, with the top two vote-getters advancing to the general election. Supporters of that approach say it leads to more moderate candidates.

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The advertisement is set against a background of a highway with a white motorcoach in the foreground. At the top, a blue rectangular sign with white text reads "DULLES AIRPORT". Below it is a large square sign with a lush green forest background. On the left side of the forest sign, there is a white speech bubble containing the text "Avoid the fine." To the right of the speech bubble, the text "Don't idle." is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below that, the text "Relax your spirit, mind and engine." is written in a similar large, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right of the advertisement, there are several logos: a globe icon, the logo for the District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE), the logo for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the logo for the District of Columbia (d.) along with a circular logo containing a stylized 'G'.

## USEPA upholds 'endangerment' finding

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is standing by its claim that greenhouse gases threaten the public health and welfare of the American people and emissions from on-road vehicles contribute to that threat.

The agency rejected 10 petitions that had challenged its endangerment finding and asked it to reconsider its position.

Several of the petitions said climate science cannot be trusted and asserted a conspiracy that invalidates the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

The EPA said it spent months considering the petitions, but found no evidence to support them.

"The endangerment finding is based on years of science from the U.S. and around the world," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "These petitions — based as they are on selectively edited, out-of-context data and a manufactured controversy — provide no evidence to undermine our determination.

"Defenders of the status quo will try to slow our efforts to get America running on clean energy," she said. "A better solution would be to join the vast majority of the American people who want to see more green jobs, more clean energy innovation, and an end to the oil addiction that pollutes our planet and jeopardizes our national security."

Opponents have filed suit in federal appeals court to overturn the EPA's finding. Arguments will likely not be heard until next spring, followed by a decision by summer 2011.

## Illinois tweaks red-light camera rules

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A new law in Illinois helps assure uniformity of red-light camera ordinances throughout the state and makes it easier for drivers to appeal tickets.

Under the law, effective Jan. 1, independent verification of camera violations will be needed before citations are issued.

In the counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, Madison, McHenry, St. Clair and Will, violations must be reviewed and approved by law en-

forcement officers or retired officers in that county or municipality.

Violations in Chicago or Cook County must be reviewed by a law enforcement officer, retired officer or a "fully trained reviewing technician."

Municipalities or counties with red-light cameras must also post the locations of the devices on their websites. They are also forbidden from charging violators an additional fee for choosing to exercise

their right to contest the ticket.

Another provision in the law gives drivers more flexibility when approaching the edge of an intersection. A complete stop still will be required before making a right turn on red, but drivers won't be ticketed solely for coming to a stop after the painted stop line, unless a pedestrian is nearby.

In addition, vehicle owners must be able to access video evidence of their offense on the internet.

## Coach operators in Ontario favor economic deregulation

TORONTO — Most motorcoach operators in Ontario aren't happy with the current economic regulation of the industry and strongly support the idea of deregulation, a new survey has found.

Motor Coach Canada, in cooperation with the Ontario Motor Coach Association, hired a company to survey its bus operator members on the issue of economic regulation.

The survey consisted of three questions, and produced the following results:

1. Considering the existing economic regulatory system of the Ontario bus industry:

- 45 percent were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the existing economic regulatory system
- 55 percent were 'dissatisfied'

or 'very dissatisfied' with the existing economic regulatory system

2. Assuming there will be effective controls to ensure safety is not compromised, does your company support or oppose economic deregulation of the Ontario bus industry:

- 69 percent support or strongly support economic deregulation
- 31 percent oppose or strongly oppose economic deregulation

3. How prepared is your company for the possible economic deregulation of the Ontario bus industry:

- 42 percent said they were 'fully prepared'
- 50 percent were 'somewhat prepared'
- 8 percent were 'not prepared at all'

## Canada gets new transport minister

OTTAWA, Ontario — Canada has a new transport minister.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper named Chuck Strahl to the post.

Strahl is a member of Parliament from British Columbia and a former agriculture minister. He

replaces John Baird, who had been leading Canada's effort for a new, publicly owned bridge between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario.

Baird has been named the country's Tory House leader, a key legislative position.



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## Letter to the Editor: *Oh, Canada!*

By William E. Pippin

It seems the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) wants to pretend the games did not exist.

I was there and personally witnessed the mistreatment and poor management of VANOC. VANOC seems to believe its performance was unblemished. This is quite wrong.

All the stories are about the money and ignore the other blatant failings of VANOC, which caused the need for more transportation. It seems now they are pretending this did not happen.

I provided one of those last-minute bus additions. I saw the untrained, short-time college students that were hired who had no knowledge of transportation; they were put in charge at all levels of supervision. These people basically just stood around. This one critical mistake caused the bus service to under perform.

VANOC would not allow Gameday Management to bring in seasoned bus people. Oh, that's right, keep the money in Canada. International Trailways put out a call for (unpaid) volunteers to help fix the problems caused by these untrained workers.

Bus owners and dispatchers rushed to Canada to save the event. Save the event they did — despite the incompetence of VANOC (Gameday runs these events all the time). It seems as if they are boxing up or throwing away evidence of their poor performance.

The phone system provided to the drivers did not allow calls outside of network and the cell phone rates made it prohibitive for (drivers and others) to use their own phones, effectively making them prisoners. I provided cell phones to my supervisors that allowed me to communicate with them.

I spoke with them many times after 7 p.m. to hear of their plight. They always were waiting for VANOC to provide their bus needs for the next day, which caused the dispatchers to be late providing schedule times for the drivers. Many had to stay

awake waiting for a call that came as little as 30 minutes before their shift transportation.

Some had to stand to board a bus two hours before their shift and wait (standing) two hours after their shift to get back to their domicile. This was because VANOC did not care about safety — instead cutting back on transportation to save money.

Canadian hours of service are basically a mirror to U.S. standards with some minor variations. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were obviously instructed to ignore the event and all the violations. Not one of my buses or drivers were stopped and inspected for violations throughout the events.

Shuttle service had to be increased because the drivers did not have enough hours of service to complete their runs (maybe this is some of the extra expense). No food was provided for the early shift. If you came to work early you got a breakfast coupon and nowhere to spend it.

By the time you got off duty it was almost dinner but not quite. Same situation in reverse at night. No one promised great food but sometimes there was no food. One bottle of water per shift was all VANOC would allow.

My contract called for my drivers to be fed and sheltered each day from the time they left their home base until the time they returned. No food was provided when they had a day off. Most were trapped in their hotel room without any means to find food. Later on some shuttles were provided to allow the drivers to buy food in bulk (maybe some more of the extra expense).

Some of the staging areas were better than others. I had to provide microwaves and refrigerators so my people could eat. International Trailways started providing extra food and water they paid for out of their own pockets.

The drivers could not afford to buy food because the prices were boosted to gouge the foreigners. My drivers were told if they deviated from their appointed routes to find food or water or for any other reason they would be apprehended by the RCMP.

As it did throughout the games and is still doing now, VANOC is pretending its

performance was flawless when in fact it caused all the problems that required extra equipment. It now seems to be saying there is no record of any extra buses ordered during this event.

My contract called for 90 percent of my funds to be held in escrow. (News articles clearly admit to this not happening.) I am told my contract is a mirror of all upstream of me. VANOC does not mention that the paralympics bus contracts were not secured until after the Olympics were over. Where is this money?

Tony Vitrano at Gameday is now saying VANOC wants to only pay for days the buses were in service. This is not what my contract stipulates. No bus owner in their right mind would send buses that far away without a secure revenue stream.

There would not have been an Olympics if bus owners had any inkling how irresponsible VANOC would be in its administration from before the event until this day. Can anyone believe that a contract could be written that basically states that company "A" will provide uncertain and unlimited services for a fixed price? Of course not.

VANOC had a budget for transportation and hired Gameday to provide a certain amount of equipment. Let's see the contract between VANOC and Gameday. I am told the extra buses ordered have been reimbursed. What specifically is VANOC talking about that would justify holding back 12.5 percent?

Does Gameday allege they were asked to provide more services than VANOC will acknowledge? The big mistake everyone made was trying to make up for all of VANOC's shortcomings. We do this in the bus business. It is called customer service.

Most times we do not even get a thank you. In this instance we are being told not only were the efforts not appreciated but actually in some ways did not happen. Basically a swift kick in the butt.

My company sent 13 coaches with 26 drivers 2,400 miles one way to help make the Olympics a success. Gameday has nothing to gain as this is what they do. If bus companies found out that Gameday was acting not in good faith, Gameday would be out of business. VANOC is out of business.

An easy conclusion can be drawn. Gameday has nothing to gain here except moving on to the next event. VANOC keeps all it stole from the bus companies and gets to put it back in the general treasury.

A bigger question would be why VANOC paid for the sorry quality of all the food they provided. Oh, sorry, they were Canadian companies.

VANOC is a public organization. Let it prove what it says by showing payments made to Gameday. That would be a little too real wouldn't it? Could it be possible that there was a 12.5 percent failure rate that caused money to be withheld to that extreme? Absurd also.

Let the public entity be specific publicly about what the shortfalls are.

And then there is the Canada Revenue Agency. How can they justify keeping our money? Oh, that's right, it stays in the Canadian coffers. We were allowed to file a waiver for moneys paid after the waiver was accepted. Why was the waiver not extended to cover the entire event? Why did VANOC not counsel Gameday that this would be an issue? Oh, that's right, the money stays in Canada.

My bus company brings about 2,000 tourists to Canada where they stay for at least a week. Do you know how many of these companies that are unpaid bring tourists to Canada each year? Maybe we should set up our tours to stay in the states?

We jumped through hoops day after day for four months prior to the games to send help to Canada to make these games in North America a success. From the beginning they were understaffed, disorganized and under planned, making it up as they went.

There were lots of people involved who tried to help but they were ignored. They tried to tell them the problems they would encounter but were ignored. They continued to help up to the point many organizations are in jeopardy, including International Trailways, Gameday, and many small-to-medium-size bus companies. I guess they think those \$500,000 buses don't have to be paid for. Oh, let's just keep the money in Canada and screw the Yanks.

*William E. Pippin is president of Cowtown Bus Charters in Fort Worth, Texas.*

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## Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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## Open letter to the Publisher and Editor

By Dale J. Marsico

Last week, I was honored to be asked to speak at the 25th anniversary of the Transit Excellence Program awards dinner hosted by the West Virginia Department of Transportation and the West Virginia Public Transit Association.

The awards are given in recognition of superior achievement by the men and women who are involved in public transit across the state.

Those honored over the last 25 years of these awards remind us of the commitment and contribution of so many who together have helped thousands of West Virginians go to work, get an education, obtain needed health care, and contribute to their community and their state.

It is a snapshot of the larger picture that can be taken in thousands of communities across America, every single day.

In West Virginia much of the public transit story is deeply rooted in small communities where what we now call public transit began as either a volunteer effort or one that was more of a social

service — designed to provide transportation as part of some other important social program.

Social programs and priorities often change, but the need for mobility is always a part of the transit experience. Mobility is a form of self-empowerment, and transit in places like West Virginia is easily identified by its key role in helping people to succeed.

One of the special contributions to our industry that we've learned from people in West Virginia is that successful transit systems put communities first — and seek to work with people across every possible facet of community life to make things better. We have tried to include that approach in our own awards programs, our community-based institutes designed to bring people together and in the work we seek to provide here in Washington as a national association.

We recognize that our path to a better place is through working together.

In our country today we find ourselves divided over many issues — political, social or economic. For many, today is, like the

line from Shakespeare's Richard The Third, "...the winter of our discontent." The entire line reads: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this son of York."

Those using the phrase often only borrow the first part, rarely the whole line. In this case the whole line and the speech in the play it's taken from remind us that people can make a difference.

In our case, the examples we saw in West Virginia are our "Dukes of York" in these difficult and often unsettled times.

Earlier today, I received in my mail the most recent copy (Aug. 1 issue) of *Bus & Motorcoach News*, published by the United Motorcoach Association.

UMA used the term, "Summer of Discontent," to describe the current economic conditions of their segment of our industry, due to the current overall economic climate. They also included within this issue several articles relevant to public transit, each filled with additional doses of discontent.

Specifically, one of these articles dealt with the \$77.7 billion bus and rail transit infrastructure

deficit identified by USDOT/FTA, as well as weighing in on the value of transit services by questioning their efficiency and cost.

We're treated to an "analysis" [their words] on the DOT/FTA report that blames "unfettered federal spending for public rail and transit," which follows a description of the federal government as too bloated, too cumbersome and falling down on every front with critical infrastructure.

This seems a very slight analysis of our nation's critical infrastructure needs, transit or otherwise.

George Will once said that anger is not an argument, and the anger about transit in these articles is clearly misplaced. These critical comments are addressed against some transit systems we don't know; obviously they are not the transit systems we celebrated in West Virginia last week, or the transit agencies we recognized at our own conference earlier this year in Long Beach.

There are no "Sons of York," in this edition of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.

In the way we like to work, I want to extend an invitation to the publishers and editors of *Bus & Motorcoach News* to meet with us

to talk about the public transit we know.

To try to understand the quality of service our members and the members of the public transit community bring to American communities every day and to share with them the vision we put forth in our ideas for a 21st century mobility system that recognizes that all of us in the mobility business — public, private and nonprofit — need to work together to make America's transportation system efficient and excellent.

It's time not for anger, but communications, and to search for solutions. I hope to hear from you soon.

*Dale J. Marsico, CCTM, is executive director of the Community Transportation Association of America in Washington.*

\*\*\*\*

**Editor's Note:** In the same spirit we met with Mr. Marsico during the sessions of the Charter Bus Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee, we will be happy to meet with him anytime to discuss the effectiveness of rural transit, and the participation of private-sector operators in delivering the best value to taxpayers.

Victor Parra,  
Editor & Publisher  
*Bus & Motorcoach News*



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# Excerpts from proposed motorcoach seatbelt rulemaking

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have issued a proposed rulemaking covering the installation of lap/shoulder belts in new motorcoaches. Here are excerpts from the proposed rule.

\*\*\*

NHTSA's safety research on motorcoach seatbelts, completed in 2009, shows that the installation of lap/shoulder belts on motorcoaches is practicable and effective. We believe the seatbelt assemblies that would be installed on motorcoach passenger seats pursuant to this rulemaking could reduce the risk of fatal injuries in rollover crashes by 77 percent, primarily by preventing occupant ejection in a crash.

\*\*\*

This notice of proposed rulemaking...results from an extensive test program completed in 2009, involving a full-scale frontal, 30-miles-per-hour barrier crash test (of a 45-foot coach) with instrumented test dummies; sled testing under a range of belted and unbelted conditions, and seat anchorage strength testing.

\*\*\*

In the sled tests, we evaluated motorcoach seats without seatbelts, motorcoach seats with lap/shoulder seatbelts, and motorcoach seats with lap only belts. We tested the seats with different size dummies and in frontal and oblique (15 degree) impact configurations and with and without loading by unrestrained occupants in the rear seat. The results showed that lap/shoulder belts prevented

critical head and neck injury values in almost all configurations using the crash pulse from the motorcoach barrier test.

\*\*\*

Motorcoach transportation is an overall safe form of transportation. Over the 10-year period between 1999 and 2008, there were 54 fatal motorcoach crashes resulting in 186 fatalities. During this period, on average, 16 fatalities have occurred annually to occupants of motorcoaches in crash and rollover events, with about 2 of these fatalities being drivers and 14 being passengers. However, while motorcoach transportation overall is safe, given the high-occupancy of motorcoaches, when serious crashes do occur (in) this vehicle type, they can cause a significant number of fatal or serious injuries during a single event, particularly when occupants are ejected. The goal of this rulemaking is to reduce occupant ejections.

\*\*\*

Data from NHTSA's Fatal Analysis Reporting System from 1999-2008 show that most (63 percent) fatal motorcoach crashes are single-vehicle roadside events (e.g., run off the road or hitting roadside objects) or rollovers. Ejections account for 78 percent of the fatalities in motorcoach rollover crashes and 28 percent of the fatalities in non-rollover crashes.

\*\*\*

We estimate that even at a minimum seatbelt-usage rate of only 21 percent, the proposed rule will remain cost effective for motorcoach passengers. Comments are requested regarding whether states

would consider adopting mandatory belt-use laws for motorcoach passengers. Also, should motorcoaches be equipped with "buckle-up" signs reminding passengers to use their belts?

\*\*\*

We estimate that installing lap/shoulder seat belts on new motorcoaches would save approximately 1 to 8 lives and prevent 144 to 794 injuries per year.

\*\*\*

The total cost of adding belts (to new coaches) and making structural changes to the motorcoach floor would be approximately \$12,900 per vehicle, with the total cost being \$25 million for the 2,000 new motorcoaches sold per year. Lifetime fuel costs due to an increased weight of the motorcoach would be an additional cost.

\*\*\*

We are not proposing at this time that used buses be required to be retrofitted with the lap/shoulder belt system. The service life of a motorcoach can be 20 years or longer. We estimate that the cost of retrofitting can vary substantially. We estimate it could cost between \$6,000-\$34,000 per vehicle to retrofit the vehicle with lap belts and with sufficient structure to meet today's proposal. We also estimate it could cost \$40,000 per vehicle to retrofit it with lap/shoulder belts and reinforced structure so as to meet FMVSS No. 210 to support the loads during a crash.

\*\*\*

The existing fleet size is estimated to be 29,325 motorcoaches. Hence, the fleet cost of retrofitting lap belts is estimated to range from

\$175,950,000 (\$6,000 x 29,325) to \$997,050,000 (\$34,000 x 29,325), while the fleet cost of retrofitting lap/shoulder belts is estimated to be \$1,173,000,000 (\$40,000 x 29,325). These costs do not include increased remaining lifetime fuel costs incurred by adding weight to the motorcoach. Weight would vary depending upon the needed structural changes, and lifetime fuel cost would vary depending upon the age of motorcoaches that would be retrofitted.

\*\*\*

Retrofitting used motorcoaches may not be structurally viable for many motorcoaches and may not be economically feasible for many motorcoach for-hire operators, many of which are small businesses...Comments will help us determine whether we should issue a separate supplemental (rulemaking) to require retrofit.

\*\*\*

The poor performance of the lap-belt restraint in the sled tests was consistent with the lap-belt results from the full-scale motorcoach crash test. Compared to the unbelted dummies, the (lap-belted) dummy's head typically hit the seat back in front at an earlier point in time due to the lap belt restraining forward motion and the upper torso pivoting about the lap belt.

\*\*\*

The data available for this 10-year period for fatalities of occupants in buses other than transit buses and school buses show that only 12 percent of the passenger fatalities were in buses with a GVWR less than or equal to

11,793 kg (26,000 lb). We also found that among fatalities in these buses (buses other than school buses and transit buses) with GVWR greater than 11,793 kg (26,000 lb), 87 percent were in tour/intercity buses, 4 percent in commuter buses, 7 percent in shuttle buses, 1 percent in buses used for school transportation and 1 percent in buses modified for personal use.

\*\*\*

We propose excluding urban transit buses from the proposed definition of motorcoaches because fatality data for urban transit buses differ significantly from that of motorcoaches, and because of the stop-and-go manner in which urban transit buses are used.

\*\*\*

Comments (on the proposed rule) must be received on or before Oct. 18, 2010. You may submit comments to the docket number (NHTSA-2010-0112) identified in the heading of this document by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail: Docket Management Facility, M-30, U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building, Ground Floor, Rm. W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590.
- Hand Delivery or Courier: West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., between 9 am and 5 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

## Seatbelt rule

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

risk of motorcoach passengers being killed in a rollover by 77 percent.

Ejections account for 78 percent of the fatalities in motorcoach rollover crashes and 28 percent of fatalities in nonrollover crashes, according to NHTSA.

"We want motorcoaches to be as safe as possible and are working towards that goal," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland.

During its testing, Strickland's agency did extensive comparisons between unbelted instrumented crash dummies, dummies restrained by lap belts, and dummies using lap-shoulder belts.

The differences during the crash tests were pronounced and, in some cases, dramatic. Unbelted dummies were thrown about wildly. Dummies with lap belts often re-

ceived severe damage because their heads and necks banged into the seat in front of them. But lap-shoulder belts prevented critical head and neck injuries.

### No surprise

"We have been expecting this announcement for some time and now that a rule has been proposed, we will help our members navigate through the ruling to ensure compliance," said Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association.

"It's important to note that the proposal is for new motorcoaches only, used motorcoaches are not included at this time."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is seeking comments on the technical and economic feasibility of a retrofit requirement.

NHTSA estimates it could cost upwards of \$1 billion to retrofit

the nation's existing motorcoach fleet with seatbelts. The agency estimates the cost of retrofitting at between \$6,000 and \$40,000 per coach, depending on whether lap belts or lap/shoulder belts are installed and the structural changes that would have to be made for coaches and retrofitted belted seats to meet strength and anchorage standards.

The agency questioned whether some coaches could even be retrofitted to meet strength standards, and whether retrofitting made economic sense.

The seatbelt announcement is the latest initiative from the USDOT, NHTSA, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to improve motorcoach safety.

Earlier this year, the department released a Motorcoach Safety Action Plan, outlining steps for addressing driver fatigue or inattention, and improving operator

maintenance.

Research aimed at improving motorcoach structures, fire safety protection and emergency egress also is under way and likely will lead to recommendations for new federal standards in the future.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is seeking public comment on the proposed seatbelt rule. To read the proposal, go to [www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/rulemaking/pdf/NPRM\\_Belts\\_on\\_motorcoaches.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/rulemaking/pdf/NPRM_Belts_on_motorcoaches.pdf).

Comments on the proposal are due on or before Oct. 18.

Other elements of the proposed rule include:

- A "motorcoach" is defined as a bus with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,000 pounds or greater, 16 or more designated seating positions (including the driver), and at least 2 rows of passenger seats rearward of the driver's seating position that are forward-

facing or can convert to forward-facing. Comments on the definition are being requested by NHTSA.

• School buses and transit buses (sold for operation as a common carrier in urban transportation along a fixed route with frequent stops) are not included in the rule.

• Shuttle buses are not included in the rule but NHTSA is requesting comments as to whether shuttle buses should be excluded.

• Lap/shoulder belt anchorage and attachment hardware at all locations for new motorcoaches must meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 210, "Seatbelt assembly anchorages."

• Lap/shoulder belts are to be installed in forward-facing seating positions, with the manufacturer having an option of installing either a lap belt or lap/shoulder belt for side-facing seating positions.

• Lap/shoulder belts would be required for drivers.

# Pacific Western is named IMG Operator of the Year

NEW ORLEANS — Pacific Western Transportation of Calgary, Alberta, has been named International Motor Coach Group Operator of the Year.

The award was presented last month as part of the IMG Strategic Alliance Meeting.

The IMG award recognizes a member company that excels in customer service, operations, safety, best practices, community and industry involvement, and overall engagement with IMG.

Pacific Western was singled out for its positive safety record,

leadership in the communities where it operates and in the industry, and customer commitment.

The company has been around for more than 50 years. It was founded by R.B. Colborne and is now headed by Michael Colborne, president and CEO.

As Canada's largest ground passenger transportation company, with a fleet of more than 2,600 vehicles, Pacific Western operates North America's only fully-accessible, scheduled, inter-city motorcoach service; its airport shuttle

operations carry more than 10 million passengers annually; its transit fleets transport 8 million passengers to work, school and home annually; its charter operations travel 7.6 million miles annually; its industrial employee operations move 6.2 million people to work annually, and its school bus fleets carry 45,000 students daily.

Separately, the IMG board elected officers for 2011. They are: chairman, Hank Garbee of Young Transportation in Asheville, N.C.; vice chairman, Geoff Lynch of

Hampton Jitney in Southampton, N.Y., and secretary/treasurer, Stephen Story of James River Bus Lines in Richmond, Va.

Larry Benjamin of Northfield Lines in Northfield, Minn., was elected to the board for a three-year term.

The 2011 IMG Strategic Alliance Meeting will be Aug. 10-12, in Lancaster, Pa.

IMG is a consortium of 57 motorcoach companies operating in the U.S. and Canada. For more information, go to [www.imgcoach.com](http://www.imgcoach.com).

## Motorcoach Council offering 2 online contests to operators

DENVER — The Get Motorcoachified consumer education campaign is sponsoring a pair of contests designed to bolster awareness of the promotional program.

For both contests, the winners will be motorcoach operators, and both are easy to enter, says Motorcoach Council Executive Director Heather Horton.

Here are the basics for contest No. 1:

- Contact Horton at the Motorcoach Council and request the digital file for a graphic entitled Top 10 Reasons to Get Motorcoachified. Next, upload the graphic to your own website and link it to the Get Motorcoachified website, [www.GetMotorcoachified.com](http://www.GetMotorcoachified.com).

- Finally, send proof of your link to [heather@MotorcoachCouncil.org](mailto:heather@MotorcoachCouncil.org).

That will automatically enter you to win a free group meal (for up to 45 guests) at any Golden Coral restaurant.

Nice.

But hold on pardner, there's more.

Visit the Get Motorcoachified Facebook community page and click on "Like" and post a picture of your coach, your group tour, or yourself on the road, and you'll be entered to win a free Get Motorcoachified rear-cap bus wrap, courtesy of the Motorcoach Council.

All you need to do is ask others to "Like" your photo on Facebook. The photo with the most "likes" wins. The winners of both contests will be announced this fall.

"Not everyone can win the contests, of course, but all operators that participate will be providing their website visitors and potential customers with access to information that reinforces their smart choice in traveling with their company and by motorcoach," said Horton.

To learn more, or to request the digital file of the graphic, contact Horton at the Motorcoach Council. Call (720) 449-9000, or email [heather@MotorcoachCouncil.org](mailto:heather@MotorcoachCouncil.org).

## Entertainer bus operators organize, set up council

WASHINGTON — Operators and leasers of entertainer motorcoaches have formed an association under the aegis of the American Bus Association.

The new Entertainer Motorcoach Council elected a six-member board that has been charged with getting the organization up and running.

Among other things, the board will work with other council members to develop standards and best practices designed "to inspire a level of confidence in the safety, reliability and quality of service for the operations of entertainer motorcoaches employed on a charter or lease basis," the group said in announcing its formation.

The board also will provide strategic leadership, develop purchasing programs and other benefits, and actively promote entertainer motorcoach services.

The council directors are: Jay Adams, owner of Roadhouse Transportation in Comfort, Texas; Renee Deymonaz, owner of Taylor Tours in Anthem, Ariz.; Gary Roberts, president of Roberts Brothers Coach Co. in Springfield, Tenn.; Rob Russell, owner of Russell Coach Co. in Knoxville, Tenn.; Mike Slarve, president of Four Seasons Coach Leasing in Lebanon, Tenn., and Olan Witt, owner of Coach Quarters Entertainment Transportation in Goodlettsville, Tenn.

Slarve was chosen to serve a one-year term as chairman of the council board and Renee Deymonaz will be vice chairman.

Entertainer Motorcoach Council members typically are coach operators and leasers serving the "entertainer market," specifically performers and their staff needing tour accommodations as they travel from one venue to another.



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**Ray Land – President – Fabulous Coach Lines**

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**John Nichols – President – J. A. Nichols & Company**

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# Toilet deodorants don't get much respect or 'thanks'

By Michael A. Chaplar  
Unit Chemical Corporation

Toilet deodorants are thankless products.

If the product you've been using is working, chances are you'll never receive a compliment on how well your restroom smells. However, if there's a problem in the restroom, you will undoubtedly hear about it.

I'm often asked which product works best. This used to be an easy question in that most operators where simply referring to which product was the most effective against controlling odors and breaking down solids.

However, when I'm asked this same question today, there are many other factors to consider, including cost, convenience, type of usage (day vs. extended trips), — environmental concerns, and supplier issues.

Due to the increase in these factors, a motorcoach operator has many types of toilet deodorant products to choose from. The most common forms of toilet deodorants include: liquids and nonliquids (powders, packets and tablets).

With today's technology and advancements in disinfectants and deodorants, there's no reason for ANY motorcoach operator to experience an odor problem in the restrooms or any other section of the motorcoach.

There also is no reason to substitute effectiveness for the sake of convenience.

However, many operators are doing just that and looking strictly at convenience and portion control while sacrificing performance.

## Liquid deodorants

In general, liquid toilet deodorants will provide the best overall coverage at the least cost per use. This is because more perfume can be added to a liquid product, compared to a nonliquid product, meaning liquids perform better.

Remember, most people use the motorcoach restroom when the coach is moving. This leads to "misses" around the base of the toilet. The extra perfume in a product will help to cover odors from these types of occurrences.

## Liquid pros:

- Least expensive
- Best performance in toilet
- Best performance for toilet misses
- Best overall value
- Instant effectiveness (do not have to wait for product to dissolve)

## Liquid cons:

- Harder to portion control. (However, liquids are now better controlled with smaller bottles, pumps and/or metering devices.)
- Dyes can stain (Most companies make their toilet chemicals with dyes that have a tendency to stain. However, there are products now made with 100 percent non-staining dye.)

## Nonliquid deodorants

In most, if not all cases, non-liquid products do not perform as well as liquids. And, if they even start to approach the performance of a liquid (they never meet it or exceed it), then the product begins to become cost prohibitive to use.

The reason is that most non-liquid products actually begin as a liquid that has had a drying agent or filler added to make the product into a solid form. (Quats, formaldehydes, perfumes, nonstaining dyes, detergents, and antifoam agents all begin as liquids.)

## Powders

Most powders have now been either packaged in packets or have been pressed into tablets due to the same portion control issues of a liquid. Therefore, a straight powder out of a jar would not offer any better portion control over a liquid, would not work as well as a liquid, and would cost more on a per-use basis when compared to a liquid.

Therefore, this is why most powders are no longer available in bulk form and are packaged for individual usage.

## Tear-open packets

This sort of product has taken powders and placed them into some form of a portion control packet (i.e. cellophane or foil pouch). This type of packing is NOT water soluble and must be opened first and then poured into the holding tank.

## Tear-open packets pros:

- Portioned controlled (As long as you can get the person to use just one.)
- Package does not fail as often as water-soluble packets as humidity and water will not cause packaging to dissolve
- Minimal time needed to dissolve or activate product

## Tear-open packets cons:

- Does not perform as well as liquids
- More expensive to use compared with liquids
- Other packets offer greater convenience as they don't need to be torn open prior to use. Spilling of contents is possible.
- Portion control can be thwarted. As is often the case, the person cleaning the restrooms will use more than one packet because of lack of performance issues.
- Dyes can stain (There are some products that do not stain.)

## Water-soluble packets

This sort of product has taken powders and placed them into a water soluble portion control packet. This type of packaging can simply be tossed into the holding tank; it does NOT need to be torn open before using.

## Water-soluble packets pros:

- Portion controlled (As long as you can get the person to use just one.)
- Extremely convenient. (Simply toss into the holding tank.)
- Minimal time needed to dissolve or activate product. (Not quite as fast as tear open packaged products.)

## Water-soluble packets cons:

- Does not perform as well as liquids
- More expensive to use compared with liquids
- Packaging has a tendency to fail and stick together when exposed to humidity and water and may begin to dissolve prior to use
- Portion control can be thwarted. As is often the case, the

## Key items to consider when buying odor-control products

By Cathy Crawford  
Chempace Corporation

In selecting which sanitation and odor-control products to use, motorcoach operators should consider cost, quality and the environment.

The most cost-efficient products are those that perform at 100 percent effectiveness for the longest period of time.

Some products will last a full seven days. With such products, your customers will not notice the toilets and will simply enjoy the ride.

The environment also is im-

portant to everyone.

Many restroom, sanitation and other cleaning products are safe to use and environmentally friendly. Whether liquid or packet, Mother Nature is comfortable with our green ingredients.

In addition to "green" toilet treatments, there also are environmentally friendly masking deodorizers. For example, there are concentrated deodorizers designed for spraying in the coach, and there are hanging fragrances that last for months.

Based on our more than 42 years of experience, a happy passenger is a repeat passenger.

person cleaning the restrooms will use more than one packet because of lack of performance issues.

• Dyes can stain (most companies make their toilet chemicals with less expensive dyes that have a tendency to stain).

• Operators using recirculating toilets should be careful when using this type of product as undissolved packaging has been linked to recirculating pump failures.

• Ingredients used in many water-soluble packets have been known to soften rubber gaskets and lead to leaky dump valves. Not an expensive fix, just a job that no one really wants to do. Also, material released from a leaky holding tank dump valve often is green in appearance and resembles anti-freeze which can cause all kinds of issues.

• Cleaning products used to clean the toilet bowl can raise the PH and cause the water-soluble packet to either not dissolve or leave an insoluble stringy residue that clog filters, screen or recirculating pumps.

## Tablets

This type of product has taken

powders, applied pressure, and created a portion-control tablet. This type of packaging can simply be tossed into the holding tank. In most cases, the packaging does NOT need to be torn open or unwrapped before using. Although, in some cases, some manufactures are individually wrapping their tablets in a tear-open packet.

## Tablets pros:

- Portioned controlled (As long as you can get the person to use just one.)
- Extremely convenient. Simply toss into the holding tank.

## Tablets cons:

- Does not perform as well as liquids.
- More expensive to use.
- Can take some time to fully dissolve especially in cold water and cleaner may use additional tablets to obtain desired color or perfume.
- Portion control can be thwarted. As is often the case, the person cleaning the restrooms will use more than one tablet because of lack of performance issues.
- Dyes can stain hands and coach areas

## MTR Western

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

comment," Berg asserted.

Berg's business empire began to collapse earlier this summer. Investors in several of his investment

## D.C. parking

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

D.C. with the permit requirement. Volvo owns Prevost but D.C. doesn't seem to understand that. Instead of educating law enforcement, we're having to appeal a ticket."

And as a Michigan operator

funds, which bought high-risk, unconventional mortgages, forced those funds into bankruptcy after scheduled interest payments were missed. Lawsuits filed by the investors charged Berg had misled them.

added: "This past weekend, we were issued two (\$500) tickets and our efforts to correct this with the various officials in Washington, D.C., pretty much led to dead ends.

"We have spoken to various police departments and their representatives; all indicate they are aware of the issue but there is

An attorney for one group of investors said in a court filing that the bankruptcy trustee representing the investment-fund creditors "has uncovered financial irregularities regarding the funds and other entities controlled by Berg."

nothing they can do about it and will continue to write the tickets if we don't have it corrected."

Prevost operators planning to send coaches to D.C. might want to call the permit phone lines and inquire about the issue. The numbers are (202) 729-7079, 729-7078 or 729-7083.

## Calendar

### SEPTEMBER 2010

**10 Tourism Cares for America Day**, National Mall and memorial parks, Washington, D.C. Info: Go to [www.tourismcares.org/volunteer-day](http://www.tourismcares.org/volunteer-day).

**12-15 Virginia Motorcoach Association Annual Convention**, Doubletree Charlottesville, Va. Info: [www.vamotorcoach.org](http://www.vamotorcoach.org).

**27-30 Florida Motorcoach Association Appointment Show**, Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club, Innisbrook, Fla. Info: Go to [www.floridamotorcoach.org](http://www.floridamotorcoach.org).

# Can pine oil fragrance improve driver performance?

By Rees Whitaker  
Inca Gold Products

Smells from onboard motorcoach toilets can reduce bus driver morale.

Using toilet chemicals that include a pine oil fragrance may improve driver morale and performance.

However, before we talk about the research behind pine fragrance and its affect on driver performance, let's first talk about how we perceive smell in our environment.

The Smell Report, published by the Social Issues Research Center in the United Kingdom, states that humans have more than five million olfactory receptors. By comparison, dogs have more than 220 million.

As any dog owner can tell you, the human sense of smell is nothing compared to that of a dog, yet our sense of smell is more important than many people realize.

Recent research suggests that the human brain "may be more adept at distinguishing smells than previously thought," according to a Science Daily article.

Research conducted by Leslie Kay, assistant professor in psy-

chology at the University of Chicago, demonstrated the "importance of smell as a means for people to gather information about their environment."

## Test it yourself

You can test this yourself pretty easily by taking a walk in your neighborhood. What odors greet you as you walk past homes and what do these odors tell you? What emotions do you associate with them?

How do you feel about unfamiliar or "foreign" cooking smells, versus the smell of freshly mowed grass? What associations come into play when you smell something cooking on a grill or when you walk past someone's odoriferous trash cans?

What do you smell if someone has a junker car sitting in the driveway, and is this smell pleasant or not?

How we perceive odors is subjective and personal.

Terry Molnar, executive director of the Sense of Smell Institute, a division of the Fragrance Foundation in New York, in a Denver Post article, "Good Smell, Bad Smell," wrote that "smell is pro-

cessed by the part of the brain that handles emotions. It is a matter of association."

The junker car sitting in the driveway that smells of grease and oil can excite a car enthusiast who restores autos as a hobby, or it can make a neighbor angry who perceives his property value declining.

In a recently publicized kerfuffle, Bob Dylan's Malibu, Calif., neighbors noisily complained about the smelly porta-potty on Dylan's property that wafted fumes over their high-priced properties.

The problem was that the cool ocean breezes, which in the past had held associations of peace and contentment, had now become an obnoxious irritant that detracted from people's quality of life.

It works the same for bus drivers who must deal with onboard toilets that produce unpleasant odors: what may seem a minor inconvenience to some who don't have to sit on the bus for days on end can become a powerful negative emotion for others.

Bus drivers can build bad memories and associations due to intense smells in the motorcoach — lowering concentration and a

positive outlook toward one's job and employer.

## Masking problems

U.S. consumers spend billions of dollars on home fragrance products, according to the Denver Post article, "Good Smell, Bad Smell."

However, these fresheners don't remove odors — they mask them. Air fresheners lay odor on top of odor, which can sometimes result in even worse odors as the brain detects the fragrance and the odor it's supposed to be masking.

Many commercial toilet deodorizers use a sweet-smelling scent to combat odor; however, instead of eliminating the odor, these products simply mask it.

So, if smell is subjective and many air fresheners simply mask odors, which fragrance is best for eliminating odors? In one word: pine oil. Pine oil, a natural and nontoxic substance, is used in many products to help eliminate odors, including animal litters and cleaning products.

## Pine vs. driver performance

A study conducted by Wheeling (W.Va.) Jesuit University and

commissioned by AroMetrics, revealed that "drivers were more alert and experienced less fatigue when the scent of pine was added to the car interior.

The study also revealed that drivers demonstrated a decreased level of anger and improved overall driving performance when exposed to strawberry and pine scents.

Sums up the Sense of Smell Institute about the study: "The results of this study are consistent with previous independent research in olfaction and aromachology, some of which was funded by the Sense of Smell Institute, that has consistently demonstrated pleasant scents can elevate mood, enhance quality of life, and improve performance."

As motorcoach companies address driver fatigue by changing the behaviors that cause it, management may also want to consider the smell inside the coach interior and how it affects driver performance.

Using a toilet deodorizer that incorporates a pine oil fragrance can add that extra "oomph" in helping to keep drivers happy and alert.

And, of course, a fresh clean smell keeps passengers happy as well.

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## Olympic dispute

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

responsibility for Gameday's supplier arrangements to the extent they were not approved by VANOC as part of its contractual arrangement with Gameday," VANOC Vice President Terry Wright said in a statement.

He contends that bills submitted by Gameday included costs that far exceeded what had been approved by VANOC and that most of the increased costs were due to billing errors, unapproved expenses and charges that had been specifically disapproved by VANOC.

"VANOC communicated to Gameday that Gameday would be responsible out of their considerable management fee for satisfying committed payments to bus providers that had not been approved by or communicated to VANOC," he added.

It is not known how much Gameday was to be paid for managing the operation but published reports say VANOC had a transportation budget of \$52.3 million and most of it was earmarked for motorcoach transportation. A smaller portion went to rent cars that were used for Olympic officials and dignitaries.

### Talking still

Gameday President Terry Vitrano said the dispute with VANOC is down to disputed bills and each one is being discussed individually.

"We have several disputed items that we feel VANOC needs to address and we are moving forward to resolve them," he said. "We had hoped that the problem would have been resolved a long time ago."

He said more talks with VANOC are upcoming and he hopes the issues that are holding up the payments can be settled in the next couple of weeks.

In addition to contracting with Trailways, Gameday also hired Edison Transportation of Orlando to provide 300 transit buses and Lewis Stages of Salt Lake City to furnish a fleet of specialty buses equipped for wheelchair passengers. Gameday also contracted with 50 Canadian carriers for another 250 motorcoaches.

Vitrano said some of those vendors also are owed money — among them 15 Canadian carriers that have been shorted about \$500,000 — and he is attempting to reconcile those bills as well.

Robert Hill of Edison Transportation said his company still has several million dollars coming that is needed to pay the leasing companies that he hired to supply the transit buses. So far, they have been patient and are just waiting it out because it is out of our hands,

he added.

He said the argument could have an adverse affect on U.S. bus tours to Canada. "You know, we've all had good relations with Canada but this leaves a bad taste in your mouth, he said.

### Taxes withheld

The payment issue with the U.S. operators has been further complicated by the Canada Revenue Agency, which seized for tax withholding purposes about \$6 million that VANOC paid Gameday, leaving the management company with less money than it had anticipated having available for its obligations.

According to Vitrano, the CRA surprised the U.S. companies by requiring withholding of 15 percent of their gross revenues rather than the usual 15 percent of net revenues.

By coincidence, the \$6 million is the same amount Trailways attorney Ron Wall said Trailways is owed by Gameday — \$3 million to \$4 million the carriers have coming, plus another \$2 million or so for a number of other vendors, administrative costs and other expenses.

He maintains that International Trailways simply does not have cash available to pay the carriers. "We are not sitting on any money, but waiting for VANOC to pay Gameday so they can pay us and we can pay our operators," he said.

Still, Wall said he's concerned that some operators are becoming impatient for their money and could file legal action against Trailways if they are not paid soon.

"At the end of the day, we owe the money to the operators," he said. "But it seems that many of them understand that we can't pay until Gameday is paid and Gameday can't pay until they get their money from VANOC."

Vitrano also cautioned against legal action, saying that Gameday is on the same side as Trailways and the operators. "We're not arguing that we don't owe them the money, and we are fighting for the bus companies," he stressed.

### Dire implications

Wall emphasized that a settlement needs to be reached soon or many of the operators will find themselves in more serious financial trouble than they are in now and some could even go out of business.

"There is concern now that some operators might not be around when the money finally is paid," he said.

Alan Thrasher, chief operating officer for International Trailways, said the Olympic work initially was "God sent" because of the sour economy and depressed travel



Linwood Whitters, left, accepts Bus & Motorcoach Academy certificate from UMA's Ken Presley

## Academy grad

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Operator designation offered by the academy's Clarence Cornell School of Business.

He became interested in the program after attending a UMA safety seminar where the academy and the courses it offers individuals in the motorcoach business were discussed.

"I thought it would really help me in my business and in my career and aid in my business growth," he said.

And that's just what it did, too, according to Whitters, who said the program has helped him see the motorcoach business from a different side other than a driver or safety manager.

"It provided me with the motivation to look at the business dif-

ferent from a driver and see it from many different aspects," he said.

Although he now has work duties other than driving, he still enjoys getting behind the wheel of a coach from time to time. However, he doesn't do it as often as he would like because he worries that a possible accident might undermine his work as the safety and training manager.

"That would not be a good message and could discredit my program," he said, quickly adding that he has never had a driving accident, either with a car, bus, ship or sub.

"And I have been driving since I was 16 years old," he added.

The academy, which is presented by UMA through a partnership with the College of Southern Maryland, is designed specifically for the motorcoach industry with on-

line courses covering the issues the industry deals with on a daily basis.

The APTO program through the Clarence Cornell School includes lessons in financial management, business and marketing, safety and compliance, and human resources, and is made possible by a generous contribution from the ABC Companies.

The academy also offers a Motorcoach Operator and Driver Program, which includes courses in driver qualifications, passenger issues, security and vehicle maintenance.

"We are proud of all our graduates," says Ken Presley, UMA vice president of industry relations and the academy's executive director. "Congratulations to Linwood Whitters, APTO. We know he will carry the designation with pride."

For more information, go to [www.uma.org](http://www.uma.org).

business and because it came at a time of the year when motorcoach travel is generally slow.

"But now I have been told by some operators that this is causing them great financial harm," he said.

He suggested the U.S. Congress could get involved, noting that Trailways could encourage operators from across the country to begin complaining to federal lawmakers in hopes that such action could raise enough noise to get VANOC to pay.

Thrasher blames VANOC for the problems, charging that the entities down the chain cannot pay those below them until VANOC pays Gameday.

"The direct pay recipient is Gameday, but International Trailways and affiliated companies are the intended recipients," he said.

"That makes our problem VANOC."

### Victims: Operators

Frank Montgomery of Capital Trailways in Montgomery, Ala., which had 29 coaches in the operation, said payments to the carriers went well until the very end when they suddenly stopped. He said his company is owed about \$200,000.

"I can't speculate as to who is to blame, but there is no speculation as to who the victims are — me," he added.

The United Motorcoach and American Bus associations have also gotten involved, warning VANOC in separate letters that the affected carriers are in serious trouble and need their money immediately.

"There is no question that VANOC's failure to remit this out-

standing balance is resulting in tremendous financial harm and could result in business failures for some of our members," wrote Ken Presley, UMA's vice president of industry relations.

ABA President Peter Pantuso shared the concerns in his letter, saying "Please understand the urgency of this matter as most of the U.S.-based companies involved are not corporate conglomerates, but are rather mom-and-pop, family-owned small businesses that are operating on some of the thinnest margins after a down global travel economy."

Wright, in his statement, said VANOC regrets that bus suppliers have encountered financial hardships, but emphasized that their disappointment, frustration and payment demands should not be directed to VANOC.

# New-entrant rules make lots of safety/economic sense

By Dave Millhouser

At the top of a steep grade, humming along at 70 mph, Nevada's portion of U.S. 50 stretched into the distance — straight as an arrow for at least 40 miles.

We were empty, just me and a co-driver, who was sleeping on the floor at my feet. So, I kicked the Scenicruiser into neutral just to see what that puppy would do.

WHAT was I thinking?

The speedometer pegged at 80, but we were doing north of 100 mph when I nervously tapped the brakes. They turned cherry red, like the Space Shuttle's heat shield, and we continued to accelerate.

As we approached the perigee (bottom), we hit a bump and my formerly sleeping partner went weightless, bouncing high enough off the floor to glare at me.

Thankfully, we eventually rolled to a soft landing.

My buddy analyzed the situation, grabbed my shirt and yelled, "what did you think was going to happen?"

The take away? Before making a major decision, devote some thought to what might happen.

Until 1980, the regulatory environment made it difficult to enter the bus business. You needed major resources to buy, or originate, operating authority.

People who are spending serious bucks usually think carefully before writing a check.

When the industry was "deregulated," the

pendulum swung too far. The cost of obtaining "operating authority" dropped to mere hundreds of dollars, while the "rights" that existing companies had counted as equity became nearly worthless.

Many tour brokers, bus drivers, limousine companies and other entrepreneurs thought they'd spotted a goose laying golden eggs, and began chasing it. New bus companies were hatched overnight.

A few made it, many did not. Some existing operators failed to adjust to the new go-go pace, and went to "Bussy Heaven." Safety suffered and our ability to price trips at sustainable margins withered.

You're thinking I'm taking a shot at government's failure to anticipate the impact of deregulation. Taint so. The old system wasn't fair. It was an "old boys network" whose idea of competing was to keep outsiders — out.

Government thinking may have been that, in the brave new bus world, safety regulation, finance company vetting, and insurer constraints would somehow make it all work.

You can't use a hammer to saw wood, and hoping these disparate entities do more than their job hasn't worked.

There is increasing support for a requirement that new companies, known as new entrants, understand the basics of the business they are entering. This would benefit our industry because smart competitors don't behave poorly in ways that reflect on us all.

It would be good for startups because it would give them some understanding of how

complex and difficult operating a coach company is, helping them avoid a costly "what-did-you-think-would-happen" moment.

USDOT has already seen some questionable applicants walk away when asked for the basic information currently required.

Enforcement is on the rise, and at the same time the rules are being revised. Yet, many operators don't even know what the rules are, or how to find out. For an idea, take a peek at <http://fleetowner.com/management/news/csa-intervention-risk-0806/>.

The United Motorcoach Association and other industry organizations are pushing for an entry exam as part of the USDOT application process, requiring start-ups to demonstrate knowledge of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. They are readily available in book form (UMA offers them at a discount).

Forcing entrants to understand (and abide) safety regulations accomplishes several things. No. 1, of course, it will help them run their company more safely. It also gives them some indication, before they've spent a ton of money, of the complexities of the industry.

Once they've passed a knowledge test it becomes more difficult to plead ignorance to a regulator. Playing dumb won't save them if an accident reveals shoddy safety practices.

UMA's Ken Presley says "UMA believes policymakers and regulators should focus on closing the knowledge gap that many new entrants enter the industry with, and focus on noncompliant operators."

So far, I suspect I'm preaching to the choir,

but it might not be a bad idea to have existing companies periodically tested. UMA, and other trade organizations indicate members ask more questions about regulatory stuff than anything else. Many are unsure where to find information.



Dave Millhouser

Preparing for a test would be less painful than having an inspector kick your shin for noncompliance, and would keep you up to date on rule changes.

Most of the rules make sense and are helpful. The only way to find the ones that are not useful (and ask for changes) is by reading them.

Operators could study the regulations on their own, or use such resources such as the Bus and Motorcoach Academy. Many insurers leap at the opportunity to educate customers.

A couple of caveats.

Never, EVER put a bus in neutral while in motion. Only an idiot would do that.

And, you're probably thinking "that's the dumbest thing he's ever done."

Obviously you haven't heard the story involving an ex-girlfriend and an airplane that had no door.

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

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- Indoor Odor Control Products And More!!

## Legal battle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

continues against both Busco and MCI.

MCI, however, maintains it should be released from any financial responsibility because its sales agreement with Busco requires Busco to defend, indemnify and hold it harmless from any claims resulting from an accident in which Busco or its employees were negligent or reckless.

MCI, according to court records, asked Busco to defend it in the original lawsuit under the agreement, but Busco has failed and refused to do so. "The duty to defend arose at the time that plaintiffs filed their original complaints against MCI and Busco, and that duty exists at this time," MCI said in its court filing.

MCI included as part of the filing a copy of the sales agreement for the bus that crashed.

The agreement covered the purchase of six MCI J4500 models for \$2.339 million and was signed by a Busco executive in July 2007. The provision that MCI contends indemnifies it from responsibility appears in capital letters on the fifth page of the six-page contract. Each of the pages contains the ini-

tials of the Busco executive who signed the agreement.

Busco, in its court response to MCI's charges, denied most of the claims and said it never agreed to the indemnification provision. "As an affirmative defense, cross defendant Busco alleges that the purported indemnification provision in the purchase agreement was neither negotiated or agreed upon by the parties, or supported by valid and sufficient consideration," it said in its filing.

Additionally, Busco said the initial suit filed by the victims and their families zeros in on the bus itself as being defective, and Busco had no part in designing or manufacturing it.

"Busco further affirmatively states that plaintiffs' claims against cross claimant (MCI) involve the design and manufacture of the motorcoach with unreasonably dangerous defects, namely the lack of seatbelts and insufficient roof strength and integrity, of and in which Busco had no participation or involvement," the company wrote.

Busco's attorney Bill Schrank of Phoenix maintains that the provision in the sales agreement that is under question cannot be enforced because the integrity of the

bus is believed to be a major cause of the deaths and injuries of the passengers.

"The indemnity provision does not obligate Busco to indemnify MCI for its wrongful acts or wrongdoings," he contends.

He notes, too, that under federal regulations, the NTSB report of the accident, which suggests the driver likely was at fault, cannot be used in civil lawsuits. He said federal investigators count on the cooperation of everyone involved in an accident and if their statements could later become part of legal proceedings they could be discouraged from cooperating.

Patricia Ziska, vice president and chief customer officer at MCI, stressed that the indemnity provision in the sales contract is standard in many commercial agreements. She also asserted that the action against Busco is aimed at protecting MCI in a situation in which nobody claims the coach design or manufacturer caused the accident.

"This is an unfortunate situation and is the first time in our history that we have found it necessary to ask a court to enforce the indemnity provision in our agreement to purchase," she noted. "We believe past precedents and our

## Contract provision is heart of dispute

PHOENIX — The legal dispute between Motor Coach Industries and Busco Inc. centers on a provision contained in an "Agreement to Purchase" the two companies signed in June 2007, covering the purchase by Busco of six MCI J4500s.

Below is the key provision, which appeared on the fifth page of the six-page sales contract and was printed in capital letters:

**"TO THE FULLEST EXTEND PERMITTED BY LAW, BUYER SHALL DEFEND, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS SELLER, ITS AFFILIATES, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PRESENT AND FORMER OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS**

**FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL CLAIMS, DEMANDS, ACTIONS, CAUSES OF ACTION, DAMAGES, LOSSES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES (INCLUDING ATTORNEYS' FEES, EXPERT WITNESS FEES, AND OTHER LITIGATION EXPENSES) RESULTING FROM, ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH (A) ANY ACTUAL OR ALLEGED NEGLIGENCE, RECKLESS OR INTENTIONAL MISCONDUCT BY BUYER OR ANY OF BUYER'S EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, OR CONTRACTORS, OR (B) ANY BREACH BY BUYER OF ANY OF THE PROVISIONS, TERMS OR CONDITIONS OF THIS AGREEMENT."**

current vigorous defense of our product in the Mexican Hat litigation prove that MCI stands behind its products in each and every situation. We value our customer relationships immensely."

She said MCI believes it has done nothing wrong and is simply aggressively defending its product against what it contends are meritless allegations, while at the same

time asking the court to decide the parties' relative rights and obligations under the indemnity provision.

MCI asks the court to order Busco to indemnify and hold it harmless of any damages resulting from the suit and to reimburse it for its legal fees, while Busco asks that the case be dismissed and that it be awarded legal expenses.

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## Bookings up from top inbound markets

WASHINGTON — Foreign travel to the U.S. appears to have picked up during the first quarter of this year.

The top five U.S. travel inbound markets, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, Mexico and Germany, posted increased bookings to the U.S. for the first three months of 2010, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce-sponsored Travel Trade Barometers for each country.

The five countries typically account for more than 70 percent of inbound foreign visitors to the U.S. Here's a quick rundown on each country:

- Canada. Bookings increased 10 to 15 percent, compared to first quarter 2009. For the second survey in a row, the exchange rate

was listed as the top motivator for travel in the next six months. This was followed by the level of promotion by U.S. destinations and businesses, accommodation rates and the economy in Canada.

The collection of travelers' personal information and enhanced — security measures ranked as the top two deterrents for travel to the — United States in the next six months.

- Japan. Bookings increased 1 to 3 percent. Also, nearly all of the respondents projected an increase in bookings for second quarter 2010. The top motivator listed for travel from Japan to the United States in the next six months was the exchange rate to the U.S. dollar.

- United Kingdom. Bookings increased 4 to 9 percent. Accom-

modation rates ranked as the top motivator, followed by the level of promotion by U.S. destinations and businesses.

- Mexico. Bookings increased 10 to 15 percent. Accommodation rates continued to be listed as the top motivator for travel to the United States. Enhanced security, visa processing and entry-exit requirements were the top three deterrents to travel to the U.S.

- Germany. Bookings increased 1 to 3 percent. The level of promotion by U.S. destinations and businesses was the only motivator listed for bookings in the next six months.

For more information on the Travel Barometer Program, go to <http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/research/programs/barometer/index.html>.

## Tourism spending in Canada rises in first quarter

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Tourism spending in Canada increased during the first quarter of this year despite a drop in visitors from the U.S.

The Canadian Tourism Commission's latest National Tourism Indicators report shows tourism spending rose percent during the first three months of this year.

Here are the numbers:

- Total tourism spending reached \$13.8 billion.

- Accommodation, food and beverage services, as well as transportation, saw the biggest gain in total revenue (5 percent).

- A large jump in the price of vehicle fuel (19 percent), along with repairs and parts (9 percent),

played a significant role in the rise in transportation revenue.

- Gains from overseas visitors (4 percent) were offset by U.S. travelers making 7 percent fewer trips to Canada.

- The number of tourism jobs went down another 2 percent to 599,600 full- and part-time positions.

## Meetings business picks up

Travel organizations, hotels and convention bureaus are reporting a rebound in business from group customers, an important segment that includes companies, associations, sports teams, religious groups, social organizations and the military.

In a survey of members by Meeting Professionals International, which represents meeting planners, 61 percent responded they are seeing more favorable business conditions, including attendance, budgets and number of meetings.

## Ford's Theatre closes this month

WASHINGTON — The National Park Service and the Ford's Theatre Society have announced that Ford's Theatre National Historic Site, comprising the theater, museum and Petersen House (the house where President Abraham Lincoln died), will close for two days this month for routine maintenance.

In August last year, only 15 percent reported an up-tick.

The U.S. Travel Association forecasts a 7 percent increase in meeting and convention spending this year, to \$90.7 billion.

That follows a 15 percent decline in 2009, when organizations canceled meetings, sent fewer employees to trade shows and insisted on bare-minimum amenities.

Still, it remains largely a buyer's market. Hotel room rates reportedly remain flat or lower in many places.

The museum will close Sept. 15 and reopen Sept. 16. The Petersen House will close Sept. 16 and reopen Sept. 17. The theater will close both days, Sept. 15 and 16 and reopen to the public Sept. 17.

Go to [www.nps.gov/foth](http://www.nps.gov/foth) and [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org) for more information.

## Disney becomes more expensive

ORLANDO, Fla. — Walt Disney World has increased its admission price to \$82 for adults, up from \$79. Prices for children over 9 climbed to \$74, up \$6.

In California, admission to Dis-

neyland will cost \$76 for adults (up from \$72) for a single-day, single-park ticket and \$68 for children. The one-day price of a two-park pass (for Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure) will be \$101.



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**Calif. operator Wilburn Peppers dies**

NAPA, Calif. — Wilburn Peppers, who spent nearly 50 years in the bus industry, owning several bus operations, died here last month. He was 93.

Mr. Peppers began his industry career with Greyhound Lines 1939 as a bookkeeper and terminal manager. In 1943, he drove for Mendocino Transit before being appointed manager of the Napa City Bus Line.

In the late 1940s, he purchased Napa City Bus and began operating it as Napa Transit Company with five buses. He purchased his first charter bus in 1952.

In 1955, Mr. Peppers won a bid to operate part of the Bracero Program that had been created by the federal government during World War II to bring tens of thousands of Mexican laborers to work in the agricultural fields of California,

Oregon, Washington, Arizona and Colorado. At one point, Napa Transit reportedly transported more than 265,000 men to and from California alone.

In the 1960s, Mr. Peppers obtained a pilot's license to help grow his far flung enterprises.

Over the years, Mr. Peppers owned and operated several bus lines and school bus services. In 1969, he started a charter bus company, All-West Tours of Napa, which operated throughout the western U.S., and Economy Tours, a travel agency.

A flood in 1986 sent eight feet of water through his yard, flooding his buses, parts room and administrative offices. Mr. Peppers contacted Farwest Bus Sales, contracting with Dan Eisentrager and Marshall Deems to sell the coaches that were running and help get

the flooded engines and transmissions repaired.

A year later, Mr. Peppers sold All-West to Farwest Bus Sales, which rebuilt the company and operated it out of Sacramento and Napa as All-West Coachlines. In 2000, All-West was sold to Coach USA. Today it is a unit of Coach America.

Through his bus company and the Napa Grange, Mr. Peppers supported children's activities, including Napa Little League teams and high school band activities. After many bus trips, a Napa Valley Baton & Dance Club was named The Peppettes, after "Peppers," as he was often called.

Mr. Peppers was an honorary member of the California Bus Association.

He is survived by his wife, Bonnie; two sons, three daughters and a sister.

**N.J. operator Anthony DiDomenico dies**

NORTH BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Anthony 'Sonny' DiDomenico, who spent more than 40 years in the bus industry, owning and operating three companies, died here last month. He was 81.

Mr. DiDomenico owned Domenico Bus Service in Bayonne, N.J., for 30 years, after which he founded and operated Eagle Bus Company and Carol Coaches in Bayonne for 15 years.

His family reported he was one of the first operators of regular-route

service to Atlantic City casinos.

During his career, Mr. DiDomenico also innovated mass transit bus service in the New York City borough of Staten Island, and grew his business into "the largest privately-owned charter and commuter bus company" in New Jersey at the time.

He also operated several school bus companies, serving special education students in New York City.

Mr. DiDomenico, an Army veteran of the Korean War, was a for-

mer president of the Bayonne Junior Chamber of Commerce. He also was active in local politics, serving as a Democratic committeeman.

He was born in Bayonne where his father was once the mayor.

He is survived by his wife, Carol; a son, Jay, and a daughter, Wanda Lempa.

A memorial in Mr. DiDomenico's name has been established with the American Heart Association, 1 Union St., Suite 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691.

**Carolina associations' board member dies**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Cynthia Boyd Curry, a former associate member of the boards of the North Carolina Motorcoach Association and the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina, died here last month after a years-long struggle with cancer. She was 62.

Following a 19-year career with Eastern Airlines in the reservations and vacation planning de-

partments, Mrs. Curry was employed by Paramount Carowinds, the amusement park company, in sales and marketing.

When she met people for the first time she would smilingly point to her name badge, which spelled out her name and title — Fun Technician.

While with Paramount Carowinds, she became involved with the

tourism industry in Charlotte, which led her to the Greater Charlotte Hospitality and Tourism Alliance. She served two years as chairwoman of the alliance.

She is survived by her husband, Bill, and two daughters.

A memorial has been established with the Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church, 15000 York Rd., Charlotte, NC 28278

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