

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## Operators implementing 'Get Motorcoachified' campaign



This Kansas City-based coach of Arrow Stage Lines sports new industry-promoting graphics.

DENVER — The much-anticipated campaign to market motorcoach travel in a new and exciting way — by urging individuals to *Get Motorcoachified* — is now under way.

A variety of full and partial bus wraps and bumper stickers, featuring the slogan and urging the public to give motorcoach travel a try, are available from The Motorcoach Council, the not-for-profit organization that has been working on the idea for nearly two years.

The first to buy the banners have been the council's founding members — operators who joined the council early on and made cash donations that were pooled with contributions from national and state motorcoach associations, manufacturers and others in the in-

dustry to initiate the campaign.

Now, everyone can take part.

"Any operator can join the campaign without being a founding partner," said council spokeswoman Heather Horton. "For \$45, the estimated cost of one bumper wrap, an operator can join the campaign and get a listing on our consumer website directory under 'Find a Tour.'"

She said operators can design a wrap online using an easy-to-operate "bus wrap wizard" tool on the group's website — [www.motorcoachcouncil.org](http://www.motorcoachcouncil.org).

Using the tool, operators can select a number of variables to create their own unique design and preview their artwork. They then can complete their order online by sending an electronic request to any

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## Health care proposals look costly

WASHINGTON — After nearly nine months of struggle, Congress has come up with three different versions of legislation designed to change the nation's health-care system.

And if critics are to be believed, many in the private motorcoach industry may not be enthusiastic about any of the three.

That's because pro-business groups say the plans cost too much, give the government too much power over health decisions, and most importantly put major new tax burdens on small businesses and many families.

The last of the three plans to emerge, that put together by the finance committee of the U.S. Senate, calls for expanding insurance to 29 million uninsured Americans.

It would expand Medicaid, limit out-of-pocket costs, prohibit insurers from denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions, and require almost everyone to buy a health-insurance policy by 2013.

It also would let health insurers vary premiums based on tobacco use, age and family composition; establish state-based health insurance exchanges to help con-

sumers compare plans; would require U.S. residents to buy insurance or face a yearly fine up to \$3,800 per family; would fund a new Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP) to encourage creation of nonprofit, member-run insurance companies, and impose annual fees on insurance companies (\$6 billion), medical device manufacturers (\$4 billion), pharmaceutical manufacturers (\$2.3 billion) and clinical labs (\$750 million).

The Senate finance bill would be paid for with about \$500 billion

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## Senate adopts bill to create tourism promotion program

WASHINGTON — A tourism promotion authority whose main focus would be to promote the United States as a tourism destination overseas could soon be created as a result of a vote in the U.S. Senate last month.

The Senate approved a procedural motion for legislation that would create a not-for-profit tourism promotion body. The entity would be supported by a \$10 fee on visitors who do not have to apply for a visa to enter the U.S.

Backers of the legislation say

the U.S. needs to move quickly to set up a promotional body of this kind because other nations have already established such tourism promotional organizations.

The proposed legislation has come up repeatedly during the past decade but failed to find enough support to win passage. This time around, however, the bill appears to have stronger support, with 53 Senate co-sponsors signing up.

Supporters of the bill say an intensified international tourism

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## Twitter, MySpace, Facebook: Making them work for you

By Ted Janusz

Question: I hear people talking about websites like Twitter, MySpace and Facebook. What are they? And, even more importantly, should I be using them to promote my motorcoach business?

Tools like Twitter, Facebook and MySpace are internet applications in

which the users are actively engaged in creating and distributing web content.

Here's a look at the three applications and how they might work for your coach operation:

### Tweet, Tweet

Twitter. "Twitter is like text messaging, only you can also do it from

the web," says Dan Tynan, author of the Tynan on Technology blog. "Instead of sending a message to just one person, you can send it to thousands of people at once.

"You can choose to follow anyone's updates (called "tweets") simply by clicking the Follow button on their profile, or vice-versa. The only rule is that each tweet can be no lon-

ger than 140 characters."

The former CEO of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, once accepted an award for Twitter by saying, "We'd like to thank you in 140 characters or less. And we just did!"

According to ComScore, Twitter is the fastest-growing major website in the United States with 17 million registered users. That's up 3,000 per-

cent from a year ago.

So, what's the business application of Twitter?

In the past, says Natalie L. Pethouhoff, an analyst at Forrester Research, companies would depend on focus groups to gain the reactions of customers during a two-hour session that cost \$10,000 to \$15,000.

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# Fullington Trailways selling control to French firm

CLEARFIELD, Pa. — Fullington Trailways/Fullington Auto Bus of Clearfield has signed an agreement to sell controlling interest in the company to the U.S. subsidiary of a French concern.

Ratp Dev, whose parent company is RATP, the leading transport operator in the Paris-Île de France region, is buying control of the 101-year-old Fullington from family members.

Aerial Fullington Weisman, president and CEO of Fullington Trailways, told an area school board that no family heir is interested in taking over the business.

RATP, which provides bus, tram and rail services, currently operates on four continents. It transports more than 10 million rail passengers daily.

"This opportunity will allow Fullington to continue to thrive in all areas of our business, while taking advantage of the worldwide experience and insight of our exciting new global partner, Ratp Dev," said Weisman.

"We are pleased that just as the Fullington Auto Bus Company has a solid foundation of more than 100 years in the transportation business, Ratp Dev draws from the 60 years

of experience of its mother company, RATP, as well.

"Moreover, Ratp Dev's business philosophy mirrors ours," said Weisman. "They value their employees and customers, provide security and reliability, are continually innovative, and provide long-term security. This shared philosophy will make this a natural transition for our customers and employees alike," she added.

Michael L. Fullington, company vice president and chief operating officer, said the company will continue to operate under its existing name and the upper manage-

ment team will remain in place.

Jean-Marc Janaillac, president and CEO of Ratp Dev, said his company's decision to expand into the United States with the purchase of Fullington was based "on the solid belief that we share the same values of quality, integrity and respect.

"We are convinced that Fullington's reputation as an outstanding transportation company, combined with the financial and technical support of Ratp Dev will make it a more formidable company, recognized and respected by the transportation industry," said Janaillac.

Fullington has more than 350

employees and operates 52 motorcoaches, 138 school buses, and 11 limousines. It has offices in Clearfield, DuBois and State College, Pa., as well as school bus offices and garages in Clearfield, Philipsburg, Houtzdale and Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Fullington is a long-time member of the Pennsylvania Bus, United Motorcoach and American Bus associations.

Ratp Dev has affiliates in Algeria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Morocco, South Africa, South Korea, West Indies, and now the U.S.

# Anchor purchases Smyrna Motorcoach

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Anchor Trailways & Tours of Nashville has acquired Smyrna Motorcoach Services Inc. of Smyrna, Tenn., which is about 25 miles southeast of Nashville.

Eugene Mullins, former owner of Smyrna Motorcoach Services, will remain as an operator and sales representative for Anchor Trailways in Rutherford County, Tenn.

Mullins founded Smyrna Motorcoach about five years ago and at

one time operated four coaches. The company also maintained a presence in Auburn, Ky., near Bowling Green. The purchase includes the business and company name but not Smyrna Motorcoach Services' equipment.

In announcing the acquisition, Dr. John Stancil, president of Anchor Trailways & Tours, noted that he and his wife had founded Anchor Trailways in Murfreesboro, Tenn., 20 years ago with one motorcoach. Murfreesboro is a dozen

miles from Smyrna.

"We are so pleased to once again have a personal presence in the communities where we started," said Stancil. "With our state-of-the-art equipment and Eugene's relationship with area travelers, we look forward to expanding our safe, comfortable and innovative motorcoach charter-and-tour services in the Rutherford area."

Since its founding, Anchor Trailways & Tours has grown to 95 motorcoaches and is now the largest

privately-owned motorcoach operator in Tennessee. The family-owned and -operated company provides a variety of group travel services, including "unique tour packages."

In addition, it also operates Holiday World Express in the summer between Murfreesboro and Santa Claus, Ind., with four pick up locations in the greater Nashville area, and the year-round, scheduled ATRunner service between Florence, Ala., and Nashville.



John Stancil of Anchor, right, congratulates Eugene Mullins.

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# THE DOCKET

## E-ZPass expansion links Midwest, Northeast

BEREA, Ohio — The Ohio Turnpike joins the E-ZPass highway tolling system this month, enabling coach operator members of the network to drive from Maine to west beyond Chicago and pay all tolls electronically.

With Ohio in the network, that covers toll roads in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, much of the eastern half of the U.S. is now linked by a single highway tolling system.

The Oct. 1 hookup by Ohio will allow vehicles equipped with E-ZPass transponders to travel uninterrupted through the 14-state tolling system, the largest in the United States.

The network extends from

Maine in the Northeast to Virginia in the South to Illinois in the West. Until Ohio joined E-ZPass, the Buckeye state created a major gap in the system.

A total of 25 tolling agencies and 18.6 million vehicles use the E-ZPass system, which is operated by the E-ZPass Interagency Group. It cost \$50 million to implement the system on the 241-mile turnpike across northern Ohio.

The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, which represents tolling agencies, predicts that a nationwide electronic system serving all toll roads, tunnels and bridges could be a reality within 10 years.

Existing technology would

make it possible, but a major obstacle is forging agreements among tolling agencies to make sure toll revenue is distributed properly across state borders.

More than 95 percent of the nation's tolling agencies are served by E-ZPass or TransCore, which supplies technology for electronic tolling systems in Georgia, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Washington.

Technology exists to provide compatibility between TransCore systems such as TxTag in Texas and SunPass in Florida and E-ZPass. But the systems are unable to process each other's transactions because there are no agree-

ments yet among tolling agencies.

North Carolina, which broke ground last month on its first modern toll road — the 18.8-mile Triangle Expressway in the Raleigh-Durham area — hasn't decided whether to use E-ZPass, TransCore or something else.

The Ohio Turnpike, which carries about 150,000 vehicles daily, is adding an incentive to encourage vehicles to use E-ZPass. Drivers won't see any rate hikes if they use E-ZPass. But rates for drivers who pay cash will jump 40 percent.

Despite the prevalence of toll roads in some parts of the country, 20 states, mostly in the West, currently have no toll roads or bridges.

## Kansas Turnpike tolls rise for those without transponders

WICHITA, Kan. — Tolls for buses, cars and trucks on the Kansas Turnpike increase Oct. 1 for drivers paying in cash, but not for vehicles using the turnpike's electronic tolling system.

If a vehicle has a K-Tag, whether the vehicle is registered in Kansas or another state, it will be allowed to run the turnpike at the

same toll rates now in effect. K-Tag is the state's electronic toll collection system.

On the other hand, vehicles whose drivers pay cash on the turnpike will see tolls rise as much as 15-20 percent.

For example, the cost for a three-axle motorcoach to run the entire 236 miles of the turnpike

currently is \$12.75. After Oct. 1, the cost for a coach without a K-Tag would be \$15. The last time the turnpike authority changed its toll structure was two years ago.

The increase met only modest opposition; Kansas turnpike tolls are generally considered among the most reasonable in the U.S.

The change in the toll structure

is largely designed to get more people to use K-Tag to shift costs away from booths staffed by toll-takers and onto the less expensive electronic system.

The turnpike was opened in 1956 and runs from the northeastern corner of the state outside Kansas City southwest through Topeka and Wichita to the Oklahoma border.

## Roadway traffic is rising in U.S.

Kirkland, Wash. — Traffic congestion across the U.S. is on the rise amid signs of economic recovery, stimulus-funded highway construction and lower fuel prices, according to a mid-year analysis by Inrix.

"Traffic congestion decreased over the past 18 months and hit bottom in the second quarter of 2009," said Bryan Mistele, INRIX president and CEO.

"Now, our nation's roadways are starting to jam up again. Traffic is a great indicator of the pulse of the economy."

According to the Inrix National Traffic Scorecard, New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago were rated as having the worst traffic conditions, with the west-bound side of the Cross Bronx Expressway in New York the worst.

Inrix, which provides traffic and navigation services in North America, found that 64 of the top 100 cities had increased traffic congestion during the first half of the year.

The 10 most-congested were:

1. Los Angeles,
2. New York City
3. Chicago
4. Washington, D.C.
5. Dallas
6. Houston
7. San Francisco
8. Boston
9. Seattle
10. Philadelphia

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

## New York bans on-road texting

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York state has passed a law banning the use of handheld devices for reading, typing and sending text messages while driving.

Effective Nov. 1, the law makes New York the 18th state to enact such texting legislation.

Text messaging while driving is already banned in Alaska, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington and the District of Columbia.

Other states, including Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Oregon, have similar legislation in place that goes into effect Jan. 1.

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## Feds' safety system gets new website

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has launched a new website, <http://csa2010.fmcsa.dot.gov>, to educate bus and truck companies, commercial vehicle drivers, and federal and state law enforcement personnel about the new compliance and inspection program the agency has created to improve safety and reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities.

CSA 2010, as the safety measurement system is called, is aimed at identifying unsafe behaviors before the carriers and drivers are deemed high-crash risks.

The new system replaces SafeStat and measures the previous two years of roadside violations and crash data. With the system, every inspection counts, not just out-of-service violations, and both driver and carrier safety performance are monitored.

CSA 2010 is being tested in six states. FMCSA expects the CSA 2010 program to be fully implemented throughout the U.S. by December of next year.

# Highway bill prospects dim, lost in shuffle

WASHINGTON — Political observers say prospects for passing a long-term highway bill continue to grow dimmer as other issues dominate the Senate and House legislative agendas.

Not only are other priorities getting in the way, say government affairs specialists, but new deficit and debt projections make getting long-term highway authorization, and the funding sources for it, more of an uphill battle.

Before leaving for the August recess, the House and Senate agreed on a roughly \$7 billion patch for the ailing Highway Trust Fund, but the two bodies still differ on how to approach a long-term transportation bill.

The Senate, supported by the Obama administration, favors an 18-month extension of the current

highway bill to take effect when the bill expires Sept. 30.

The House, however, led by Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, is continuing to work on a long-term, six-year authorization bill and opposes a significant delay.

Despite Oberstar's pushing, though, it appears unlikely a long-term bill will be enacted this year.

One transportation lobbyist was quoted as saying "the reality that nobody is talking about" is that "nobody wants to tell Chairman Oberstar that he's not going to get a bill."

"In every meeting you have [Hill staff] tell you: 'We're not getting a bill now and, in fact, it's somewhat unlikely that we're going to get a bill next year,' but

no one wants to tell Mr. Oberstar that," the lobbyist anoted.

The highway bill is not the only piece of legislation being pushed back. Senate Democrats reportedly are delaying introduction of sweeping cap-and-trade climate change legislation.

Meanwhile, the Center for Public Integrity reports that special interest groups have spent \$45 million lobbying federal lawmakers during the first eight months of this year on issues relating to the highway authorization bill.

The center published its latest report last month, saying the money spent lobbying for transportation has rivaled that of climate change.

The report clearly highlights what the motorcoach industry is up against in battling issues relat-

ed to the legislation and how, in Washington, it is very easy to get lost in the crowd because the crowd is much larger than most people realize.

The message to the coach industry is to stay involved because there are hundreds of groups pushing to move money around or to change regulations at every turn.

This year has already been a big one for transportation, with House lawmakers rolling out the prototype of what the next five-or six-year highway authorization bill could look like. For starters, House members believe the highway bill could cost \$450 billion to \$500 billion to fund.

That compares to the 2005 highway bill, known as SAFE-TEA-LU, that cost \$286 billion to fund.

## House passes 'green vehicle' bill, but where are motorcoaches?

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill that would spend billions to promote research and development of a whole range of more fuel efficient medium- and heavy-duty vehicles — except, of course, motorcoaches.

H.R. 3246, the Advanced Vehicle Technology Act, passed the House last month by a vote of 312-144.

The bill would create an advanced vehicle technology research and development program at the U.S. Department of Energy.

USDOE would join in public-private partnerships with academia and industry to carry out research and development for medium- to heavy-duty commercial, recreational and public transit vehicles. Motorcoaches are nowhere mentioned in the proposed bill.

The bill authorizes \$2.9 billion over five years, including \$550 million in the budget year starting Oct. 1.

However, the measure still has to be passed by the Senate, and Congress must act separately to allocate the money.



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## Get Motorcoachified

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or all of the participating licensed graphic vendors, asking to be contacted for pricing.

"The licensed vendors have all agreed to offer competitive and extremely affordable pricing for the campaign wraps in an industry-wide effort to get all involved in the campaign launch," Horton explained.

Campaign graphics available are: full wraps that cover both sides and the rear of the bus; partial wraps that cover the sides of

the bus; partial rear wraps that cover the upper back cap; partial rear wraps that cover one side; reflective bumper wraps, and non-reflective bumper wraps.

The first to hit the highway with wraps on its buses were Ramblin Express of Denver and Arrow Stage Lines of Omaha, Neb., both founding members.

The council was formed in 2007 by a handful of operators who came together with a goal of recasting the image of motorcoach travel, and creating a slogan or theme that would become as popular as the Got Milk campaign de-

veloped by milk producers. It has raised more than \$250,000 in donations since its inception.

The newly coined *Get Motorcoachified* slogan was developed by a marketing agency, which said its three key elements combine to encourage the public to get onboard and try modern day motorcoach travel. The elements include "get," which the designers see as a "call to action" for consumers to find out more about motorcoach travel, "motorcoach," which emphasizes upscale buses specifically, and "ified," which is a fun way of expressing what people experience

when they ride on a coach.

And, the designers note, the catch word *Motorcoachified* is a word that the industry campaign can own because it is new.

A second website, [www.GetMotorcoachified.com](http://www.GetMotorcoachified.com), is being developed to help promote the program as well. It is expected to go live early this month.

The council and its efforts have won broad support from throughout the industry, including both the United Motorcoach and the American Bus associations, which together represent hundreds of motorcoach operators across the country.

## Tourism agency

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marketing push could potentially drive an additional 1.6 million arrivals in the U.S.

Conservative critics of the idea say the move is another example of the federal government taking up more work that the private sector should fund for itself. And, internationally, the travel promotion act has managed to draw criticism, with the European Union speaking out against it, calling the proposed \$10 fee a "penalty."

The European Commission's ambassador to Washington has declared that if the U.S. enacts such a fee, the EU will have to consider doing the same to Americans entering Europe.

The United Motorcoach Association is among many domestic tourism and travel groups strongly supporting the legislation.

proposals to pay for its bill.

• **Finance committee:** The measure would cut \$507 billion from government health programs and raise \$349 billion in new taxes and fees on health-care sectors, including a 35 percent tax on insurers for plans that cost more than \$8,000 per individual, or \$21,000 per family.

## Health care

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, and roughly \$350 billion in new taxes and fees.

Here's a side-by-side comparison of the major issues contained in the bills put forward by House Democrats, the Senate health committee, and the Senate finance committee:

### Employer mandates

• **House:** Companies with an overall payroll of more than \$250,000 would be required to offer insurance or pay a fine equal to as much as 8 percent of payroll.

• **Health committee:** Businesses with 25 or more employees would be required to offer insurance or pay a fine of \$750 a year for each employee not covered.

• **Finance committee:** Companies with more than 50 full-time workers would have to pay a fee of up to \$400 per employee if they do not offer health insurance.

### Individual mandate/subsidies

• **House:** All individuals would be required to purchase health insurance, and families of four making less than \$88,200 a year would receive subsidies to help pay for premiums.

Those without coverage would

pay a penalty of 2.5 percent of their adjusted gross income up to the cost of the average national premium, or roughly \$4,800 for an individual.

A family of four earning less than \$29,326 would become eligible for Medicaid.

• **Health committee:** This bill has the same mandate and subsidies as the House bill and a tax penalty of no more than \$750 per year. A family of four earning less than \$33,075 would be eligible for Medicaid — slightly more generous than the House bill.

• **Finance committee:** Similar mandate and subsidies as the other bills; penalties would be up to

\$3,800 per family and \$950 for individuals. A family of four earning less than \$29,326 would become eligible for Medicaid.

### Paying for overhaul

• **House:** A family earning more than \$350,000 a year and an individual earning more than \$280,000 a year would pay an income surtax: 1 percent for families with income between \$350,000 and \$500,000; 1.5 percent for between \$500,000 and \$1 million, and 5.4 percent for income greater than \$1 million.

• **Health committee:** Because the committee does not have jurisdiction over taxes, it did not include

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## Freightliner unveils bus chassis

CHICAGO, Ill. — Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. introduced its newest commercial bus chassis, the MB-65, at the 2009 BusCon trade show here.

Featuring a lowered engine and softer suspension, the MB-65 is designed to provide industry-leading maneuverability, durability and reliability, says Freightliner.

The MB-65 utilizes an Allison six-speed transmission and a Cummins ISB 6.7-liter engine with up to 300 horsepower.

The chassis model also uses Hendrickson SofTek taper leaf suspension on both the front and rear, producing a smoother ride and better handling.

The MB-65 possesses a 55-degree wheel cut.

“Maneuverability within a metropolitan area is a consistent challenge for bus operators,” said Jona-

than Randall, director of sales and marketing. “Turning corners, entering and exiting parking lots all present difficulties during a normal day for the driver. (Freightliner) developed the 55-degree wheel cut to help operators effectively maneuver through our nation’s most congested cities without concern.”

Freightliner says the chassis is ideal for light- to medium-duty shuttle and big bus applications. The lowered engine results in a flat-floor driver cockpit area, enabling bus operators to safely move from the cockpit to the passenger area without having to step over an engine doghouse.

Freightliner also announced the availability of customized financing options for bus industry customers purchasing a vehicle riding on a Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. chassis.

“As Daimler companies, (Freightliner) and (Daimler Truck Financial) have partnered to provide the best financing solution possible for commercial bus chassis customers,” said Randall.

For more information about financing, go to [www.daimler-truck-financial.com](http://www.daimler-truck-financial.com).

Separately, it was announced that Freightliner Custom Chassis and Enova Systems have signed a letter of intent to jointly launch an all-electric commercial chassis development program.

The program will focus on integrating Enova’s 120kW and 90kW all-electric drive system technologies into Freightliner chassis platforms.

Under the agreement, the two companies will develop at least four vehicles for placement into national fleets.

## Ford introduces new diesel; no more Navistar

DEARBORN, Mich. — Ford Motor Co. has introduced a new Power Stroke diesel engine, an in-house-built power plant that will be the core engine in its Super Duty truck and chassis line beginning next year.

The Super Duty chassis is popu-

lar with some cutaway bus makers.

The 6.7-liter V-8 will replace the current diesel supplied by Navistar International. Ford’s contract to buy Navistar’s engines is slated to end Dec. 31.

The two companies earlier this year agreed to terminate their long-

time engine supply partnership, which soured during a much-publicized feud over warranties and problems with recent engine versions.

The new turbocharged Power Stroke features aluminum heads and a reverse exhaust flow into the turbo.

## People

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — *Sonny Gordon* has been hired as regional sales manager in the Midwest for **American Seating**. His territory consists of Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Idaho, Kansas, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Gordon joins American Seating with more than 16 years of sales and customer service experience in the metals and automotive industry. “Sonny brings a wealth of knowledge and proven sales experience, along with a personality that blends very well with our company. Our customers will be very well served by Sonny,” said *Dave McLaughlin*, national sales manager for American Seating.

Gordon attended The Ohio State University where he was captain of the football team. He holds a bachelor’s of science degree in business management from the University of Phoenix.

Gordon is taking over for Matt Hemmelgarn who has been named national sales manager for **Otaco Seating** in Canada, a division of American Seating.

TAVARES, Fla. — **Coach-Crafters Inc.** has created two new

positions in safety and environmental protection.

*Wayne Wolf*, president of CoachCrafters, said that after looking at the hard and soft costs of workplace injuries he had decided to elevate company safety policies.

Promoted to safety officer was *Aaron Atkins*, who joined CoachCrafters in February.

“We were very fortunate that one of our mechanics had a strong background in industrial safety, and we appointed him our safety officer and empowered him to make whatever changes he felt necessary to make our facility as safe as it possibly can be,” said *Tom Quay*, vice president of CoachCrafters.

Wolf said the new position had “helped foster a greater sense of teamwork among our employees, which was an unexpected benefit to the initiative.”

CoachCrafters has hired an environmental services consultant, *Jami Wolf*, to perform a full environmental audit.

“Our eyes were really opened by the improvements we could make as far as recycling and proper disposal of items we never had really thought of as a danger to the environment in the past,” said Quay.

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# Engine builders seeking EPA certification

The manufacturers that supply diesel engines to the motorcoach industry have officially begun the process of getting their 2010 engines certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Cummins reports having submitted the certification paperwork and other required documentation for both its heavy-duty and mid-range engines.

A spokeswoman said the company expects to have certification for its 2010 engines prior to Jan. 1, when Cummins starts producing the new models. She added that

Cummins doesn't anticipate any certification issues because "we continually work with the EPA year-round in preparation for the certification process."

Volvo, which supplies engines to Prevost Car, reports submitting its application in July and says it's currently being reviewed by the EPA.

Detroit Diesel Corp. said it submitted its first heavy-duty 2010 engine for EPA certification in August. It also expects to have full certification before Jan. 1.

Navistar Inc. said its 2010 system was ready to meet certifica-

tion but it declined to say when it would submit its application.

All engine manufacturers, with the exception of Navistar, are using selective catalytic reduction, which converts NOx to nitrogen and water vapor in the aftertreatment to meet the 2010 mandate. Navistar is using what it calls advanced EGR, a stepped-up version of the technology introduced three years ago.

Several engine makers using SCR say they expect fuel economy to increase with their 2010 models.

"Volvo's SCR technology for EPA 2010...will deliver increased

fuel economy, lower cost of operation and no active diesel particulate filter regenerations, along with near-zero emissions," said a Volvo executive.

Detroit Diesel says its 2010 system could enable customers to recoup all the fuel mileage that was lost through changes made necessary by EPA mandates going back to 1998.

"We've surpassed 25 million demonstrated miles of reliability testing and fuel-economy enhancement that our customers can expect with BlueTec," said a company spokesman. BlueTec is the brand name of Detroit's SCR system.

## Pilot has first 'diesel exhaust fluid' pump

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Pilot Travel Centers said it has begun operating a diesel exhaust fluid fuel-island pump in Brooks, Ore., in preparation to serving over-the-road trucks and buses equipped with 2010 selective catalytic reduction technology.

Pilot says the diesel exhaust fluid pump is the first in the nation.

According to Pilot, diesel ex-

haust fluid has a 2 percent consumption rate versus diesel fuel, meaning a 23-gallon diesel exhaust fluid tank will cover 7,000 miles.

"The installation and operation of the first (diesel exhaust fluid) pump marks a major milestone for Pilot and the commercial vehicle industry," said Mark Hazelwood, executive vice president for Pilot Travel Centers.

According to Pilot, diesel ex-

haust fluid will initially cost \$2.79 per gallon at the pump. Drivers can fill up with diesel exhaust fluid while they're filling up with diesel fuel and will pay for both using the same charge processes they use today.

Pilot plans to install 100 bulk dispensing pumps at a rate of 25 pumps per quarter beginning in the third quarter of this year through the second quarter of next year.

## Sessions focus on '10 requirements

HOUSTON — With 2010 USEPA emissions requirements quickly approaching, Shell Lubricants is conducting a cross-country tour to help fleets learn more about the requirements.

Experts conducting the Shell Lubricants 2010 Emissions Symposium will discuss emission control technologies, equipment changes, lubricants and coolants required for the new engines.

Those wishing to attend can register at [www.ShellES2010.com](http://www.ShellES2010.com). More information is available by e-mailing [info@ShellES2010.com](mailto:info@ShellES2010.com).

Here is the symposium schedule:

- Sept. 29 – Newark, N.J.
- Oct. 1 – Philadelphia
- Oct. 6 – Indianapolis
- Oct. 8 – Chicago
- Oct. 13 – Dallas
- Oct. 15 – Houston
- Oct. 20 – Los Angeles
- Oct. 22 – Seattle

## Letter to the Editor

While I agree with your article about small colleges using coaches to drive buses, the danger does not stop there. (See Sept. 15 issue of Bus & Motorcoach News.)

In Oklahoma, most public school systems own and operate their own school buses. Coaches are required to drive to their own activities. This is after they teach all day. Since schools are exempt from USDOT regulations in regards to hours of service, students on Oklahoma school buses are in

danger every day.

It is common practice for the coach to teach all day, drive as much as two-three hours, coach, then drive two-three hours back home.

I might also add that many Oklahoma schools use their buses for activities outside school use. Many 'charter' their buses in the summer to church groups going to camp. This is also a violation of USDOT regulations. But, schools can get around that because of

their exempt status.

I was director of transportation of Shawnee (Okla.) Public Schools for 17 years and just recently retired. Coaches were expected to have their CDL and drive their own buses.

This practice is not favored among transportation directors. However, until laws are passed to eliminate the exemptions, it will be an accepted practice.

*Robert L. Williams  
VP/General Manager  
Time Lines LLC  
Oklahoma City*

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# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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## Oregon adopts B2 biodiesel fuel standard

SALEM, Ore. — Oregon has begun enforcing a 2 percent biodiesel requirement, making it the third state mandating the fuel.

The others are Minnesota and Washington.

The requirement was prompted when the state's production of biodiesel reached the capacity of five million gallons annually.

The new standard is part of renewable energy legislation approved in 2007. Nine Oregon counties began distributing the biodiesel in August; the rest of the state is following on Oct. 1.

Minnesota, which was the first state to mandate a B2 requirement, increased its standard to B5 in May.

Washington also has a B2 standard in place, and Pennsylvania will follow suit starting Jan. 1. Next July, Massachusetts will require that diesel and home heating oil sold in that state contain 2 percent biodiesel.

Oregon has three biodiesel plants. Portland, Oregon's largest city, uses a minimum of 20 percent biodiesel in its municipal fleet.

Meanwhile, the National Biodiesel Accreditation Commission of Jefferson City, Mo., has recognized Louis Dreyfus and Blackhawk Biofuels as BQ-9000 biodiesel producers, and designated West Coast Reduction as a BQ-9000 marketer.

BQ-9000 is a voluntary fuel accreditation program covering storage, sampling, testing, blending, shipping, distribution and fuel management practices.

There currently are 34 biodiesel production facilities certified as producers under the program and 17 certified as marketers.

# The 2010 engines: Why you may be worrying needlessly

By Dave Millhouser

It was nearing dawn and Bill was flopping around in the driver's seat, trying to keep awake. It was ye olden days and we didn't count "hours of service" — it was DAYS of service. He glanced at the interior mirror... and screamed.

Apparently, sneaking up behind him was an unkempt, unshaven man.

The bus swerved and there was a slight indication Bill may have dampened his seat before realizing the ugly apparition was himself. The mirror had slipped down and he was looking at his own mug.

History does not record his passengers' thoughts.

Sometimes "preventative worrying" works, but too often we get stressed about things that never were a danger.

2010 is coming, and we're girding for another round of engine changes.

Heck folks, if you're reading this, you survived 2002, 2007 and all the others. You're gonna survive this one, too. Yogi Berra said it best: "This is like déjà vu all over

again."

Most of the engine builders are using a new technology this time around. Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) will add new "stuff," weight and operational concerns. SCR chemically treats exhaust gases after their confused journey inside and about the engine.

Adding this step allows engine manufacturers to lower pressure and stresses inside the engine, as well as reduce the amount of cooling necessary.

Proponents point to better reliability, longer life and measurably better fuel mileage. Particulate filters will still regenerate, but less often. They hope to return engines to 1999 performance levels.

Detractors point out that SCR introduces a new system that adds weight, requires attention, and can break.

One engine builder is meeting 2010 requirements by tweaking its current EGR system.

Bus manufacturers, as in the past, have stocked up on as many 2009 engines as the current market conditions allow. Depending on what you buy, it may be months

before you're forced into a decision.

SCR does add some operational steps. It works by spraying a minute amount of a urea-based liquid into the exhaust stream. Coaches will carry this "diesel exhaust fluid" (DEF) in a tank, along with a mechanism to spray it into a special chamber where it mixes with exhaust gases. Most of the tanks will be approximately 20 gallons, and a fill may last up to 7,000 miles.

In addition to filling the tank periodically, there's a filter to change. The DEF has some temperature constraints. Too cold and it freezes, too hot (for a long period of time) and it slowly turns to ammonia. It's an organic compound that a demented bus salesman once told me is a chemical cousin to pig urine.

This may sound complicated but it has been working successfully in Europe for years. Most diesel trucks in this country will use SCR/DEF (WAY too many acronyms), so infrastructure is on the way. If you send a coach on an extended trip there will be thousands

of fuel stops and dealers that will sell DEF in bulk or jugs for an estimated \$2.75-\$2.80 per gallon.

Coaches will have DEF gauges or lights. There is clever programming that will not allow the engine to start once the DEF tank empties but won't normally shut down while under way.

A couple of things to consider while considering future coach purchases:

Aside from the normal startup hiccups, this stuff is likely to work fine, so it's not worthwhile to buy extra buses now just to avoid it. (As if anyone can afford to do that right now.)

The best engine is STILL the one with the best local dealer. Talk to your engine folks now and see what they think. As in the past, all of these engines will be good but none will be perfect.

Service trumps almost everything. The engine builders all have websites that explain their systems.

Take a look at how the bus builders wedge the new stuff into their coaches; look for potential problems with the installation. Ask

questions.

Driver training shouldn't be a big issue but they will have to know what the DEF gauge/lights mean, or you'll get a call at midnight, asking why the bus won't start.

Look into your duty cycle. 2010 technology is going to add thousands of dollars to the cost of a coach, which may be recouped in fuel savings. If you are a high-mileage carrier, SCR technology might make sense sooner than for an operator that does more hours than miles.

FDR once said "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

Probably appropriate here, but on this topic baseball immortal Satchel Paige may have been more on target: "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you."

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



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## Twitter, Facebook

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Now, companies like Dell, H&R Block, Southwest Airlines and Whole Foods can “follow” what real customers are saying about them in real time. And they can answer questions and resolve complaints from real customers immediately, if they choose.

### Top four websites

According to Google Trends, the No. 1 website in the United States is Yahoo, followed by YouTube. The third most visited site, is Facebook, followed by MySpace.

YouTube was started by three former employees of PayPal, and then sold to Google about a year later for \$1.65 billion.

Unlike the other sites we’ll discuss that allow for the posting of words and photos, YouTube is the No. 1 video-sharing website. Best of all, you can post your video on the site for free.

What is the business application of YouTube?

Let’s examine some successful examples:

Blendtec, a Utah-based manufacturer of blenders, posted a series of videos entitled “Will it Blend?” In

the videos the company attempted to pulverize items such as golf balls and iPods. The first eight episodes resulted in three million downloads in a week.

Even better for Blendtec, it sold out of its \$600 blender -- in the first 24 hours.

Diet Coke + Mentos. Check out the geysers this combination creates. While Coca-Cola stayed away from promoting this phenomenon (perhaps out of fear of litigation), Perfetti (the maker of Mentos) jumped in with both feet, posting both a large link to YouTube on its website and sponsoring its own contest. In the process, it sold a lot of mints.

The key to business success on YouTube:

Do not post a video of your company president in a head shot saying blah-blah-blah. Nobody will view it. To be noticed on YouTube be sure to be humorous, offbeat or very personal.

And take good care of your customer. What kind of damage do you think United Airlines’ customer Dave Carroll has done with his video — “United Breaks Guitars” — on YouTube? So far the video has more than five million hits. You might want to use the video to teach proper customer service to your staff.

To view these YouTube videos, go to my blog: <http://web20madeeasy.blogspot.com/>

### Face off

According to ComScore, Facebook surpassed MySpace earlier this year in the number of users in the U.S. Facebook also stands as the No. 2 website in the rest of the world (behind YouTube), surpassing MySpace internationally in April 2008. Since its usage has doubled in the past year, total Facebook users outnumber MySpace users worldwide, by 200 million to 125 million.

Facebook was created by Mark Zuckerberg, intended for use by his fellow students at Harvard University as “The Facebook.” It was meant to be an online replacement of the book freshmen receive when entering the university. It contains photos and other information about fellow freshmen classmates.

Within 30 days, about half of the students at Harvard had a profile on the site. Facebook soon spread to other Boston-area colleges. Presently, approximately 85 percent of all college students have a presence on Facebook.

Facebook has been able to overtake MySpace as the No. 1 social networking site in the world because

it no longer has the stigma that it is “just for high school or college students.” Anyone may join Facebook.

Sites like MySpace and Facebook are so popular because social networking allows so much more than e-mail or text messaging. In addition to writing on someone else’s “wall” on Facebook, the site also allows for sharing photographs and videos.

With more than a billion photos and over 14 million added each day, Facebook is the No. 1 photo-sharing site on the internet. At a glance, you can see what all of your “friends” are up to. And because you choose your friends on Facebook, you can virtually eliminate spam.

What is the business application of Facebook?

People have a “profile” on Facebook, whereas businesses have a “page.” You and I can have “friends” on Facebook, while businesses have “fans.”

Businesses on Facebook can really benefit from the referrals of their fans, which is something generally missing from the monologue of advertising.

### Making connections

MySpace. Tom Anderson and Chris DeWolfe designed a website to provide a service — at no charge —

to people looking for a way to connect with others having similar likes and dislikes.

The site was initially popular with bands, which didn’t want to go through the hassle of creating and maintaining a website, but sought a way to distribute their music, photographs, videos and other information to their fans and would-be fans.

MySpace usage has since spread like wildfire to people of all interests and ages.

What is the business application of MySpace?

Successful marketing using any of these Web 2.0 applications means an ad cannot look like an ad or else it will be rejected immediately by the social networking visitors. Your customers on average are subjected to 1,500 to 5,000 advertising impressions each day.

Since they have successfully learned how to block most of these interruptions, they are six times more likely to read an article from you than an advertisement.

To see how companies have successfully launched a presence on MySpace, check out Cartier International ([www.myspace.com/lovebycartier](http://www.myspace.com/lovebycartier)). But for my favorite, look for Miss Helga, a spokesperson for Volkswagen ([www.myspace.com/misshelga](http://www.myspace.com/misshelga)).

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### Putting it together

There is a danger for businesses to view social networking sites as the new television, but a business can advertise on them for free.

“If you are going to go there, you had better go for the right reasons,” says Seth Godin, author of the best-selling book on marketing, Purple Cow. “And if your reason is to sell more stuff, please don’t bother. It’s not going to work. People don’t care about you. They just don’t.”

“On the other hand, if you can use social networking sites as ways to connect to real people, just for that sake alone, not because you want to sell anything, then it’s a great way to spend a half hour a day.”

Concludes Godin: “And what we are finding, as a by-product of that...yes, in fact, your business will do better because you are a trusted member of the community. Not because you are trying to sell stuff.”

There will be an in-depth session on the business applications of social networking sites during the 2010 UMA Motorcoach Expo in Las Vegas Feb. 23-27.

Copyright Ted Janusz. Janusz is a professional speaker, author and entrepreneur who presents “Web 2.0 — How to Harness the Power of Social Networking to Promote Your Business.” He has presented dozens of creative marketing conferences across the country for Rockhurst University. His website is: [www.januspresentations.com](http://www.januspresentations.com).

# Sprinter shuttles are 'returning' to Mercedes-Benz

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Sprinter shuttle buses and commercial vans are being rebranded, losing the Dodge nameplate and gaining the Mercedes-Benz name.

Mercedes-Benz USA, part of Germany-based Daimler AG, announced that the popular shuttles and vans will be sold under the

Mercedes-Benz and Freightliner names beginning next year.

The change is a consequence of Daimler divesting Chrysler Corp. two years ago, and control of Chrysler passing to Fiat of Italy earlier this year. Dodge, a unit of Chrysler, is discontinuing its Sprinter sales after Dec. 31.

The Mercedes-built Sprinter has been sold in the U.S. and Canada for the past five years under the Dodge and Freightliner brands.

A new company, Daimler Vans USA, is being established to oversee future sales and service of the Sprinter for both Mercedes-Benz and Freightliner. Freightliner is part

of Daimler Trucks North America, another Daimler subsidiary.

While Dodge dealers will stop selling the Sprinter once current inventories are gone, they will continue to service the shuttles and vans indefinitely, said a spokesman for Dodge. About 420 Dodge dealers have been selling the vans.

A spokesman for Daimler Buses North America said that separate Daimler Vans' locations are being set up in about 100 Mercedes-Benz automobile dealerships to begin selling and servicing Sprinters.

About 45 Freightliner dealers also sell Sprinters.

## FirstGroup issues bonds

ABERDEEN, Scotland — FirstGroup plc, parent company of Greyhound Lines, Greyhound Canada, First Student, and a passel of bus and rail operations in the United Kingdom, has had a prospectus approved covering the issuance of more than \$330 million in bonds.

Money raised through sale of the bonds will be used to retire existing company debt and general corporate purposes, FirstGroup said in its prospectus.

The unsubordinated fixed-rate bonds, which total 200 million British pounds and carry an interest rate of 6.875 percent, will neither be sold nor available for purchase in the United States. The bonds will trade on the London Stock Exchange.

Although the prospectus says there have been no significant changes in the financial position of FirstGroup and its various business units since its March 31 financial statement, it nevertheless contains interesting tidbits. To wit:

Fuel costs at Greyhound Lines for the year ended March 31, 2010, are expected to equate to 12 percent of revenue.

Greyhound has steadily improved its on-time performance since FirstGroup bought the company — as part of its purchase of Laidlaw International — in October 2007.

Greyhound's on-time performance "now consistently tracks" above 82 percent on its regularly scheduled service.

Consolidation of corporate services, including information technology, real estate and finance, as well as personnel cuts has reduced total company headcount by roughly 30 percent, producing "significant cost savings for Greyhound."

### In Manitoba...

WINNIPEG — Greyhound Canada will keep running — at least for now — in Manitoba. Greyhound routes in the province won't shut down Oct. 2, as announced last month. (See Sept. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.) The province and the company reportedly are negotiating, after Greyhound said it needed a subsidy to keep the routes open. Officials in Manitoba have said they want Greyhound to reveal which bus routes are unprofitable before offering the company any subsidies.




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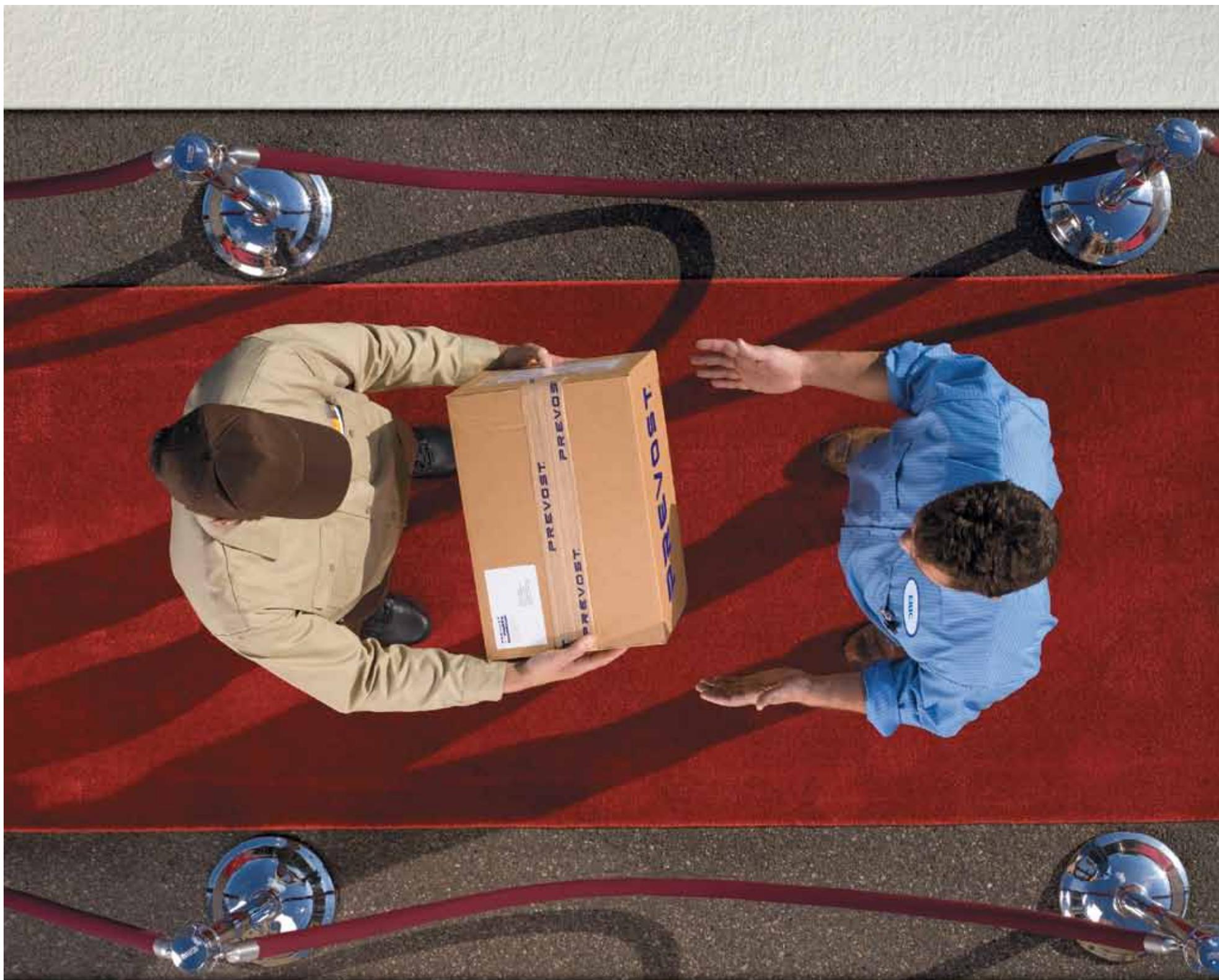
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assist you with all your parts needs. We know how important it is to get back on the road. It's our policy to make that happen without delay. We call it the Red Carpet Policy: Part corporate policy, part constant reminder that someone is always looking out for you.

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