

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

Watch out, higher liability insurance rates are coming

Motorcoach operators that have been enjoying low auto liability insurance premiums in recent years can expect to see a rate hike soon.

Companies that specialize in insuring motorcoaches say the stalled national economy and a rash of costly accidents are catching up with the industry and higher premiums are on the way.

"They're right around the corner," warns Michelle Silvestro of National Interstate Insurance Co., the large motorcoach industry

insurer.

She said trucking companies already have seen a jump in their rates and that sector of the transportation industry usually is a leading indicator of what is going to happen to premiums for motorcoach companies.

Randy O'Neill of Lancer Insurance Co., the other leading motorcoach industry insurer, suggested the increase could come quickly, and for some carriers it could be substantial.

"They could be very sudden and very severe, possibly in the double digits," he said. "It's hard to say when, but it could come in six months, nine months."

Among the key factors at work, say insurance executives, is the national economy, which has crippled investment earnings that play a crucial role in the income stream of insurance companies and how they price their products.

Many insurance companies operate on ratios in the low- to mid-

90s — paying out roughly 90 cents in claims for every premium dollar they collect, and they count on strong investment earnings to bolster margins and earn money for their investors.

"With the investment market the way it is we just can't do it," said Silvestro, whose company in the most recent reporting quarter hit its target ratio of 96, earning 4 cents on every dollar it collects.

O'Neill said the ratios are watched closely by insurance com-

panies and rate adjustments usually are made when they get too close to 100.

"That's when the red lights go on and the red flags go up," he said.

In addition to the poor investment climate, the increase in premiums also is being driven by the rash of deadly and costly accidents that have hit the industry.

Research by Lancer indicates there have been 70 deaths and 700 serious injuries in motorcoach and

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Buses Gather

'A Gathering of Buses' in Hibbing, Minn., last month attracted plenty of buses, including (from left) a Flxible Visicoach, GM 4106, MC7, MC9 and MC5, plus an estimated 400 bus aficionados from the U.S. and Canada. For more, turn to Page 18.



Irene: Good 'n bad for operators

Hurricane blows business in, away

Hurricane Irene may not have been the doomsday storm that was forecast when it began its windy and watery journey up the East Coast last month, but it was destructive enough to take more than three dozen lives and cause an estimated \$20 billion in property damage in a dozen states.

And, much like past major storms, it was powerful enough to stir up a mix of bad and good for the motorcoach industry.

Although a number of operators in the storm-struck states landed evacuation and utility crew shuttle work, many more lost revenue with the cancellation of hundreds of tours, charters, commuter-and-line runs, and airport shuttles.

The hurricane, which took four long days to creep up the coast from North Carolina to Maine, affected about 65 million people, including large numbers — some estimates were as high as 3 million — who evacuated their coastal homes and businesses.

While motorcoach operators were available to help with the evacuations, the lengthy and nonstop warnings residents received about the pending storm, and the East Coast's extensive mass transportation system, apparently allowed authorities enough time to manage the movements with minimal use of motorcoaches.

"A number of our members were ready to go if they needed us," said Tim Stout of Stout's Transportation in Trenton, N.J., and president of the Greater New Jersey Motorcoach As-

sociation. Stout said state emergency management officials made arrangements with individual operators to be on standby as the storm approached.

Several other states joined New Jersey in contracting with individual operators, while others hired two major transportation management companies to have operators at the ready.

But few of the companies were put to work.

Transportation Management Services, a logistics company based in Sandy Spring, Md., lined up more than 100 operators that were poised to handle evacuations, but none were needed, said marketing director Brianne McManus.

"We were surprised, but it gave us an opportunity to test our procedures and everything went very

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ▶

Heeding regeneration signals being emphasized after crash

SENECA COUNTY, N.Y. — A fatal crash earlier this summer involving a motorcoach that had pulled off a busy highway to perform a regeneration of its exhaust after-treatment system has focused attention on the need for drivers to carefully monitor emission system warning signals so they don't end up having to shutdown at a potentially unsafe location.

The driver of the coach had completed a stationary regeneration of the emissions system alongside the New York State Thruway and was pulling back onto the highway but was unable to get the coach up to speed, according to investigators.

He was returning to the shoulder when a tractor trailer plowed

into the rear of the coach, killing the truck driver and setting the bus ablaze.

Although the coach was carrying 52 passengers, 30 of which were injured by the crash, all were able to get off — with help from passersby — before the fire consumed the bus.

The incident in late July involved a 2008 Setra equipped with a Detroit Diesel Series 60 engine whose emission's control system included a diesel particulate filter that oxidizes, or burns, soot.

During normal highway operation, engine exhaust temperatures are typically high enough to burn off the particulate filter's accumulated soot, a process known

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Feds award bus security grants; dollar amount plummets

WASHINGTON — Eighty-three bus and motorcoach operators from across the U.S. have been awarded fiscal 2011 Inter-City Bus Security grants by the Department of Homeland Security.

A total of \$4.99 million was awarded to operators in 32 states that will use the money to upgrade company security measures with onboard cameras, communication equipment, fencing at terminals, passenger screening gear, driver shields, and global positioning tracking devices.

The less-than-\$5-million in grants this year compares to \$11.5

million awarded in fiscal 2010 to 69 operators, and \$11.66 million awarded to 71 operators in fiscal 2009.

Since its inception in 2003, the program has provided operators with a total of just over \$100 million in taxpayer dollars for security enhancements, including this year's amount.

In fiscal 2008, \$11.17 million was awarded to 49 companies; in fiscal 2007, \$11.64 million was awarded to 39 companies; in fiscal 2006, \$9.5 million went to 35 companies, and in fiscal 2005, 25 companies received \$9.66 million.

Those companies awarded

grants this year are required to commit to a 25 percent match of the amount they are awarded. That means operators getting grants must pony up a total of about \$1.25 million.

The 2011 grants mark the ninth consecutive year the Department of Homeland Security has awarded money under the program to private bus operators.

Over the years, roughly 38 percent of the grant money has gone Greyhound Lines, which has received about \$38 million. Greyhound's fiscal 2011 grant was just over \$1 million, or slightly more

than 20 percent of the total, the lowest relative percentage since the program began, and a substantial drop from fiscal 2010 when it received \$4.2 million and its fiscal 2009 total of \$3.67 million.

Greyhound has gotten its large percentage not only because it has the biggest fleet of line-run coaches of any private carrier, but also because it travels to the areas believed to be most vulnerable for a terrorism attack — one of the program's key criteria.

The reduced grant amount for fiscal 2011 directly reflects the federal budget-cutting mood cur-

rently prevalent in Washington.

Many sectors of the motorcoach industry have been lobbying to save the security grant program, which the Obama Administration and many Republican budget hawks want to eliminate. (See May 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The program is not in the fiscal 2012 Department of Homeland Security budget, and with pressure mounting to cut and reduce funding for discretionary programs, the security grant money could fall victim to the sharp knives.

The fact that Greyhound and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►

Drum roll please: Bus/Motorcoach Academy announces grads

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Bus & Motorcoach Academy has announced its graduates for the fall 2010 and spring 2011 semesters.

The following individuals completed the Clarence Cornell School of Business program, supported by ABC Companies, and received their Accredited Passenger Transportation Operator (APTO) designation:

- James Beem, APTO, Black Butte Tours, Weed, Calif.
- Mark Begg, APTO, Delaney Bus Lines, Avonmore, Ontario
- David Bratcher, APTO, Daisy Charters

and Shuttles, San Antonio, Texas

- James M. Brown, APTO, Magic Carpet Tours, Richmond, Va.
- Wendy Cuevas, APTO, Certified Transportation Services, Santa Ana, Calif.
- Laura Heinz, APTO, Lake Crystal Coaches, Madison Lake, Minn.
- Ayanna Jackson, APTO, Gaten's Adventures Unlimited, Hammond, La.
- Neal Prichard, APTO, Harlows Bus Service, Bismarck, N.D.
- Jason Quick, APTO, Quick-Livick Inc., Staunton, Va.

The following individuals completed the

Motorcoach Operator/Driver program and received a Certificate of Academic Achievement in Motorcoach Operations:

- James Boyd, Thrasher Brothers Trailways, Birmingham, Ala.
- William Chard, Custom Coach & Limousine, Gorham, Maine
- Tim Heinz, Lake Crystal Coaches, Madison Lake, Minn.
- Sheila Knight, Thrasher Brothers Trailways
- Rebecca Losh, Custom Coach & Limousine
- Mark Myers, Custom Coach &

Limousine

- Cary O'Brien, First Transit, Overland Park, Kan.
- Henry Palmer, Quick-Livick Inc.
- Katrina Washington, Keller Transportation, Waldorf, Md.

The academy was founded and is operated by the United Motorcoach Association.

The 2011 fall semester begins Oct. 4 and will offer Business & Marketing I and II, Safety & Compliance, Passenger Issues, Security, and Vehicle Maintenance courses.

For more information, go to www.uma.org/academy.



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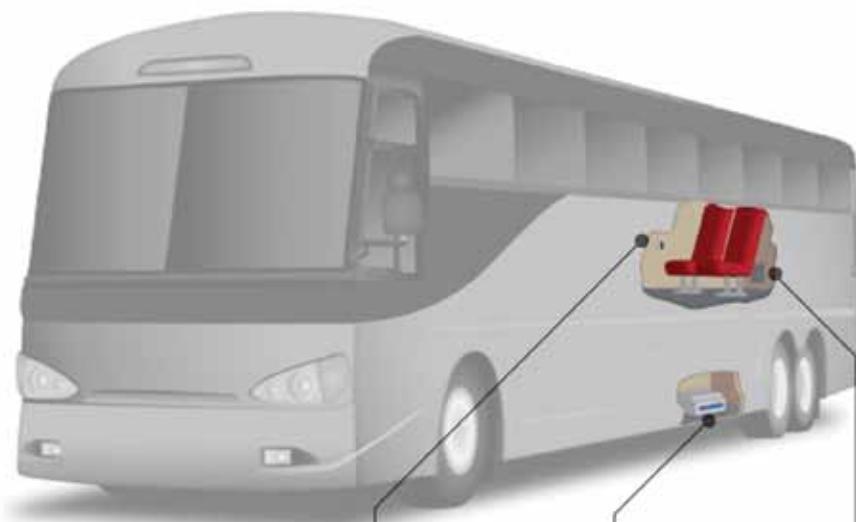
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THE DOCKET

Huge NY/NJ toll hikes this month generate outrage

NEW YORK CITY — Motorcoaches traveling from New Jersey into New York City will get an unpleasant surprise in a few days when they stop at toll booths or get their next E-Z Pass statements.

Tolls are more than doubling or tripling over night for coaches using any of the six bridges and tunnels managed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

A two- or three-axle coach paying cash will be hit with a toll of \$20, starting Sept. 18, versus the current \$6. E-Z Pass users will see a toll of \$10 on the 18th, versus the current \$4.

After that, tolls are going up 75 cents for E-Z Pass users and a \$1 for cash payers every year for the next four years. By December 2015, coach operators will have to pay a cash toll of \$24, while E-Z Pass users will see toll charges go to \$13 in December 2015.

Tolls for autos and trucks also

are increasing. Truck tolls are going up 125 percent, while car tolls are rising 67 percent.

The toll hikes are aimed at bailing out the financially strapped Port Authority, which has \$14 billion in debt and runs the region's three international airports and major bridges and tunnels.

It also is leading the World Trade Center rebuilding project that — along with some of its

Pa. Turnpike wants to end cash option

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is studying whether to adopt an all-cashless system of toll collection, but the agency is getting push back from truckers and others.

Most commercial vehicle operators that are frequent turnpike users have E-ZPass, but some apparently still prefer to pay cash, while others may be unable to get

other projects — has had huge cost overruns.

Critics of the toll hikes, and there are lots of them, point out that little of the additional revenue raised by the increases will be used to improve the bridge and tunnel infrastructure or help the businesses that pay the majority of tolls for using the crossings.

The fast-tracked toll plan, which is expected to raise \$33 bil-

an E-ZPass because they have poor credit.

As part of its possible switch to all-electronic toll collection, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission would encourage E-ZPass use, but would have an alternative way for customers to pay if they didn't have a transponder.

That option would involve a system that snaps a photo of the vehicle's license plate and sends

lion in new revenue, earmarks just \$9 billion to fix up facilities. The rest goes into capital improvements and economic development that have little, if anything, to do with the toll crossings.

At one hearing on the increase last month in New Jersey, those attempting to speak in protest were harassed and intimidated by port authority workers who showed up in droves in matching orange shirts.

an invoice to the vehicle owner.

However, concerns have been expressed about scofflaws, privacy issues and a paper trail with such a system.

Some critics question why every transaction, including trips for personal conveyance, should include a paper trail or a photo.

Go to www.paturndpike.com/aet to learn more about the Pennsylvania Turnpike's initiative.

Officials say the capital improvement plan funded by the toll increases will create and preserve thousands of jobs.

It will continue funding billions of dollars for the World Trade Center site and other efforts to draw economic development to the region.

But using toll increases to fund economic development doesn't sit well with many highway users.

One critic said bridge and tunnel users should not be forced to shoulder the burden for economic development of the region just because they drive across certain bridges to do their jobs.

"They're making the toll payers a different class of citizen and saying those citizens should be taxed more just because they use a bridge," said one New Jersey critic. "When did toll payers become responsible for the economic development for a city or for a 20-mile radius of a bridge?"

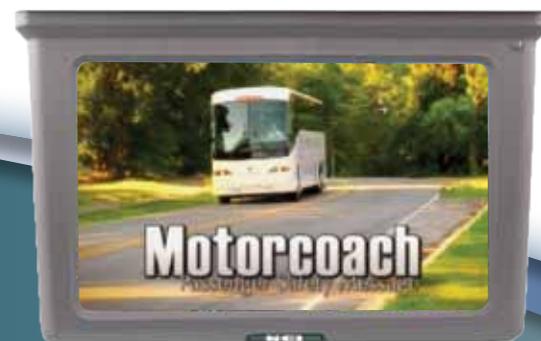
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Appeals court stymies FMCSA onboard recorder rule

CHICAGO — The rule the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration adopted last year requiring motor carriers with significant hours-of-service violations to install electronic onboard recorders has been blocked by a federal appeals court.

A three-judge panel said the rule does not protect drivers from potential harassment by their employers.

Siding with three truck drivers and the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judges vacated and remanded the rule back to the FMCSA for revisions.

The court said the agency's EOBR mandate for carriers with hours-of-service problems, set to go into effect next June, does not adequately address or ensure that carriers could not use the devices to force drivers to stay on the road even when they are tired.

The truck drivers contend that if the onboard recorder showed they were still eligible to drive, their employer might force them to stay behind the wheel even though they were tired.

"The agency needs to consider what types of harassment already exist, how frequently and to what extent harassment happens, and how an electronic device capable of contemporaneous transmission of information to a motor carrier will guard against (or fail to guard against) harassment," the court said.

For now, the ruling will stop the requirement that 5,700 truck and bus fleets with hours-of-service violations in the past install EOBRs in their vehicles by the middle of next year.

And the ruling seems certain to delay the FMCSA proposal to eventually require the nation's nearly 500,000 truck and bus fleets to install similar devices within the next few years. (See March 1, *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The federal government's plan to mandate electronic onboard recorders for all over-the-road buses and trucks has both supporters and critics in both industries.

The American Trucking Associations strongly supports the requirement, while it is vigorously opposed by the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, which is composed of small, often one-rig, trucking operations.

In the motorcoach industry, the American Bus Association supports the rule, while the United Motorcoach Association has expressed strong reservations.

UMA contends the FMCSA needs to prove that electronic onboard recorders reduce commer-

cial vehicle crashes before requiring all truck and bus operators to install the expensive equipment.

Currently, says UMA, the evidence indicating use of recorders actually results in fewer crashes is inadequate.

Early this summer, UMA filed comments urging the FMCSA to

substantiate the case for electronic onboard recorders through its rule aimed at chronic hours-of-service violators. That rule, at least for the time being, has been blocked by the appeals court.

UMA wants the FMCSA to defer any consideration of an EOBR mandate for all commercial

carriers "until such time as FMCSA can substantiate a credible and significant reduction in crashes and a further reduction in supporting documents that justifies such a substantial financial investment by motor carriers."

Supporters of the rule, like the ATA, generally don't assert the

mandate will reduce crashes, since there are no scientific studies to back up such a claim.

Rather, they say FMCSA data shows that compliance with hours-of-service rules is strongly associated with a reduced crash risk and EOBRs improve hours-of-service compliance.



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California alters fuel tax regime

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California is among those states that impose a sales tax, as well as a fuel tax, on the sale of highway fuel — both diesel and gasoline.

Last year, it adopted legislation that adjusts the way in which the two taxes apply to fuel sales. The change has gone into effect.

In a nutshell, the fuel tax on diesel has dropped from 18 to 13 cents a gallon, but the rate of the sales tax applied to sales of diesel has gone from 8.25 to 9.12 percent.

The California Board of Equalization has posted questions and answers about how the changes will affect fuel tax rates at the pump for gasoline, diesel and other fuels. For details, go to:

www.boe.ca.gov/sutax/gasswapfaq.htm.

During the first quarter of this year, California had the highest total tax rate on diesel fuel of any state, at 39.7 cents per gallon. The state tax on gasoline, at 49.6 cents per gallon, was far and away the highest in the nation.

N.C. fuel taxes rise

RALEIGH, N.C. — Motorcoach operators filling up in North Carolina are paying 2.5 cents more in diesel fuel taxes.

The state legislature took no action on an automatic recalculation of the state fuel tax before ending its five-month session in June.

Therefore, the state tax on gasoline, diesel, and alternative fuels

rose to 35 cents per gallon, from 32.5 cents. It will remain at that level through Dec. 31.

Maine ends fuel tax indexing

AUGUSTA, Maine — The state legislature here approved a two-year, \$637 million transportation funding bill that would end annual fuel tax increases tied to inflation beginning next year.

The end of indexing is expected to deprive the state of more than \$5 million per year, Gov. Paul LePage estimated in his budget request for fiscal 2012 and 2013, which asked for the end of fuel tax indexing.

Generally, those opposing indexing weren't against supporting state infrastructure needs, rather they didn't like the fact increases in

Georgia freezes fuel taxes

ATLANTA — A special session of the Georgia legislature has frozen the state tax collected on fuel purchases.

Georgia's fuel tax is a two-part tax. One portion of the tax is calculated twice per year and is based on the average price per gallon of fuel in the state at the time. The rate can change twice a year, on Jan. 1 and July 1.

Gov. Nathan Deal decided in June to freeze fuel taxes to reduce consumer pain at the pump. As required by law, the Georgia House

and Senate approved the freeze through the end of the year.

Not collecting the tax is expected to cost the state an estimated \$40 million in revenue that would have been used for roads.

This marks the third time in six years Georgia taxes on fuel have been frozen.

Then-Gov. Sonny Perdue acted to keep the tax rates the same in the summer of 2008 and for one month in the fall of 2005 following Hurricane Katrina.

fuel taxes were on automatic pilot.

Under the indexing model, taxes on a variety of fuels, including diesel and gasoline, increase each year by a rate calculated from

the consumer price index.

The tax increased to 31.2 cents per gallon on July 1, from 30.7 cents, the state revenue services department said on its website.

Maryland officials weigh several tax increases, including fuel taxes

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and the majority leader of the state senate are eyeing a slew of possible tax increases that would help balance the state budget next year.

Under consideration — to deal with a projected \$1 billion deficit — are a sales tax expansion, modifications to corporate filing regulations, higher corporate taxes,

and increased taxes on the wealthy.

A fuel tax hike also is being actively discussed.

The nonprofit Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute has analyzed several tax proposals, including extending the state 6 percent sales tax to professional services and internet sales; reinstating a higher tax on incomes of more than \$1 million, and closing a

loophole that allows large corporations to file taxes in other states where rates might be lower.

Untaxed services, including those for vehicle repairs, comprise the state's largest untapped tax base, according to the institute.

Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Garagiola said the legislature has to consider revenue options, but extending the sales tax to ser-

vices could be a poor decision.

In 2008, after much public outcry, the legislature repealed a sales tax that had been expanded to computer-related services during a special session the prior year.

Garagiola said he is not sure if taxing businesses further would be a good idea, either.

Regardless of how the legislators handle tax increases or cuts to

services to balance the state general fund, Garagiola said he will propose a fuel tax increase to replenish the state fund for road construction and repair.

In recent years, the state has sucked more than \$1 billion from its transportation trust fund to fill budget gaps elsewhere, leaving counties without money for road repairs and other projects.

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Mica supports temporary funding for highways, transportation

WASHINGTON — Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, says he supports a temporary extension of the nation's current transportation plan.

"While there are no details at this point, as the committee continues work to complete a six-year surface transportation reauthorization, it also will support an extension of expiring authority as necessary," Mica spokesman Justin Harclerode told a leading trucking publication.

The current highway and public transportation law expired in 2009, but Congress has approved several temporary extensions, which require House and Senate approval and a signature by President Obama.

The current extension expires Sept. 30. Without another extension, the federal government will not be able to collect the 18.4-cent gas tax, nor the 24.4-cent diesel fuel tax that support the nation's transportation system.

In addition, the government will not be authorized to spend money on transportation, shutting down construction across the U.S.

States to impose unemployment tax assessments

Thirty states across the U.S. apparently will have to assess a special unemployment insurance tax on employers to raise money to repay federal loans used to cover state unemployment benefits during the past couple of years.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development has notified employers in that state they'll have to pay an assessment so federal loans used to pay state unemployment benefits during the depths of the recession can be repaid.

Most states' unemployment funds went broke during the recession, and 40 states borrowed from the feds.

States that didn't pay the money back by the beginning of 2011 are now being charged interest, on which payments become due at the end of this month.

For most Wisconsin employers, the rate of the assessment is 0.2249 per cent of taxable wages, which are capped at \$12,000 per employee. Payments are due this month.

The department said in its notice that 29 other states will have to raise funds to pay interest on their federal loans.

For more information, go to www.dwd.wisconsin.gov.

The situation is "dire," state highway officials said last month at a news conference organized by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

Time is considered critical because Congress will only be in session 11 days during September.

Both Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., chairwoman of the Senate

Environment and Public Works Committee, and Mica have unveiled outlines of long-term highway and public transportation reauthorization bills that each has promised to introduce but, thus far, have not. (See July 15 issue of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Mica favors a six-year reauthorization and Boxer a two-year

reauthorization.

Mica's proposal has stirred intense opposition from transportation advocates, labor groups and Democrats in Congress because it proposes slashing current spending by at least 30 percent during the coming six years.

Mica said he's constrained by a rule passed early this year by the

House Republican majority that transportation spending cannot exceed revenue generated for the Highway Trust Fund.

State and labor officials have said the proposed Mica spending levels could cost as many as 500,000 jobs and imperil the nation's highway system, which they contend is already underfunded

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On the horizon: Two major changes for the CSA program

WASHINGTON — Since it was unveiled last year, the Comprehensive, Safety, Accountability program developed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has been something of a work in progress.

The electronic tracking and enforcement tool has been criticized and modified, with more changes coming. Both operators and drivers will be impacted by the modifications that are in the works.

No. 1: For years, the FMCSA has ranked motor carrier safety performance with a "Carrier Safety Rating" under the SafeStat system that CSA is in the process of replacing. Motor carriers would receive these ratings — and still do

— only after a compliance review.

The lengthy, manpower-intensive process of conducting compliance reviews has resulted in fewer than 4 percent of all motor carriers in the United States ever being inspected and receiving a safety rating. The inspection rate is notably higher for passenger carriers.

From the start, one of the key components of CSA was to identify at-risk motor carriers electronically through collected data (from inspections, traffic stops and the like), eliminating much of the need to go on-site with motor carriers, except for those with the worse performance records.

Assessing the safety performance of motor carriers is done

roughly on a monthly basis.

Under CSA, motor carriers are currently ranked in seven Behavioral Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories — dubbed "BASICS" by the FMCSA.

The agency is proceeding on a rulemaking that, if completed, will allow the agency's monthly updates to include the carrier safety rating.

So, rather than wait for the unlikely event of a compliance review, motor carriers will have a publicly distributed safety rating posted monthly.

The FMCSA also wants to rank drivers in the BASICS as well. It has been a part of the plan since 2004, when CSA was an-

nounced. And the methodology is already in place.

The problem, again, for the agency is that current regulatory authority does not allow for the agency to rank individuals in the BASICS.

Earlier this year, the Government Accountability Office said in a report that the "FMCSA is seeking to gain new authority to regulate drivers through the next surface transportation reauthorization bill; if it gains this authority, the agency plans to make driver safety data public as well."

The Obama Administration's proposed highway bill includes a complete section of regulatory directives targeted at drivers. Within

that section is a proposed provision addressing CSA and driver enforcement.

Detailed under the "Driver Safety Fitness Ratings" section is a plan for individual drivers to have a safety score assigned to their compliance history. While not expressly stated, it's apparent that system would occur under the Compliance, Safety, Accountability enforcement program.

The program already is set up to track driver performance for use exclusively by enforcement personnel. However, the proposed legislation adds the rating mechanism and gives the FMCSA the authority to disqualify drivers from driving because of poor ratings.

CSA system baffles many commercial vehicle drivers

ARLINGTON, Va. — Truck drivers have a poor understanding of the federal government's Compliance, Safety, Accountability program, with nearly two-thirds of the drivers fearing they could lose their jobs because of the new ratings program, a survey has found.

About 80 percent of the 4,500 drivers surveyed said they believed the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's CSA system would not reduce the number of truck-involved crashes, according to the American Transportation Research Institute, which conducted the survey.

In addition, more than 98 percent of drivers could not correctly identify which five Behavioral Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories, or BASICS, scores are publicly available.

"Findings reveal that support for the government program is still divided, and there are mixed reports of how well CSA is functioning," the American Transportation Research Institute said in an-

nouncing the survey results.

"More must be done to improve understanding surrounding CSA's basic tenets, which, despite modest education and training efforts, do not appear well-known."

The survey included 204 drivers who completed survey forms at a trucking show and 4,351 drivers who volunteered from an unnamed large motor carrier.

"The takeaway for the trucking industry is that what this shows is

that trucking companies need to educate their drivers on what CSA is and why it matters," Boyd Stephenson, manager of security and safety operations for American Trucking Associations, told *Transport Topics*, a leading trucking industry publication.

Among of the survey's other findings:

- About 22 percent said safety awareness had increased among their peers, 10 percent reported a

decrease in safety behaviors and 68 percent observed no changes.

- One in four said they refused to drive less-well-maintained vehicles since the CSA program began in December.

- More than 83 percent expected the CSA program to exacerbate the driver shortage.

- About 25 percent expected take-home pay to be reduced as a result of CSA, while 20 percent expected pay to increase.

The survey also identified a number of myths with CSA.

For example, 77 percent incorrectly believed that a trucking company inherits past violations from new hires, and 72 percent erroneously believed FMCSA can revoke a commercial driver license as a result of CSA. However, the FMCSA is seeking changes that would allow it to disqualify drivers using the CSA system.

In addition, 68 percent of drivers incorrectly believed that CSA takes into account a driver's personal driving record.

Conversely, more than 95 percent realized that all violations — and not just out-of-service violations — count against drivers and carriers under CSA, and 82 percent were aware a carrier cannot remove violations simply by firing the responsible driver.

"Clearly, CSA still represents a new and challenging government program, with varying degrees of understanding," the survey concluded.

Five pitfalls of a family-owned business

NEW YORK — A family-owned business, big or small, carries a lot of positives: stability, flexibility, shared commitment and the like.

But whether you're together on a company board of directors, or in a small office with a one-bay bus garage out back, there are minefields every family-owned business needs to avoid.

Katie Morell discusses common mistakes in an article on

American Express' Open Forum. Here are her watchouts:

1. Mixing work and personal matters: Respect each other's boundaries, and don't drag up an old issue from your personal life and drop it in a meeting at work.

2. Taking work home: While it's one thing to mention schedules or reminders, you should declare most work-related issues off-limits at home.

3. Assuming your kids will

want to join the business: Maybe they will, maybe they won't. Let the choice be theirs when they're old enough to decide.

4. Feeling entitled to a job: Make sure all employees — family and nonrelatives — understand that positions are filled based on ability, not last name.

5. Keeping loose financial arrangements: Better to put all major agreements in writing than to rely on memory.

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UMA, NTA develop plans for co-locating annual events

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Members of the United Motorcoach and National Tour associations will be doing much more than just rubbing shoulders when they hold their big annual meetings at the same location for the first time in 2013.

They'll also be sharing educational seminars, taking part in joint panel discussions, dining together, and combining celebrations of their previous year's accomplishments.

A joint task force planning the first integrated gathering of the two organizations agreed at a meeting here to open all education sessions to members of both associations and combine their major evening events — UMA's Vision Awards Banquet and NTA's Gala Reception.

The action is aimed at helping create a co-mingled networking opportunity for members of both trade groups and building better understanding of the unique dynamics of the tour and motorcoach businesses.

"We discussed the nuances of each association's membership very thoughtfully and were able to firm up many of the key details to make sure our NTA and UMA

event is useful, relevant and fun for everyone," said task force chairman Michael Neustadt of Coach Tours in Connecticut and a UMA board member.

UMA Chairman Tom Ready of Ready Bus Lines in Minnesota emphasized that a substantial amount of progress has been made toward creating an overall event that will benefit every attendee, while assuring that the core values and essence of the NTA- and UMA-respective events are maintained.

"Not only will the business and networking events be great for all attendees, but we'll have a chance to learn more, too," added NTA's Chair and Chief Executive Cathy

Greteman of Star Destinations in Iowa.

The initial jointly-conducted meetings in 2013 in Orlando, Fla., will be the first of three approved by the boards of the two associations. The two groups also will conduct jointly-located annual meetings in 2014 and 2015.

Meantime, talks that might have led to the American Bus Association combining or jointly locating its annual Marketplace with NTA and UMA have been put on hold.

Officials of the ABA, who were engaged in months-long discussions with the NTA and occasionally the UMA, said they could restart talks at some future date but

currently are not pursuing any plans to link their shows.

"Everybody is interested but nobody is doing anything right now," said Peter Pantuso, president and chief executive of ABA.

Surveys and anecdotal information has indicated widespread support among members of the three organizations — as well as most motorcoach and group travel industry vendors — for an annual three-way event.

Many of these individuals and companies take part in more than one of the groups' shows each year and they have shown strong support for some sort of co-locating or combining of programs that would

save them substantial travel, time and exhibition expenses.

While discussions among the associations have been going on periodically for months, they apparently ended when NTA decided it could not make a joint show work and put the idea on hold.

It informed its members it was suspending the discussions.

ABA told its members it was willing to continue the talks but it expressed concern that it was not part of the earlier agreement that is bring together the NTA and UMA shows after next year.

"ABA is more than happy to engage in future discussions of a single show, but if there are to be future discussions of a combined show, ABA will be an equal partner in those discussions from the inception, not an add-on to a framework that has already been created by the other parties," ABA Chairman Jim Jalbert told ABA members.

Added UMA Chairman Ready: "If NTA could get into a comfortable situation with ABA joining our group, it would be great. We're wide open; our board is more than wide open to it. We're ready to make it a bigger and better show — at any time."

UMA affirms value of Michelin tire program

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — With tire manufacturers raising prices, some by double-digit amounts, the United Motorcoach Association is reminding its members it offers a program that provides discounts to purchasers of Michelin tires.

"While Michelin has recently seen significant price increases due to an increase in the cost of raw materials and current market conditions, please be assured that they are

still offering a discounted tire buying program for UMA members," said UMA Marketing and Membership Director Michele Nosko.

To take advantage of the Michelin discount, members must contact Sheila Taylor at Michelin North America at (864) 458-6034 to let her know which dealer the member will be visiting to discuss tire purchases.

Taylor will contact the dealer

to assure the UMA member receives the discounted UMA price.

Ambest to offer Michelins

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — Ambest Service Centers announced it will begin offering Michelin- and BFGoodrich-branded products at its 68 centers in 30 states.

Ambest locations also will offer emergency road service at many of the locations.



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Alberta deregulates intercity service, '60s rules tossed

EDMONTON, Alberta — In two weeks, this western Canadian province is deregulating its private intercity bus industry.

The regulated system that has been in place since the 1960s is giving way to an “open market” that officials believe will ultimately result in better service but in the short run appears will create service shortfalls and dislocations.

“This is about putting in place the tools necessary for a flexible and responsive bussing system for all Albertans,” said Luke Ouellette, Alberta’s minister of transportation.

“An open market for bus service supports free enterprise, removes barriers for service providers, fosters competition, and gives service providers the flexibility to respond to their customers’ needs,” Ouellette added. Under Alberta’s 50-year-old regulated system, the province required carriers to maintain minimum service levels and provide service to rural or remote communities in exchange for limiting competition on the carrier’s routes.

Officials, perhaps belatedly, have realized that such a system is no longer economically viable. It risked carriers ceasing operations in Alberta and communities losing service.

Under the system that goes into effect Oct. 1, there will be no required minimum service levels, nor will any carrier have protected rights to any route.

The new approach is designed to give carriers the freedom to make decisions “in the best interests of their business and their customers,” say provincial officials.

It is seen as providing more opportunity for new carriers to provide services. It also will likely

Distracted driving targeted in Alberta

EDMONTON, Alberta — The most comprehensive distracted driving legislation in Canada has gone into effect in Alberta.

Among other things, it bans applying lipstick or shaving while driving.

The law prohibits the use of hand-held cell phones for talking or texting, the use of other electronic devices, reading, writing, and personal grooming while driving.

Drivers can use cell phones or radio communication devices but only if they use them in a hands-free or voice-activated mode.

More information about the law, including a fact sheet, is available at www.transportation.alberta.ca/distracteddriving.htm

result in some new regional services by public transit agencies.

“Safety will not be compromised,” said Ouellette. “Carriers have to operate safe vehicles, have properly licensed drivers, have the appropriate insurance coverage, and are subject to commercial vehicle inspection requirements.”

In advance of the deregulation, Greyhound Canada announced it’s cutting back service across Alberta as of Oct. 24. A combination of 12 routes in northern and central Alberta will be impacted by the cuts.

Tom Olsen, a spokesman for Greyhound, said the company was losing \$7.5 million annually running

nearly empty buses on the Alberta routes that are being cancelled.

“People who use the service really need it,” observed Mayor Terry Yemen of Drumheller, Ontario, a community of 8,000 about 70 miles northeast of Calgary.

But, noted the mayor, “there may be an increase in other com-

panies’ services.”

The expectation is that deregulation will encourage smaller carriers to fill the gaps and provide service to the province’s smaller communities.

Go to www.transportation.alberta.ca/499.htm for more information about the changes.

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Charters provided by Seattle transit

SEATTLE — The only public transit agency in the U.S. that's exempt from the federal charter service rule is providing charter service for University of Washington and Seattle Seahawk football games again this season.

The King County Metro shuttles will operate at all Washington Husky and Seahawk home games.

King County Metro was exempted from the federal charter service rule, which prohibits public transit agencies from supplying charters that private operators could provide, thanks to a special provision inserted into a U.S. Department of Transportation funding measure by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., chairwoman of the Senate subcommittee on transportation, housing and urban development.

The motorcoach industry sued to have the so-called Murray Amendment declared unconstitutional but lost at the U.S. Court of Appeals level. (See July 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

This year's King County Metro football charters kicked off early this month at the University of Washington-Eastern Washington game.

BANY meeting to feature New York DOT official

ALBANY, N.Y. — The commissioner of the New York State Department of Transportation will be the headline speaker at the annual meeting of the Bus Association of New York here next month.

BANY will conduct its Annual Meeting and Marketplace on Oct. 23-25, at the Albany Marriott Hotel. More than 100 individuals are expected to attend.

NYSDOT Commissioner Joan McDonald will address the group Monday evening, Oct. 24. She's expected to discuss New York's stepped-up safety enforcement program. (See Sept. 1 and Aug. 15 issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Association President Godfrey LeBron said BANY has "put together a top-notch program for this year's meeting, with workshops geared to-

ward the safety and compliance issues we all face, social media networking and how it provides us all the opportunity to stay informed, and programming that takes the guesswork out of what the tour planner looks for when building their itineraries for travel groups."

The event also will feature a display of top-of-the-line buses and coaches, as well as exhibits from a

variety of industry vendors.

"Of course, networking opportunities abound, so attendees can share information and the occasional 'war story' with colleagues throughout the three-day program," said LeBron.

Information about the event, as well as contact information for the association, can be found at www.BANYBus.org.

Georgia, South Carolina operators vamp Savannah

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The first-ever joint meeting of the Georgia Motorcoach Operators Association and the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina appears to have produced lots of positives, including a positive impact on Savannah.

Georgia and Carolina operators, along with representatives from industry vendors, suppliers, attractions and destinations made up the 425 people who attended the meeting at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront late last month.

The Georgia Motorcoach Operators and the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina combined their meetings this year in a bid to save the attendees money and time.

They talked about safety, legislation and regulations and also checked to see what the Savannah area offered motorcoach travelers.

The motorcoach operators are important because they make decisions that either bring tourists to Savannah or send them elsewhere, Joe Marinelli, president of Visit Savannah, told the *Savannah Morning News*.

The attendees went on tours, ate at local restaurants and visited attractions, gaining first-hand knowledge about Savannah and environs.

"Group tour business fills a lot of seats on trolley tours and restaurants around town, as well as filling many of the smaller and mid-size hotels," Marinelli said.

"This conference gives our members the opportunity to showcase their products to operators from around the region."

Linda Morris, executive director of the Georgia and South Carolina groups, said she expected the repercussions — for Savannah — from the conference to be huge.

The attendees had a positive experience in Savannah and were thrilled with their reception, Bob Garrett, president of the South Carolina association, and Georgia group president Walter Hubbard told the *Savannah News*.

The meeting included product displays, including new motorcoaches.

Kelly Tours, a Garden City,

Ga.-based operator, used the conference to take delivery of a \$500,000-plus coach from Motor Coach Industries.

Kelly Tours president Don Adams said the coach is one of three added to his business in the past couple of months, bringing the total number in his fleet to eight.

The company, which is in its 16th year, has had "steady and increasing" business throughout the recession, though Adams said margins were impacted by higher fuel prices.

Adams said the company has added more than 30 full- and part-time jobs in the past two years, boosting its overall employment to more than 50.

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Midwest association announces first meeting, website

MIDDLETON, Wis. — The Midwest Bus and Motorcoach Association has set a date for its first annual meeting/convention, and established a website.

The association, which was formed during the past year by operators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan and Missouri, will conduct its initial major function Nov. 9-10 at the Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel in Lisle, Ill., a west Chicago suburb near the junction of Interstates 88 and 355.

Among the scheduled events for the meeting/convention will be the election of officers for the board of directors and planning for the future of the group.

Representatives from the Unit-

ed Motorcoach and American Bus associations, as well as the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, are expected to speak at the event.

While the initial meeting/convention will be in Illinois, future versions of the get-together will

rotate among the five member states.

Meanwhile, the group's executive director, Cherie Houser, announced the establishment of a website for the organization, which can be found at www.mbmca.org.

The site contains background

about the association and its goals; membership, meeting, and contact information; industry and association news, and links to key industry groups. Eventually, job opportunities and help-wanted ads will be posted.

Houser also has developed a

membership brochure, and is recruiting members and seeking sponsors for the annual meeting and other activities.

For more information about the association, contact Houser by email at cherie@mbmca.org, or call (608) 354-7110.

Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2011

25-28 South Central Motorcoach Association Annual Meeting, Hyatt Place in the Stockyards, Fort Worth, Texas. Info: www.southcentralmotorcoach.org.

OCTOBER 2011

3-5 APTA Expo 2011, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans. Info: www.aptaexpo.com.

11-12 Northwest Motorcoach Association Convention & Roadeo, Pasco, Wash. Info: www.nwmotorcoach.com.

21-26 Busworld Kortrijk 2011, Kortrijk, Belgium. Info: www.busworld.org.

22-25 California Bus Association 38th Annual Convention & Trade Show, Hyatt Regency Monterey Resort & Spa, Monterey, Calif. Info: www.cbabus.com.

23-25 Bus Association of New York 2011 Marketplace, Albany, N.Y. Info: Email BANY@BANYBus.org, or go to www.BANYBus.org.

NOVEMBER 2011

6-9 2011 Ontario Motor Coach Association Conference and Marketplace, Windsor, Ontario. Info: www.omca.com, or call (416) 229-6622.

8 Trans-Expo, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Ontario. Info: www.cutaactu.ca.

8-9 Sleep Apnea & Multi-Modal Transportation Conference 2011, Sheraton Baltimore City Center, Baltimore. Info: www.samtc2011.org.

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Double-deck coach orders reflective of megabus growth

Easily the most astounding aspect of the motorcoach industry during the past four to five years has been the phenomenal growth of the curbside companies operating in the eastern half of the U.S. and into Canada.

Consider for a moment the growth of the sector's biggest player, megabus.com.

Four years ago this month, megabus began introducing double-decker Van Hool coaches into its nascent service in the Midwest. With an initial order of 17 Van Hool TD925s, megabus initiated the first double-decker intercity service in the U.S.

The first run of a bright-blue, dual-deck megabus in the U.S. was in early September 2007, between Chicago and Minneapolis.

Today, four years on, megabus has a fleet of about 155 double-decker Van Hools in a network that has spread to states in the Northeast, New England, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-South and South, as well as Canada.

Another 31 of the 83-seat coaches are on their way to megabus' fleet.

The total of 186 coaches repre-

sents an investment of upwards of \$110 million.

It is little wonder then that Belgium's Prince Philippe and his wife, Princess Mathilde, hosted a formal reception earlier this summer at which representatives of U.S. companies that are major buyers of Belgium-made products were honored.

Top executives of megabus were on the guest list.

Van Hool double-decker coaches are produced at a sprawling factory in the small community of Koningshooikt, near Lier, Belgium.

The prince came to the U.S. as part of an economic mission to promote Belgian business alliances. The reception he attended was conducted at the residence of the Belgian ambassador to the U.S.

Principals from Coach USA, parent company of megabus.com; Van Hool, and ABC Companies, which imports and distributes Van Hools in North America, participated in a signing ceremony, marking the on-going trade agreement between Coach USA and Van Hool.

Representing ABC Companies at the event was top executive



Participating in the signing ceremony were, seated from left, Filip Van Hool, Dale Moser of Coach USA/megabus, and Dane Cornell of ABC Cos. Standing are Jay Oakman of ABC, left, and John Oakman of Coach USA/megabus.

Dane Cornell, his wife Judy, and sales executive Jay Oakman. Coach USA Chief Operating Officer Dale Moser and Senior Vice President John Oakman represented Coach USA/megabus. And Filip Van Hool, his wife Benedicte, and Hugo De Roo, represented Van Hool NV.

"We were extremely honored to be a part of this vital economic mission," said Cornell, president and CEO of ABC. "The signing and reception afforded all parties the opportunity to celebrate the mutually successful partnerships directly driven by ABC and Van Hool's unique and long-standing

American-Belgian alliance."

Judging by industry reports, the prince may be back for an encore.

megabus reportedly is planning to order at least 90 more of the double-decker Van Hools. Such an order would push megabus' total investment in the dual-deck coaches to around \$165 million.

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Insurance, little black-boxes and lowering expectations

By J.R. Buzzell

Comlink GPS Tracking Systems LLC

A recent nightmare, where high-tech sales zombies, waiving flyers for a "Telematics in Insurance Symposium" and moaning "diss-countss," struck a little too close to home.

Television inundates us daily with auto insurance ads offering "good-driver discounts" — if we install a vehicle tracker.

Vendors claim anticipated discounts, justifying their cost.

Lulled into misperception, we envision the latest vehicle technology compensating for bad drivers and operators. More importantly, we demand our discount.

Occasionally, I have to step back and remember what's being underwritten — companies and coaches. Drivers and actions are management's responsibility.

The error, while understandable, is viewing technology as a failsafe for thinking and management. It doesn't work that way.

Technology is a tool management uses to better protect passengers, other people and, finally, property. Effectively using these tools requires both effort and investment.

Please do not hear me say:

Insurance rates

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

school bus accidents so far this year.

"That's the most since World War II and the year isn't over yet," O'Neill noted.

He said that when claims for those accidents work their way through the system and checks start to be written, it will further reinforce the need for an increase in premiums.

A big jolt will come from reinsurers, which will be paying out the bulk of the settlements, and likely will raise their rates to make up for the projected huge payouts.

"It takes time for the severity to catch up with the system and the losses to reach the reinsurers, but when they do it will accelerate a contracting of the market," said O'Neill.

He suggested, too, that because reinsurers cover all types of insurance, recent natural disasters also are straining their finances and that will add to their reasons for increasing their rates to insurance companies.

Another key driver behind the possible rate increases for motorcoach operators is that much of the soft market of the past few years has been fueled by new insurance companies that undercut the rates of established companies, but now are expected to begin exiting the

"Safety at any price."

Cost matters. Seatbelts and roll bars save lives — and carry significant costs. They also illustrate an important consideration. Before they provide real benefit, an "event" has already occurred.

Technology, too, carries costs. But if designed, implemented and used effectively, the event is eliminated. The key is to focus on the decisions and actions leading up to the event — before it ever happens. Continued over time, this will impact our premiums.

So, how does technology eliminate these near-misses? It doesn't — people do. Again, we've fallen into the trap of viewing technology as a "failsafe" for bad decisions/actions, which, of course, is the real issue.

Granted, there are true "accidents" and mechanical failures, but the overwhelming majority of events are caused by poor judgment and/or action.

We may categorize them as negligence, fatigue, aggressiveness or carelessness, but ultimately we simply need to eliminate or at least change them.

History is our best indicator of where these actions and "non-events" will likely occur. Statisti-

market.

"I expect some of them to be out of the market soon because they are writing low and they can't do that in the long term," says Silvestro.

She notes one company operated this year at a ratio of 169 and, in a recent quarterly report to insurance authorities, said it lost \$27 million.

O'Neill agrees that the new insurance companies have helped to hold down the rates of all insurers with deeply discounted rates and that they will not be able to survive in the market.

"They won't be able to keep it up and they won't last," he said.

While Silvestro and O'Neill are firm about premiums going up soon for motorcoach operators, they stress that the increases will not impact all carriers the same.

They said premiums will continue to be priced individually with safety records, hiring practices and a number of other important management and operational practices playing crucial roles in determining rates.

And that practice could help shape what the industry looks like down the road.

"We all want to write only the better companies and better businesses, and that means poorly run motorcoach companies are going to become an endangered species," suggested O'Neill.

cally, the more "near-misses" a driver has, the more likely he or she is to have an accident — and, therefore, by the same token, a major accident.

Doesn't it make sense to point technology at that history and provide warnings of patterns? Better yet, tell me as it's occurring.

Certain technologies excel at capturing, measuring and analyzing information. We must simply apply it correctly.

A good video system documents an event for detailed analysis.

A good safety system captures deviations from sound driving prac-

tices (e.g. rapid lane changes; where; how often, and which driver).

It sounds like they do the same thing — until you ask who's paying someone to sit through all those videos, to proactively categorize and analyze them?

We need to manage to the "non-event." Consistent behaviors predate most accidents: speeding, tailgating, poor lane-selection, lane-hopping, and the like.

We have the capability to capture and analyze these actions, or at the very least, indicators of these actions. Histories highlight these dangerous trends and can (should)

be used to quantify risk and our effectiveness in addressing that risk. The ball is now firmly in our court — we are accountable.

Why not lower our expectations?

Our responsibility is zero events — not a single one. That may be idealistic, but that's where we aim. The technology already exists, and it doesn't have to be exorbitantly complex or expensive.

If we step back and embrace this ideal, we will manage to it. If we do not, the alternative is to put on a yoke and let others dictate how we're driven.



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Driver is charged with manslaughter in fatal N.Y. crash

NEW YORK CITY — The driver in a highly-publicized motorcoach crash in the Bronx that killed 15 people was sleep-deprived and driving recklessly when he lost control of the bus, prosecutors charged late last month.

Ophadell Williams, 40, of Brooklyn was charged with manslaughter and other criminal charges in a 55-count indictment.

"This was not a mere accident," Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson said. "It was a serious criminal act, and that is what we intend to show."

Williams pleaded not guilty and was ordered held on \$250,000 bail.

Williams was at the wheel of a bus making a return trip to New York from a Connecticut casino in March when it flipped on its side and slide into a metal stanchion that sliced through the coach.

Federal investigators say Williams was driving at 78 miles per hour. The speed limit was 55 mph.

Williams has denied falling asleep while driving, and has said the crash was caused when a passing tractor-trailer clipped the bus.

2011 Bus Security Grants

Alabama	Royal Charters Inc.	\$9,000	Michigan	Yankee Trails World Travel	\$43,977	
Camelot Limousine			Blue Lakes Charters/Tour. . .	\$5,000		
Charters & Tours	\$12,000		Compass Coach Inc.	\$44,183	Pennsylvania	
Thrasher Brothers			Indian Trails Inc.	\$61,468	David Thomas Tours Inc. . .	\$115,189
Trailways	\$61,144				Frank Martz Coach Co. . .	\$159,137
Kelton Tours Unlimited . . .	\$50,885		Minnesota		Fullington Auto Bus Co. . .	\$164,711
Kingdom Coach	\$30,375		Northfield Lines Inc.	\$38,700	Myers Coach Lines Inc. . .	\$10,418
Southern Coaches Inc. . . .	\$48,510		Tourco Travel Inc.	\$15,000	Susquehanna Trailways . .	\$11,550
			Trobec's Bus Service.	\$34,470	Rhode Island	
Arkansas					Flagship Trailways	\$15,627
Little Rock Tours	\$17,955		Missouri		South Carolina	
			USA Tours Inc.	\$13,012	June Bus Tours LLC	\$12,000
Arizona			White Knight Coaches . . .	\$42,360		
All Aboard America	\$37,103		Montana		Texas	
Tour West America	\$16,935		Rimrock Stages Inc.	\$35,168	Arrow Trailways of Texas. .	\$11,550
					Autobuses Ejecutivos LLC. .	\$90,465
California			North Carolina		Coach America	\$415,563
Silver State Coach Inc. . . .	\$40,548		Burke International Tours .	\$64,367	Eagle Tours Inc.	\$11,550
Silverado Stages	\$38,220		Sunway Charters	\$35,325	Gotta Go Express	
					Trailways	\$23,376
Connecticut			Nebraska		Greyhound Lines Inc. . .	\$1,075,000
DATTCO Inc.	\$148,504		Arrow Stage Lines	\$55,528	HME Executive Coach Inc..	\$60,075
					Sierra Stage Coaches Inc.	\$24,413
Florida			New Hampshire			
A Candies Coachworks Inc. .	\$5,250		C & J Trailways	\$21,625	Virginia	
AAA Limo Inc.	\$6,705				James River Bus Lines . . .	\$62,325
Astro Travel and Tours Inc. .	\$28,575		New Jersey		Venture Tours Inc.	\$38,700
Empire Coach Line Inc. . . .	\$30,825		Academy Express LLC . .	\$108,780	Winn Bus Lines Inc.	\$19,194
Express Transportation Inc. .	\$50,566		Coach USA Inc.	\$197,100		
Magic Carpet Ride	\$17,325		Panorama Tours Inc.	\$13,500	Vermont	
Space Tours LLC	\$12,000				Premier Coach Company. .	\$69,750
Travel Lovers Tours.	\$12,000		Nevada		Wisconsin	
			Celebrity Coaches of Amer.	\$29,887	Badger Coaches Inc.	\$84,15
Georgia					Great Escapes Tours &	\$23,626
Samson Trailways	\$39,825		New York		Travel Ltd.	\$104,587
			Coastal Charter Service . .	\$20,250		
Iowa			Great Escapes Tours &		Riteway Bus Service Inc. .	\$16,813
Burlington Stage Lines . .	\$127,811		Travel Ltd.	\$104,587		

Security grants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

others have been able to sustain it for nearly 10 years may augur for

its survival, however.

Under current funding regulations, the bus grants are awarded to companies that operate fixed-route intercity bus services to areas con-

sidered at high risk of a terrorist attack, and to charter operators that make at least 50 trips annually to one or more of those same areas.

Funding is divided into two

tiers, with companies that have at least 250 buses in one category and those with fewer than 250 in the other. (See accompanying list of 2011 grant recipients.)

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No. 1 way to make a really bad first impression: Be late

By *Dave Millhouser*

Stop me if you've heard this one before:

A driver for GBB (Great Big Busline) decides to start his own charter service.

This entrepreneurial soul figures he can hold his costs down by using GBB's buses. He'll simply pick one off the "ready line" every time he has a charter.

Heck, they're just sitting there, fueled, cleaned and serviced. Why waste such a valuable resource?

His plan works fine for months. He shows up in uniform and his passengers all assume they're chartering from GBB.

Then, one day, he's late for a charter, and his customer is concerned enough to call GBB, asking when the coach would arrive.

You guessed it...someone in operations cleverly figures out they don't have a charter that day. They also remember that GBB runs scheduled service, and virtually no charters, and voila — an explanation for the buses that drivers couldn't find in recent months.

So, the driver/would-be-charter operator won an all-expenses paid holiday in the entrepreneurs section of the Greybar Hotel.

All because he was late.

Survey after survey tells us that nothing frosts the bussy public more than a coach that's late. It's bad enough when a line bus runs behind schedule, but there are often factors that can't be controlled. There is no excuse for a bus STARTING its run late, or missing the spot time for a charter.

It sends a message to the customer that their time is less important than the bus company's, and can induce panic when scheduled events are at risk. The customer picked the start time for a reason.

There are so many things in transportation that are hard to control but "showing up" isn't one of them.

Drivers need to turn up at your garage early enough to easily make it to their pickup on time (and they should have a fairly clear idea where it is). If a driver can't show up on time, how the heck* can you trust them with your coach and

your passengers?

If it's a new or unusual pickup spot, allow extra time, or scope it out in advance.

On the rare occasion when a driver really can't make it, clear lines of communication need to be established, so the customer never sees the hiccup. A meteor striking the driver's car is a reasonable excuse for an absence, but not for failing to let the appropriate person know.

Buses that are ready to go should be...ready to go. No surprises when the driver leaps into the seat.

With modern technology like GPS and cell phones, we need to do a good, honest job of keeping the customer informed about where their coach is. The only thing worse than knowing it's late...is NOT knowing it's late (is it coming at all?).

Getting this right starts with management letting everyone in the company know that, other than cherishing safety, being on time may be the most important thing your business does. It may involve

some personal sacrifice at times.

It involves maintenance and operations being crafty enough to have sufficient roadworthy buses in place. When that's going to be a problem, it's better to know sooner rather than later. Depending on the size of the company, spare buses and drivers can be part of a plan, but no matter what...there must be a plan.

Don't farm work to companies that aren't as reliable as yours because you're going to be blamed for their flubs.

Showing up late is almost unforgivable; giving the appearance that it doesn't matter is akin to slapping a customer in the face. A driver saying..."I'd have been here on time but the first three buses they gave me wouldn't start" won't help (whether it's true or not).

It doesn't matter how well the rest of the journey goes, the atmosphere is poisoned if the trip starts late.

Years ago I dated a woman (BEFORE I was married; Susan won't allow it anymore). She had a responsible job, and was, in my view,

gifted (I sense you asking... why she was dating me?).

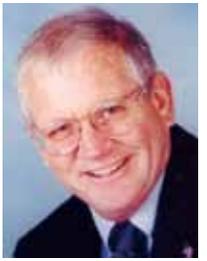
When I told her she was talented, she said "No, I'm not...I'm just reliable, and do what I say I'm going to do." Although I cling to the belief that she was gifted, it's a commentary on our times that reliability really has become a "talent."

Most of us will never have the gift necessary to hit a Major League curve ball but, with effort, anyone can be talented enough to show up on time.

Woody Allen got it right when he said "80 percent of success is showing up".

*Actually meant "hell," but I'm not sure if I'm allowed to say that.

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



Dave Millhouser

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'A Gathering of Buses'

HIBBING, Minn. — Upwards of 300 people and more than a dozen new and vintage buses made their way to Hibbing last month for "A Gathering of Buses," a convention of bus enthusiasts from across the U.S. and Canada.

Hibbing is home to the Greyhound Bus Museum, the only free-standing bus museum in America, which served as the focal point for the three-day event.

The museum houses a collection of 18 restored Greyhound buses, plus displays, a theater

and a gift shop.

Activities during the Gathering included museum tours, a flea market, a sightseeing bus tour of the area, opportunities for attendees to visit, and a dinner.

During the dinner, Greg Dots-eth of ABC Companies gave away cash and other prizes; Mark Stenz of Daimler Buses North America provided door prizes, and Janet Wotring of model bus-and-memorabilia marketer Royal Coach Bus gave away goodies.

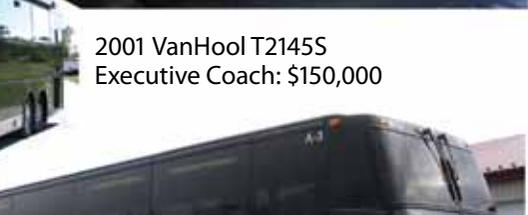
Among the buses driven to Hibbing were the stunning 1947

GM Silversides, at right, owned by SouthWest Transit of Eden Prairie, Minn.; the 1970 MC7, bottom right, owned by Richfield Bus Co. of Rochester, Minn., and a new Setra TopClass S 417 parked between a vintage GM 4501 Scenicruiser owned by John Hotvet of Minneapolis and a new Greyhound Lines' MCI D4505.

The Gathering was organized by Stan Holter of Richfield Bus Co., Charles Wotring of Royal Coach Bus, and Gene Micoletti, founder and director of the Greyhound Museum.



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Researchers try simple test for sleep apnea in drivers

SOMERVILLE, Mass. — Researchers at the Harvard Medical School say a simple, 10-minute test holds promise for quickly identifying drivers needing urgent evaluation for sleep apnea before being qualified or re-qualified as commercial vehicle drivers.

Obstructive sleep apnea is the most common medical cause of excessive daytime sleepiness and is associated with a two- to seven-fold increase in the risk of motor vehicle crashes.

In a new study published online by the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, researchers from the Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health investigated whether a recognized research tool, known as the psychomotor vigilance test, could be used as a screening tool to identify drivers at high risk for obstructive sleep apnea and excessive daytime sleepiness.

The psychomotor vigilance test is a 10-minute evaluation of attention, alertness and reaction time. The test, which can be accomplished during a short visit to a medical office, requires only brief instruction; is performed on portable, hand-held computers, and has output that can be easily and quickly read and interpreted.

Because the major predominant risk factor for obstructive sleep apnea is obesity, the prevalence of the condition among commercial drivers (where as many as 40-50 percent are considered obese) is considerably higher than in the general population.

“Our goal is to develop objective screening methods beyond obesity, for obstructive sleep apnea, to be used in occupational health settings,” said the study’s senior author, Stefanos N. Kales, MD, division chief and medical director of Employee and Industrial Medicine at Cambridge Health Alliance.

“Subjective reports of excessive daytime sleepiness are notoriously unreliable, especially during fitness-for-work examinations. And, obesity in isolation, as a screen has generated resistance from many drivers.”

In the study, commercial drivers and emergency responders undergoing occupational examinations took a 10-minute psychomotor vigilance test and were instructed to achieve their fastest possible reaction times.

Participants with discrete patterns of delayed reaction times were categorized as “microsleepers.” The results revealed that among 193 male participants, 15 microsleepers (8 percent) were identified. Microsleepers were

significantly more obese than other participants.

The abnormal alertness and reaction time patterns detected by the psychomotor vigilance test were found almost exclusively among obese men whose body composition puts them at high risk for obstructive sleep apnea. Moreover, the psychomotor vigilance test seems to detect people likely to suf-

fer from excessive daytime sleepiness based on other research that has suggested that longer lapses in reaction time are highly likely to identify drivers experiencing eye closure, as opposed to simple distraction from the test.

Eye closures while on task are consistent with microsleeps.

“This novel use of the psychomotor vigilance test is extremely

promising as a potential, 10-minute frontline check for sleepiness accomplished at professional drivers’ federally-mandated licensing exams, similar to vision and hearing screens common in current use,” said Dr. Kales, who serves as an associate professor at both the Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health.

If the method and reaction time

criteria are refined and validated in this setting, the psychomotor vigilance test can be used to identify drivers needing urgent sleep evaluation before being qualified to continue as commercial drivers, she added.

To learn more about the study, contact David Cecere at Cambridge Health Alliance. Email dcecere@challiance.org.

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Hurricane Irene

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

smoothly," she said. "We were very impressed with all of the operators."

Carey International of Washington D.C., also rounded up a large number of coaches, but there was nothing for many of them to do.

Fabulous Coach Lines of Bradford, Fla., was asked by Carey to place coaches at assisted-living facilities in South Carolina and Pennsylvania, but they were not used and after three days of sitting were sent back to Florida.

"We expected more work but we are pleased with the small bit we did," said company spokeswoman Laura Fowler Goss.

Stout's Transportation was among those that did get work, according to manager Marjorie Kunkle. The carrier was contracted by New Jersey to move U.S. Coast Guard personnel to an inland military base, and to transport residents of two senior-living centers to safer facilities.

Also, Newton Bus Service of Gloucester, Va., got multiple jobs from the storm, said owner Warren Newton. It evacuated patients from a hospital in West Virginia, transported military personnel to safe locations, and ran several Richmond, Va.-to-New York commuter trips for Greyhound Lines.

After the storm it shuttled utility repair crews to and from work sites.

Tom McCaughey of Flagship

Trailways in Rhode Island, and immediate-past president of the New England Bus Association, said a number of association members were placed on call and some did storm-related jobs.

He said his company was among those hired to shuttle repair crews after the hurricane blew itself out.

Location, location, location

James Kelton of Kelton Tours and chairman of the Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators Advisory Evacuation Committee said his group was not activated to help with storm work, although some individual member-carriers in Virginia were used for evacuations.

"They have such an extensive mass transportation system on the East Coast that we really did not expect to be called upon," he said, noting that the committee has been used to help with emergencies on the Gulf Coast where there are fewer mass transit services available.

Although most operators were pleased to get the storm-related work, they indicated it likely was not enough to make up for the business many of them lost as a result of the hurricane.

"We got some work but lost work, too, and that was tough," emphasized Stout.

McCaughey said his company was part of a 60-coach charter that was put together by Trailways to transport people from New York to Washington D.C., for the dedication of the Martin Luther King Jr. memo-

rial, but the hurricane forced cancellation of the ceremony and trip.

"They pulled the plug on that and then just about all of our other charter work tanked, too," he said. "The utility work we got helped a little bit, though."

'We got some work but lost work, too, and that was tough.'

Intercity carriers hit

Also hit hard were carriers that provide line-run service between major East Coast cities and those that operate daily shuttles to casinos in Atlantic City, N.J., and gambling venues in other states.

Greyhound and BoltBus, which Greyhound co-owns with Peter Pan Bus Lines, shut down most of its service in the area for two full days and part of a third day. "As a precaution, we terminated our runs across the Northeast," said spokesman Timothy Stokes.

Dale Moser of megabus.com said all service from its hubs in New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., south to the Carolinas and north to New England, also was halted for two days.

The carriers reportedly got a surge of business shortly after resuming service when Amtrak announced that flooding, debris and power issues made it impossible to immediately resume train service in

the Northeast Corridor.

"During the past couple of days we have seen an increase in passenger activity throughout the Northeast," said Stokes. "We have seen in the past, when Amtrak or other transportation carriers are not operating due to circumstances such as weather, Greyhound sees a lot of those passengers utilize Greyhound service."

Weekend business lost

Susie Turner of Sheppard Bus in Millville, N.J., said her company was notified on Friday that the casinos were being closed because of the storm. "We lost the entire weekend," she noted. "It came at a bad time, but any time is a bad time."

Sunshine Travel in Boston said it was able to send two buses to the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut on one day, but had to cancel others that were scheduled to go the following day.

Also, JRB Coach Lines in New Hampshire was prepared to make its regular run to the Mohegan Sun on one day, but riders apparently thought better and no one signed up for the trip.

The storm also forced carriers to close their offices because of storm damage, electrical outages and flooding.

Hampton Jitney in New York was shut down for the weekend after its office lost electricity, telephone and internet service. Spokeswoman Carly Shephard said the company's buses were not damaged by the

storm.

The 160-year-old building that houses Sugar Tours in Wilmington, Vt., was badly damaged by flood waters that also made most of the town inaccessible.

"It looks like World War III," said owner Chris Donnelly, who is worried about the 80 groups that have booked fall foliage tours with his company.

What about fall tours?

Greg Gerdel of the Vermont Department of Tourism said several of the traditional routes for the seasonal foliage tours have been closed and will require repairs before they can be opened.

"These are primary highways for Vermont and their repair will be a priority," he said. "Our expectation is that most areas and roads will be passable by the time the leaves begin to change."

He said operators planning to bring tours to the state can get up-to-date road closure information at the department's website at www.511vt.com and on its Facebook page.

The storm possibly could speed up plans by some motorcoach associations to develop procedures for quickly rounding up coaches for storms and other emergencies.

Andrea C. Malamut, executive director of the Greater New Jersey organization, said her group plans to discuss possible ideas at a previously scheduled meeting this month.

"Irene just came too soon," she said.

'Regen' crash

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as "passive regeneration."

However, in some stop-and-go driving and other situations, the system requires "active regeneration" to clean itself. Active regeneration can occur while the vehicle is being driven but, at times, when the driving cycle is insufficient for in-transit regeneration, stationary active regeneration is required.

Plenty of warning

Detroit Diesel said there are a series of dashboard signals well in advance of a final directive requiring that a coach be parked to perform an active regeneration.

The manufacturer stressed — in a written response to inquires about the procedure — that while during most driving conditions the regeneration process occurs without any driver intervention, there are times when the coach must be stopped for it to perform properly.

"In this situation, the dash communication to the driver provides increasing levels of awareness over an extended period of

time to ensure that the driver finds safe harbor," the company said.

The engine maker noted that the series of dash-light warnings can last between 5½ and 12 hours before a stationary regeneration must be performed, giving a driver ample time to find a safe location in which to park. The time variation is due to driving and engine conditions and other factors.

What the driver did

The upstate New York incident occurred when a driver for Farr's Coach Lines of Dunnville, Ontario, stopped his coach alongside the thruway after receiving a signal the engine required regeneration.

According to New York State Police investigator James Hunt, the driver, Rene Bisson, 52, was pulling back onto the highway after the regeneration process but experienced engine problems and was trying to get back off the road when his coach was hit from behind by the semi.

"We don't know if the bus driver was pulling on too slowly or if he misjudged the distance of the truck or if the truck driver was not

paying attention," he said. "We're still investigating."

He said Bisson was ticketed after the accident because his license was under an automatic suspension in New York for speeding

'If all warnings continue to be ignored, the system will eventually illuminate a stop engine light.'

tickets he received in 2003 and 2006. Under state law, drivers who lose their licenses have to pay a civil fee before their driving privileges can be reinstated, and Bisson, who has a valid Canadian license, was unaware of the fee and had not paid it.

"It was a technical issue and it is very common because a lot of people don't know about the civil penalty, and they think their licenses are reinstated after they pay for their tickets," said Hunt. "He made an honest effort to get his li-

cense back."

Although Bisson told investigators he pulled off the highway because of the regeneration signal, it was not known at what stage the warning system was in at the time, or if it was functioning properly.

Ron Farr, co-owner of Farr's Coach Lines, said he was unable to discuss the incident or the condition of the regeneration system. "The insurance company has asked us not to talk," he said.

Technician views

Several motorcoach mechanics suggested that while buses are sometimes forced off the road because of mechanical breakdowns, it generally would not be necessary to park a bus to perform regeneration if the warning system is working properly and the driver responds to it correctly.

If the driver heeds the early warnings, they noted, there would be enough time to find a safe location, such as a rest stop or a parking lot off the highway, in which to stop and perform the regeneration process.

"The most dangerous place for

a motorcoach to be parked is alongside the highway," one of them asserted.

Another noted that an electrical problem on a coach could affect the system, including the warning lights. "That could account for a driver not getting a warning about the need to regenerate," he said.

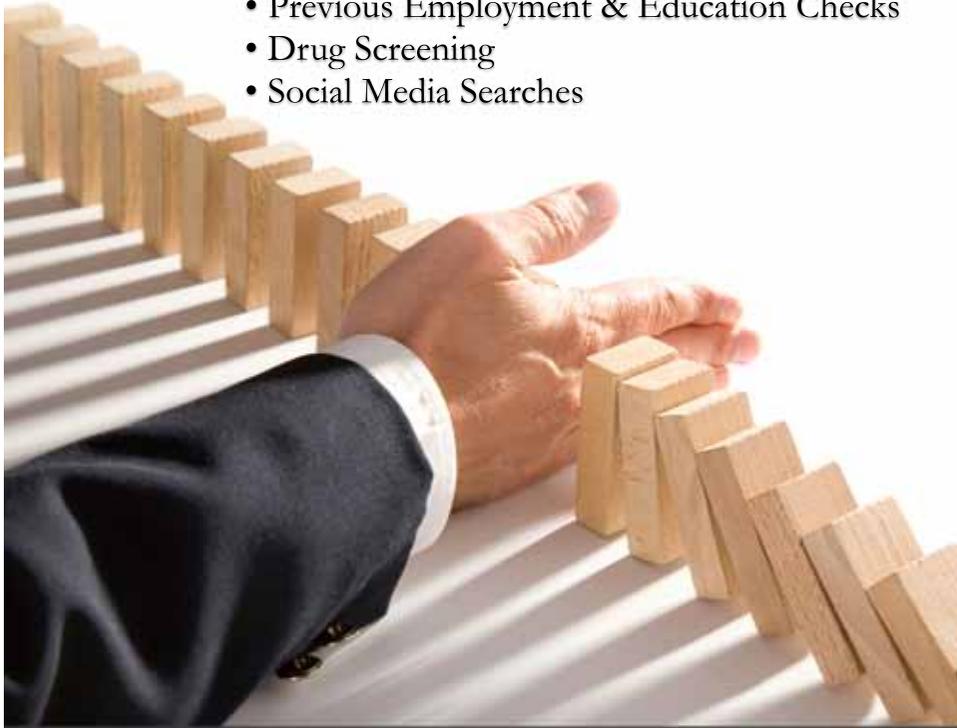
Detroit Diesel said the warning system begins with a solid illuminated lamp. After a period, the system initiates a one-second on and a one-second off sequence.

If the drive cycle continues and a parked regeneration is not initiated by the driver, the system will then illuminate a check engine light and initiate an engine derate while the lamp on the dashboard continues to flash. If all warnings continue to be ignored, the system will eventually illuminate a stop engine light and require a parked regeneration.

"The gradual progression of warnings provides an adequate opportunity, over an extended period of time, for the driver to perform a parked regeneration," the company emphasized.

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DATTCO is distributor of upscale executive van

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — DATTCO Inc. has been named the national distributor for the Mauck2 executive van.

As the exclusive distributor, DATTCO will select dealers from across the country to sell and service the Mauck2.

DATTCO's sales team has begun demonstrating the vehicle across New England and will roll it out nationally by the end of the year through its new dealer network and selected conventions.

The Mauck2 is built on a Daimler Sprinter chassis. The custom body is technically a cutaway and is

10 inches wider than the standard Sprinter.

Custom curved-glass windows and a customizable interior are designed to appeal to the livery industry.

"The Mauck2 truly is a head-turner backed by quality, comfort and fantastic performance," said Comer Hobbs, director of commercial vehicle sales at DATTCO.

"We had several Mauck2 vehicles at our DATTCO EXPO this past April and they were extremely well received. We are thrilled to be the first and exclusive national distributor for this exceptional vehicle."



Mauck2, which is based in Columbus, Ohio, said it chose DATTCO because of its 85-year history in the bus business and its existing network of dealers and service profes-

sionals nationwide.

"They truly are a natural sales partner for us in this venture," said Andy Mauck, president of Mauck2 LLC. "With DATTCO overseeing

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Texas operator Gene Shields memorialized

IRVING, Texas — A memorial in the name of Gene Shields, long-time owner and operator of Eagle Trailways/Eagle Tours here, has been established with the American Cancer Society.

Mr. Shields, 66, died in late June from complications of a long battle with cancer.

A native of Uvalde, Texas, Mr. Shields was an entrepreneur, owning and operating businesses in Irving for more than 40 years, including Eagle Trailways/Eagle Tours.

At the time of his death, he was very much a "hands-on" owner and chief executive of Eagle Trailways.

Mr. Shields was known for working hard to help his company evolve and thrive, as well other transportation companies, with an emphasis on excellence in customer service and long-term, responsible industry growth.

Associates remember him as "always willing to help anyone, any way he could."

Besides his company, Mr. Shields also was interested in off-road motorcycles, boating, snow skiing, RVing and aviation. He flew his own plane for both business and pleasure for the past 20 years.

He married Lynn Walker in 1962 and had two daughters, Jennifer Shields Sutton and Patricia Shields Bessolo. In 1984, he married Sharon Broughton Morriss and added a stepson, Rick Morriss and stepdaughter, Debra Morriss Zubrick. All survive him.

Contributions in Mr. Shields name can be made to the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org/involved/donate.

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