

Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY



Lane departure, fire suppression and tire-pressure monitoring systems are standard on the new 45-foot Temsa.

Temsa adopts big-time ambitions

FARIBAULT, Minn. — After building a reputation with its 30- and 35-foot buses, Turkish coach manufacturer Temsa introduced a 45-foot model to the U.S. market this year.

Now, early sales of the TS-45 are helping the bus maker score big in a lackluster market for new coaches, says its distributor.

CH Bus Sales, which is headquartered here, reports that coach operators have taken delivery of 30 fresh-from-the-factory TS-45 coaches, and the company is on

track to deliver as many as 20 more of the 56-seat coaches before year's end.

Michael Haggerty, owner of CH Bus Sales, said sales for all three models will exceed 200 coaches this year, and the company has placed orders for more than 200 buses for next year.

Haggerty, a former bus operator who founded Ryan's Express, a Nevada-based motorcoach company that had grown to 180 vehicles when he sold it in 2006, is bullish about prospects for Temsa

and CH Bus Sales.

"I think our competition, they thought we were a distraction when we brought out the first two units," he said.

"Now, they're looking over their shoulders and wondering how can they compete with us?"

He estimates that about 1,500

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Michael Haggerty

The meal-break battle

If you operate buses in California, don't ignore the law

SAN FRANCISCO — For six years, a leading trucking company has waged a legal battle over whether a federal law preempts California's meal- and rest-break laws.

Now, the case appears headed to the U.S. Supreme Court following a recent win by company drivers and other employees.

The case, which is being closely watched by many motorcoach operators, has been before the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which in its latest decision kept intact an earlier ruling, by a three-judge panel, supporting the

workers who brought a class-action suit against Penske Logistics in 2008 over the denial of rest and meal breaks.

Drivers and other employees claimed Penske had automatically deducted 30-minute meal breaks for each shift from their paychecks whether they took the breaks or not, and created an environment that discouraged them from taking 10-minute rest breaks.

Attorneys for Penske had argued that the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 1994, the statute that covers the issue, preempts the state meal-

and rest-break laws.

The Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act blocks states from enacting laws "related to a price, route or service of any motor carrier...with respect to the transportation of property."

However, a three-judge ninth circuit panel in July held that the federal law does not take precedence because the state regulations do not have a significant impact on the company's rates, routes or services.

In September, the full court kept intact the panel's ruling, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 ►

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Association for drivers begins recruiting members

PEWAKEE, Wis. — Four part-time drivers with diverse professional backgrounds have launched a national association for motorcoach drivers.

The Professional Motorcoach Drivers Association of North America has a new website and is accepting members.

The one-year fee for "founding member status" (meaning the first 1,000 who sign up) is \$36.

Initially, membership is being limited to residents of the U.S., but the founders expect to expand membership throughout North America.

"Until today professional motorcoach drivers have had limited representation..." association Founder and President Randy Howell said in a news release announcing the group.

Aside from a few union locals representing drivers in rather isolated groups, motorcoach drivers have had "little public or professional recognition," Howell adds.

The mission of the Professional Motorcoach Drivers Association, the group states, "is to support and promote motorcoach driver safety through education, research and informational activities; to increase

public and industry awareness of safety issues, and to enrich the public image of professional motorcoach drivers and the motorcoach industry as a whole."

A top priority for the organization will be to communicate directly with the public, tour companies and schools regarding driver safety, recognition and gratuities.

"One of the goals of this campaign is to change how the public views driver gratuities and be more in line with other industries," says the association.

Down the road, the Professional Motorcoach Drivers Associa-

tion plans to:

- Offer members group disability and life insurance
- Develop a national list of locations that provide complimentary driver meals
- Work in partnership with government agencies for development of safety training standards
- Provide mapping assistance
- Publish a directory of on-demand motorcoach parking sites
- Develop a mobile application for real-time safety alerts
- Produce a quarterly magazine (*Pro Motorcoach Driver*)
- Mount a public relations

program to promote motorcoach travel

"We have a lot of ideas," said the association vice president of information technology, Frank Krupkowski. "It just takes time and money" to develop them, he added.

The overarching goal, Krupkowski, is to develop tools for drivers. For example, one tool/idea is a forum for drivers to share information about destinations.

The Professional Motorcoach Drivers Association of North America has been set up as a nonprofit corporation, say the founders,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ▶

Prevost launches commuter-coach production at N.Y. plant

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. — Prevost is now producing the commuter coach version of its X3-45 model at its new plant here.

The initial coach assembled at the Plattsburgh facility was on display at the 2014 American Public Transportation Association Expo in Houston in mid-October.

Prevost says the Plattsburgh line has begun filling existing orders.

The coach and the plant further cement Prevost's move into the U.S. commuter coach market, long dominated by Motor Coach Industries.

Prevost suggests it wants to give the market an alternative.

"With the opening of our Plattsburgh location, we are enhancing customers' options within the commuter market" said Prevost President Gaetan Bolduc.

"We are reaching out to our

customers and saying 'the choice is yours'; they now have a choice in commuter vehicles being built in the United States. For 90 years Prevost has been a cornerstone of the motorcoach industry and we are committed to our customers.

"Now, with the implementation of our new line in New York, we can expand our support into new and exciting markets," Bolduc added.

Prevost conducted a ribbon-

cutting ceremony at the APTA show to mark the first New York-produced commuter coach.

Bolduc, as well as top executives from Volvo Bus Corp., President Håkan Agnevall and Senior Vice President Tore Bäckström, were on hand for the ceremony.

"The first coach off the Plattsburgh, New York, line is an immense step forward for Prevost in the commuter market," said Bäck-

ström. "Having Prevost as a choice for customers in the commuter market will change the landscape of that segment."

Added Agnevall: "From a global perspective, Prevost has been heavily involved in the motorcoach industry for nearly a century. The expertise Prevost brings with them to the commuter segment will be a positive factor for the growth of the North American market."

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THE DOCKET

Insurance proposal faces speed bumps, public vetting

WASHINGTON — The federal government's fast-track proposal to at least double the liability insurance minimum on passenger coaches and over-the-road trucks is moving forward, but it has to negotiate a few speed bumps before any mandate is adopted.

Earlier this year, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration asked its Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee for recommendations regarding increasing the minimum insurance amounts for motor carriers, including trucking companies and motorcoach operators.

In late October, the advisory committee, whose members were divided on the issue, presented a list of recommendations that didn't include any specific insurance increases but did suggest the FMCSA needed to collect more data before

making a decision.

If the agency agrees to conduct further studies, it could delay any final approval of an increase.

"We just gave the agency a lot of different areas they should consider," said Stephen Owings, chairman of the advisory committee. "We tried to give them all of the different angles that our different members raised so they can be brought up to date."

Owings said the committee didn't propose any specific insurance amount because "that's not our job. That is the FMCSA's job. Our role is to be a sounding board and to make sure they consider all of the information in any decision they make."

The current minimum insurance requirements of \$750,000 for trucks and \$5 million for motorcoaches have been in place since 1985.

The FMCSA contends, after con-

ducting a study earlier this year, that because of inflation and increased medical costs, those minimums don't adequately cover claims in catastrophic crashes today.

Unnecessary?

Opponents argue that the increases aren't necessary because only a small percentage of claims have exceeded the minimum limits over the past 30 years.

There has been speculation, based in part on the FMSCA study, the agency will seek to double the requirement to \$10 million for motorcoaches and increase the trucking minimum to \$3 million.

Members of the committee, including representatives from the highway safety, law enforcement, labor, trucking and bus industries, were divided on how to resolve the

issue, with some expressing concern about the lack of information about the effects of increased insurance limits on the bus and trucking industries and the lack of data showing a correlation between higher limits and increased safety.

Recommendations

The committee recommended the FMCSA consider the following actions as part of its final rulemaking process:

- Collect data on the actual costs of the most catastrophic accidents and on the rate of increase of claims settlements
- Collect separate data and conduct separate impact analyses for passenger and property carriers, and acknowledge different risk spectrums for different types of passenger carriers

- Explore establishing a national victim's compensation fund to help motor carrier crash victims when their claims exceed a carrier's insurance policy

- Consider pegging any minimum insurance increase to either the core CPI or the medical CPI

- Establish a mechanism for reviewing the insurance minimums periodically, such as every four years, and revise them as necessary

- Consider phasing in any increase over a five-year period

- Take into account any impact insurance increases would have on small businesses

Two of the recommendations that would be good news for the motorcoach industry are the phase-in period, which would allow businesses to gradually adjust to any substantial increase in minimums, and consideration of the effect of any increase on small operators.

Critics of the insurance proposal have long contended it is a thinly veiled attack on small bus and truck operators, and that its likely purpose is to reduce the number of small carriers and restrict the number of new operators.

Lancer Insurance Co., the nation's largest motorcoach insurer, has estimated that if a \$10 million minimum requirement is approved for buses, it could result in a 60 percent increase in insurance premiums, to an average \$10,000 annually per bus. Lancer executives say such an increase would make it hard to start a new bus company and would make it difficult for smaller operators to obtain insurance.

Specific analysis

Larry Minor, associate administrator for policy at the FMCSA, said during the October advisory committee meeting that the agency is required by law to conduct a cost-benefit analysis and to specifically review the impact of any increase on small businesses, according to *Overdrive*, a trucking publication.

The magazine quoted Minor as saying that one of the primary considerations in the process would be whether too many small operators would "end up going out of business as a result of this rulemaking, or come close to it."

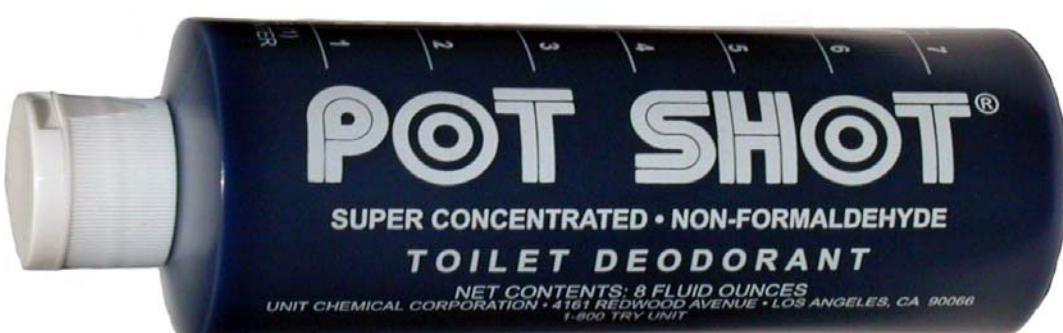
Meanwhile, the White House Office of Management and Budget cleared the FMCSA's rule proposal on the insurance issue early last month. Normally that would mean a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would be pub-

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FMCSA to conduct online survey of 'driver training'

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration plans to survey recently licensed bus and truck drivers as part of its data-gathering process for producing an entry level driver training rule.

The survey will ask drivers about their training experiences. Participating drivers also will be required to have received an inspection within the past year.

The agency says it will survey drivers who received their commercial driver's license within the past three years to gauge current industry practices.

The FMCSA is preparing to send invitations to approximately 82,000 CDL holders, including truck, motorcoach and bus drivers.

The online survey, using a secure website, will take about 15 minutes, according to the FMCSA. Results will be confidential.

"The goal is to obtain a better understanding of the amount and type of total training [the drivers] received, and its composition between that received before obtaining the CDL, and that received after obtaining the CDL," reads the FMCSA announcement in the *Federal Register*.

Before the survey begins, the FMCSA will accept public comment on its plan for 60 days. To comment, go to www.regulations.gov.

Feds registering makers of e-logs

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has started the process of registering electronic logging devices in preparation for its upcoming mandate that will require bus and truck drivers use the gizmos.

The rule requiring the devices likely will begin in late 2016 or early 2017. (See Nov. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The agency says it will maintain a list on its website of electronic-logging-device makers and their devices that are certified to meet federal specifications.

The FMCSA says it expects all 22 electronic-logging-device makers to register their devices electronically, and that it estimates roughly 88 different devices will be registered.

The agency's proposed rule to mandate electronic logging devices — published in March — included specification requirements for the hardware, "to ensure consistency among manufacturers and devices," the agency says.

The rule also required electronic-logging-device makers to register compliant devices with the FMCSA.

gov and search "FMCSA-2014-0388" to find the docket.

The survey is part of broader research being done by the FMCSA for the long-delayed entry level driver training rule.

A driver training rule has been in the works for more than 20

years, with the agency making several attempts to produce a rule. All of them have been overturned in court, however.

The 2012 federal highway funding law again required the agency to produce a rule.

In September, the Teamsters,

along with a handful of safety advocacy groups, filed suit against the FMCSA for not having produced a driver training rule.

The rule has been "unlawfully withheld," the groups argue, as Congress has more than once since the 1990s mandated the

agency produce a rule.

In August, the FMCSA announced it was exploring the possibility of producing the rule via a "negotiated rulemaking," meaning industry stakeholders would play a larger part in the rulemaking than with other rules.

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Nat'l Interstate sees 3rd-quarter gains, bright outlook

RICHFIELD, Ohio — National Interstate Corp., parent company of leading motorcoach industry insurer National Interstate Insurance, saw its financial picture improve in the third quarter after suffering a rough second quarter and first six months of 2014.

The company said net income increased to \$8.8 million, or 44 cents a share, during this year's third quarter from \$7.3 million, or 31 cents a share, during the third quarter of last year.

Gross premiums increased 9 percent for the 2014 third quarter and 8 percent for the first nine

months, compared with the same 2013 periods. The company attributed the increases primarily to growth in its alternative risk transfer (captive) and transportation components.

However, National Interstate's \$10.7 million in second-quarter losses impacted its year-to-date earnings. Company net income for the first nine months of 2014 totaled \$6.1 million, or 31 cents a share, down from \$9 million, or 46 cents a share, during the same period in 2013.

Dave Michelson, National Interstate president and CEO, said

the stronger third-quarter numbers were driven by higher premiums and gains from investments and also reflected slightly improved underwriting results.

Michelson said net income for the first nine months of 2014 lagged 2013 because of the \$20 million reserve strengthening adjustment recorded in the second quarter and transaction expenses related to a withdrawn tender offer early in 2014.

"Underwriting results for the 2014 third quarter were much more in line with our expectations when compared to the first half of the

year," he said. "We had virtually no prior-year claims development in the quarter... We continue to believe our current risk selection and pricing have improved as evidenced by approximately \$95 million of business we non-renewed in the past 21 months, along with continuous rate increases since 2012."

Michelson added that the company's "rate increases on renewal business, which averaged 9 percent for the third quarter, have also remained consistent throughout the year and contributed to our top-line growth. We believe that our rate levels for both the new and renewal

business address recent loss cost trends that have emerged for the commercial auto line of business."

National Interstate said its net investment income of \$9.1 million for the 2014 third quarter and \$26.6 million for the first nine months of the year were 10 percent higher than in the same 2013 periods. The company said the increases were the result of an increase in average cash and invested assets.

"Our top-line, underwriting expenses, and investment results remain favorable and consistent with our expectations," Michelson said. "In contrast, the 2014 third-quarter claims results can be characterized as more normal than the first half of the year. Prior-year loss development was flat for the quarter and the 2014 year-to-date accident year combined ratio of 97.1 percent is improved over the recent prior accident years."

He said the company's third-quarter gains could signal stronger results going forward.

"We continue to be cautiously optimistic that we have adequately addressed the loss trends in our commercial auto liability coverages and believe that the quality and pricing of our business will contribute to improved results," Michelson said.

Insurance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

lished in the *Federal Register*.

However, in this case, the FMCSA is using a two-step process.

That means an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, rather than simply a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, will be published, giving the trucking and bus industries, the public and any other stakeholders a chance to make public comments on the rule.

Minor said the advanced notice won't include any specific numbers related to an insurance minimum increase. That has left some critics

wondering how they can comment on a proposal that doesn't include monetary details, the key component of any new insurance rule.

After the comment period ends, the proposal, presumably including dollar amounts, will go back to the Office of Management and Budget for approval and publication of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. That will be followed by another comment period, adding even more time to the overall process.

Will Congress act?

Yet another factor that ultimately could derail the push for higher insurance minimums is still awaiting

action in Congress.

In June, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to add an amendment to its version of the annual U.S. Department of Transportation funding bill that would prohibit the FMCSA from increasing the minimum amount of liability insurance required of motor carriers.

The Senate also has a version of the bill without the amendment. Neither chamber has passed its bill, but there is speculation that when Republicans take over both the Senate and the House in January, the version that includes the amendment blocking the increase could pass.

In fact, many in the bus industry

are hoping that the Republican's anti-government regulation agenda could eventually result in the FMCSA backing off many of its regulatory initiatives.

Owings, the chairman of the FMSCA advisory committee, said he believes the minimum insurance issue remains on a fast track, but he is realistic about the way Washington works.

"My understanding is that (the FMCSA) is trying to fast track it, but fast tracking in Washington is not what anybody anywhere else would consider fast tracking," he said. "I've never seen anything move very fast in Washington."

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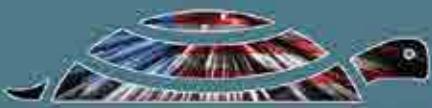


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Ticket aggregator Wanderu raises \$5.6 million

BOSTON — Travel startup Wanderu, which has ambitions of becoming the Kayak.com for booking intercity bus and train travel, has raised an additional \$5.6 million in financing.

One technology news and information website reports the new round of funding was led by Metamorphic Ventures, and was said to be over-subscribed.

Also participating were Alta Ventures; Craig Lentzsch, CEO of All Aboard Holdings, a motorcoach holding company; 500 Startups; venture capitalist John Balen; early-stage investor Brad Feld; Barbara Corcoran Venture Partners (yes, of television "Shark Tank" fame), and other so-called

financial angels.

Wanderu launched into beta in August 2013, following the close of seed-round financing totaling \$2.45 million led by Alta Ventures. (See Sept. 1, 2013, *Bus & Motorcoach News*).

Lentzsch, the former CEO of the defunct Coach America, and president and CEO of Greyhound from 1994-2003, also contributed to the first round of financing.

At the time, the company had 12 partners, including BoltBus, Go Buses, Concord Coach Lines, and New York Trailways, which allowed it to cover a sizable chunk of the northeastern U.S.

Today, the company reportedly has grown to 40 partners, and cov-

ers 70 percent of the U.S.

It now includes access to the largest ground travel providers, including Greyhound, megabus.com, Peter Pan, Grupo Senda and others.

Users come to the Wanderu site, enter their starting and end destinations, and the service offers options on how to get there, taking a cut of the ticket sales booked via its portal.

CEO Polina Raygorodskaya declines to say what the percentage is, but she told one interviewer that Wanderu passed \$1 million in monthly sales this past summer, and has continued to grow.

The company says it is growing at 200 percent quarter-over-quarter in users and 400 percent in

quarter-over-quarter in sales since its public debut.

It has a team of 17 employees, and plans to use the new capital to expand into Mexico, launch mobile apps, and expand its coverage and services targeted toward millennials.

Wanderu is targeting the younger market, which by some estimates now accounts for the majority of intercity bus travelers.

Around 74 percent of bus travelers are 18-35, Raygorodskaya told one online news service.

"It's becoming much cooler to travel by bus."

"More than 80 percent of our users are under the age of 45 and we have seen incredible return rates," Raygorodskaya says. "What's most exciting is that we've seen our conversion rate double over the past four months, driven by strong return and repeat user rates, and our push is to rapidly roll out new coverage and features that users are asking for."

In addition to bus tickets, Wanderu offers bus, train and city travel guides on its website, plus details of routes and other information.

The company, which competes with Busbud and GotoBus, plans to build its own brand going forward, rather than license its data to others.

People

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. —

Craig Smith, who for the past three years has been CEO of the Martz Group, one of the motorcoach industry's best-known operators, has been honored by his employer.



Craig Smith

Martz Group owner, *Frank Henry*, and president, *Scott Henry*, presented Smith with the Leadership Award for his "hard work and dedication" to the family-owned company.

Smith joined Martz in 2011 as general manager of its District of Columbia location. He previously held management positions with FedEx.

Frank Henry noted that Martz Group has been in business for 106 years, and Smith honors the company tradition as he continues to move the business forward, encouraging everyone to achieve their goals and strive for nothing short of excellence.

The award was given during Martz annual Manager's Meeting, which considers current and future business, as well as goals.

megabus carries 40-millionth passenger

ORLANDO, Fla. — megabus.com, the nation's largest express curbside operator, announced it has served 40 million customers across North America since it began in 2006.

The company also said it served five million customers in the last six months, helping make city-to-city bus travel the fastest growing and most economical transporta-

tion mode in the U.S.

To mark its milestone, megabus awarded a customer an iPad Air during a celebration at its new Orlando arrival/departure location at 902 N. Semoran Blvd., which is east of downtown.

megabus, which provides service in 32 states and more than 120 cities in North America, has increased sales by 13.5 percent in the

past year, the company said.

In recent months, the company has:

- Initiated a reserved seating program in 40 cities, allowing customers the option of reserving one of 10 "premium" seats for a fee ranging from \$3 to \$7.
- Added service to Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood, Miami, Tallahassee and Tampa, Fla.



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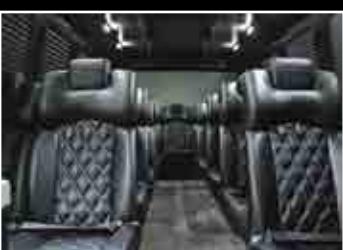
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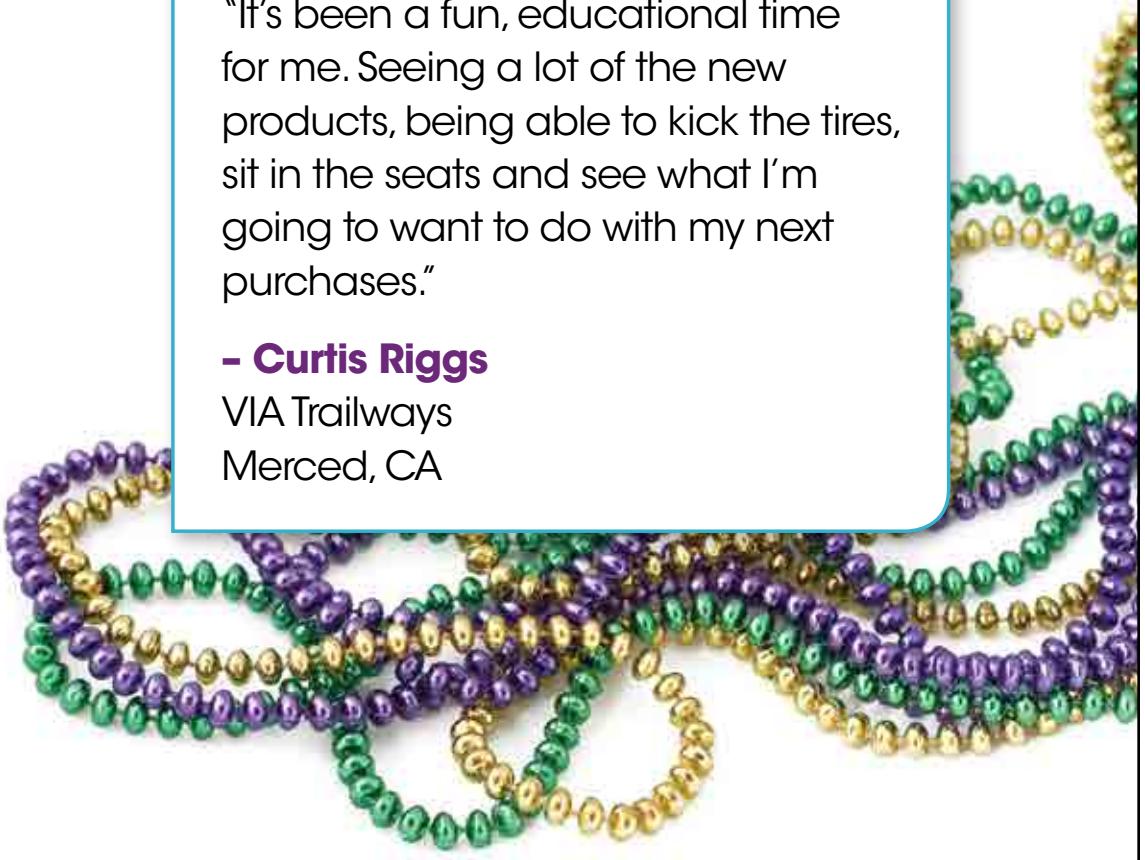
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Tems growing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

new coaches will be sold this year by the four main coach builders and distributors, including CH Bus Sales, meaning the market share for CH/Tems in 2014 would be above 13 percent. That's not enough, says Haggerty.

"We certainly hope to capture our 25 percent market share, if not more."

A real motorcoach

Central to the company strategy five years ago for gaining a foothold in the North American market was its introduction of 35- and 30-foot motorcoaches that use monocoque construction, which provides a smoother, quieter ride than previously available body-on-chassis, midsize buses, according to CH President and CEO Robert Foley.

"We've known for the last 10, 15 years that tour sizes were getting smaller. Unless it's contract runs or unique circumstances, if they rely on 45-foot coaches, they're not filling them all up," said Foley.

"That need has always been in the market. Up until the Tems product came along, I don't believe the product had the quality and durability," he said.

The company's growth has extended to its parts and service network.

It recently opened a facility in Dallas, joining locations in Orlando, Las Vegas, New Jersey and San Francisco, along with mobile technicians in the northeast and northwest.

A Los Angeles facility is planned to open in mid-2015.

Haggerty said the TS-45 is winning new customers because of its low price relative to comparable vehicles. The savings, he said, can be as much as \$80,000.

"The early reports are it's a game-changer for the industry," Haggerty said. "We go to meetings with customers, and their jaws drop."

The cost advantage

He attributed the lower price tag to the lower labor costs in Turkey.

"The labor rate for other manufacturers in Europe is 65 euros an hour. Turkish labor is 10 percent of that," he said.

'The early reports are it's a game-changer for the industry.'

By his estimate, about 1,500 man hours are required to manufacture the typical motorcoach, and a reduction of 50 euros an hour means a savings of some 75,000 euros per coach.

"As far as value, the lower price is not a reflection of the quality," he said.

The coach uses integral monocoque construction, with stainless steel framing, and comes equipped with a Cummins/Allison power train, a 425-horsepower ISX engine and B500 Gen5 transmission.

Safety standard

Six key safety features are standard on the Tems, including engine fire-suppression systems, lane-departure warning, tire-pressure monitoring and a brake-pad-wear monitoring system.

Also standard are a six-cylinder Bitzer compressor on the HVAC system and three-point belted driver and passenger seats.

According to Foley, the coach's best qualities include its drivability and maneuverability.

"The most common comments that we get are that it holds the road

well, it turns and maneuvers very well. They have to be economical, durable, and serviceable, but the drivability and the handling are important. If you can keep the drivers happy, that's important," he said.

Extensive input

In fact, input from drivers, mechanics and operators was a critical component in the design and development of the TS-45, according to Haggerty.

They pinpointed several dozen areas on a prototype model Tems engineers set out to improve. For example, they suggested adjustments to the location of a restroom fan, and the placement and height of engine covers and luggage doors.

"That's the strength of the Turkish manufacturers. They're so responsive and they listen. It doesn't fall on deaf ears," he said.

Looking ahead, Haggerty declined to provide many details about plans to introduce a 25-foot model to its lineup.

"It's something we see on the horizon for the 2016-model year," he said.

Meantime, CH Bus Sales continues its legal battle with Caterpillar over alleged defects in its engines and transmissions that went into the initial Temsas that were sold in the U.S.

So far, the company and Tems are the only distributor and manufacturer that have elected to go to bat for operators over those bus components. A judge has set a March date for trial.

"The other side, of course, they want to delay litigation as long as they can. So that's what they're doing," Haggerty said.

"But we have prevailed in a large way from the standpoint that Caterpillar made an attempt to dismiss the case at summary judgment and did not prevail. That's a big deal."

To the Editor

In a recent letter to the editor of *Bus and Motorcoach News* (Oct. 15 issue), attorney Dru Carey, founder of the Asian Motorcoach Owners Association, makes several statements about the American Bus Association.

Sadly her remarks are inaccurate and well off the mark.

She wrongly criticizes ABA's response to the media in the aftermath of the Sept. 22 accident in Maryland that left three people dead and many others injured.

First, from an industry standpoint, there are significant questions about the New York-based company involved in the accident, AM USA Express.

The company does not have a current rating of satisfactory, conditional or unsatisfactory from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Also, under the Safety Measurement System hours-of-service section, the company exceeds the intervention threshold with a score of 87, putting AM USA Express near the bottom of the industry in this category.

Reporters from the Wilmington, Del., *News Journal* discovered that the physical address AM USA Express' claimed as its office was, in reality, a bakery. AM USA Express is also not an ABA member.

While the accident is still under investigation, our thoughts are with the victims who died and their families, as well as those recovering from their injuries.

However, the National Transportation Safety Board, along with state and local law enforcement officials, have raised serious concerns about the driver's actions. Today, the driver is facing serious charges for his alleged

actions.

During my 18 years as president/CEO of ABA, we have always welcomed everyone to the industry. ABA started several new councils to bring new voices to the industry, including the Bus Industry Safety Council, Women in Buses, and the Hispanic Motorcoach Council.

Nothing else about your company matters except your safety record. ABA is the only motorcoach association to require its members to have and keep a satisfactory rating from FMCSA....If you can't or will not operate a safe operation, your company does not deserve to share the road with those that do.

ABA supports and values all motorcoach companies, small, medium and large. For about two generations, and far too long, some in the industry have insisted on the old canard that "ABA is only about big, line-haul carriers." Let's put that tired, phony rallying cry to rest once and for all.

Today, the vast majority of companies that have chosen to be ABA members have fewer than 20 motorcoaches. These companies believe in ABA to protect their interests on a daily basis. I'm proud ABA serves and supports all facets of the industry.

ABA is committed to helping all of our motorcoach companies navigate, understand, and follow the government's often complex laws and regulations concerning the safe operation of a motorcoach company. Providing the hundreds of millions of people who ride motorcoaches each year a safe experience is the highest priority of ABA and our members.

—Peter J. Pantuso

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Could your business profit from exploring new viewpoints?

By Dave Millhouser

Silence is golden...unless you're on a charter boat several miles at sea.

The Detroit Diesel 8V-71 that was powering us at a rootin'-tootin' nine knots had suddenly coughed and quit. We were broken down, adrift several miles from the nearest tavern.

After an obligatory time-out for cursing, our captain set about identifying the problem.

Within moments he figured out that the engine was not getting any fuel, a puzzling situation because he'd checked the tanks before leaving the dock.

An 8V-71 doesn't use all of the fuel that is pumped towards the injectors, returning the unused portion to the tank. Since this boat had two tanks, it was important to set the valves so fuel was being drawn from, and returned to, the same tank.

In this case, we were sucking from the starboard tank and returning fuel to the port one ... eventually emptying the tank the engine was depending on (and filling the other one).

It turned out we had plenty of fuel, a hidden resource once the correct valve was opened. We motored away and the list to port gradually corrected itself.

You may have noticed that, in many areas, our industry is either adrift or not living up to its potential. If we have any hidden resources, we need to find and use them.

For 50 years there has been a push for equal opportunity in the workplace for everyone, regardless of race, gender or whatever. It's the law, the right thing to do and good PR. Some companies do it because it's right, others make a half-hearted attempt, and a few outright fake it.

May I suggest another reason to make the effort. Your business could profit mightily from talented people you already employ...if you look at them objectively...without presuppositions based on irrelevant traits.

Years ago (WAY too many of my sentences start with that phrase), I worked at a bus sales company with a young black man who cleaned buses.

One day he went to the boss and asked if he could take home

some maintenance manuals to study at night. (You may have guessed where this is going.) He became a fine mechanic, and eventually shop foreman.

A couple of years later, the company needed a salesperson...and gave him a shot. Over the years he led the company in sales several times, and made them a lot of money.

Pretty good return on the loan of a few books and willingness to see his potential.

Thirty years of marriage has taught me a few things (Susan might say "darn few"). One is that women often think differently than men. We manly types tend to mock some stereotypes, when, in fact, we might try paying closer attention.

"Different" isn't inferior. Innovation is generally the result of "different" ways of thinking. Perhaps our current way of running the industry isn't flawless, and "different" might be an improvement.

A young woman who "captains" for my buddy's scuba charter operation (she's NOT the one who had the fuel valve wrong) re-

cently pointed out that "you guys speak a different language."

She's no dummy. Early 20s, bachelor's degree, 50-ton master's license, a scuba instructor who has worked and dove all over, and she feels left out when helping the guys do maintenance.

Once things are explained in testosterone-neutral language, she can do anything the guys can, often better.

How much productivity is lost when we assume people either don't know or can't learn tasks? How much would our businesses benefit from finding hidden resources and exploring new viewpoints?

If I were New England Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady (in MY dreams), I'd want the best possible players on the offensive line to protect me. Nothing would matter beyond their ability to keep me from being squashed.

If a 5-foot-5-inch, 110-pound woman could do the job well...

You're chuckling (probably with a hint of derision) because some jobs do require certain attributes. No one who is 5-foot-5 and 110 pounds is likely to play offen-

sive tackle in the National Football League. Putting them in the game promises to be painful for everyone.



Dave Millhouser

Political correctness isn't my thing. No one should hold a job for any reason other than because they're good at it. But, if they ARE good at it, can we afford to waste the resource? Are our competitors utilizing their people better than we are and kicking our butts?

Real performance is all that matters in professional sports. And if a woman tries out who can do better than the guys, she'll get the job. Athletics evolved into the ultimate "equal opportunity."

We need that sort of evolution. In these times, can we afford to overlook any talent? Particularly folks already in our organization?

And, is it lost on you that I resorted to a manly sports illustration to make the point?

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

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"We have been very impressed with the ride quality and performance of the Toyo tires"
Mike Dickson, President, Southeastern Stages, Atlanta, GA

"We have been testing the Toyo tires and they have been performing extremely well"
Brian Scott, President, Escot Bus Lines, Largo, FL

"The tires are doing great. Thanks for the good service and product"
Andy Barde, President, Corporate Coach, Ft Lauderdale, FL

"The Toyo tires we are currently running are giving us a superior ride and are showing better wear patterns than we have seen in many years. Customer service is A+, something that a lot of companies have forgotten about"
John Adams, President, Southern Coach, Dothan, AL

"DATTCO has 20 sets running on our Van Hools and while we do not have mileage collected as of yet, the response from the drivers has been very positive concerning handling and ride quality"
Mike Verna, Fleet Manager, DATTCO Bus Lines, New Britain, CT



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Election impact

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

far-reaching rules isn't evident.

The committee will be headed by Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska.

The key guy

Of course, the most-important Senate Republican is Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who will become Senate majority leader.

McConnell will be in a prime position to manage any legislation that seeks to put the brakes on FMCSA rules.

He also will manage Senate floor time for key transportation bills during the Obama administration's final two years.

Notably missing from the Senate in January will be Sen. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, who lost a close race with Senator-elect Dan Sullivan, who has held a number of posts in Alaska, including a stint as state attorney general.

In February, the NTA presented its Pioneer Award to Begich during Travel Exchange, the co-located trade show conducted by NTA and UMA.

The award recognized Begich's "unwavering support for the travel industry."

After entering the Senate in 2008, Begich sponsored or supported legislation designed to ad-

vance travel and tourism, including the Travel Regional Investment Partnership Act and the Travel Promotion Act, which created Brand USA. Begich also was co-founder of the Senate Travel and Tourism Caucus.

Mark Hoffmann, NTA chairman and CEO, said Begich "is a true friend to the travel industry and has always been receptive to NTA and the industry."

Begich attended several NTA conventions and was a featured speaker for at least four NTA annual grassroots events in Washington, D.C.

On the House side

In the House, the Republicans won a larger-than-expected majority.

Republicans will control at least 244 seats in the House, increasing their current majority by 15 seats, and Democrats will control at least 184.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is the linchpin panel in the House that moves legislation that impacts the motorcoach industry.

The biggest change to the committee resulting from the election was the defeat of ranking member Nick Rahall of West Virginia. Rahall lost his seat to Republican challenger Evan Jenkins by 10 per-

centage points.

With Rahall's defeat, the Democrats lose a key bipartisan player on major transportation issues.

Rep. Peter DeFazio of Oregon could replace Rahall as the committee's ranking Democrat.

Shuster back

Rep. Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, easily won re-election.

He is a central player in the ongoing highway funding debate. He led passage of an extension of the 2012 highway law that expires in the spring.

Notably, Shuster has sought to persuade the tea party bloc in Congress to realize the value of federal investments in the transportation system.

UMA's political action committee conducted a fund raising reception for Shuster in late June as part of UMA's annual Capitol Hill Days.

Also during its Capitol Hill Days, UMA awarded Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., its inaugural "Motorcoach Champion Award" for his support of the private bus and motorcoach industry.

Mica, a former chairman and current member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, was handily re-elected.

Who to watch

Any number of political observers will have their eyes on a handful of conservative Republican House members who would like to transfer control of federal spending on highways and transit programs to the states.

In other words, they would get rid of the huge bureaucracy that manages the federal highway program, dialing back the program to a money pass-through function.

Among the re-elected congressmen who favor what has come to be known as "devolution" legislation is Rep. Tom Graves of Georgia.

Graves could enhance his influence as he moves up the ranks in the powerful House Appropriations Committee, with the retirements of Reps. Tom Latham and Frank Wolf, Republicans from Iowa and Virginia, respectively.

Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado, a staunchly conservative Republican who has strongly opposed the Obama administration's highway funding proposals, also was re-elected to the House.

While he has not indicated whether he would support tea party-backed efforts to significantly reduce federal aid to states for transportation projects, most observers expect him to do so.

A Pennsylvania congressman,

who introduced a bill that would require the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to temporarily withhold from public view the motor carrier rankings and scores produced for the agency's Compliance, Safety, Accountability program, also was re-elected.

Rep. Lou Barletta, a Republican, introduced his legislation in September. It was referred to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, of which he is a member. (See Oct. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

The United Motorcoach and American Bus associations, along with a bevy of trucking groups, want availability of the CSA scores restricted to law enforcement because of the data's poor performance at measuring carriers' crash risk.

New champions needed

The two congressmen who were pushing a provision that would block the FMCSA from adopting higher insurance minimums for bus and truck operators won't be in Congress come January.

Latham, who has been chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies of the House Committee on Appropriations, didn't seek re-election, nor did the committee's ranking member, Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz.

Meal-break battle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

attorneys for Penske asked to stay the proceedings so they can seek review by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Good news?

The legal battle may ultimately mean good news for charter bus operators, says Brian Mills, a labor and employment attorney based in Costa Mesa, Calif.

Mills, of the law firm of Snell & Wilmer, said if the attorneys for Penske convince the high court that the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act preempts the state rules, the door is open for passenger-carrying companies to make the same argument successfully.

"(With charter buses,) the meal and rest breaks have a direct effect on prices, routes and services. They reduce the drivers' flexibility," Mills said.

"They affect where they can drive, customer service, routes that they can take. From a practical perspective, they reduce the amount of time that an employee can work and the service they can provide to the customer."

"So, in its barest form, you can see how there's a good argument to say that (the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act) should preempt these California rules," he said.

However, it will likely be two

or more years before the Penske case is resolved, he said. In the meantime, he advised operators to comply with the rules.

His advice also applies to out-of-state motorcoach companies that operate in California.

"I think, if you are going to be spending time in California, California's rules are going to apply to you," he said.

"There can be a question if you're just crossing the border really quickly, or this is a one-time deal and you're not going to be here for any extended period of time, you can see how some arguments can be made."

"But the way the law has been interpreted for these visits to California in other industries, once you cross the line, these California rules apply," he said.

Mills spoke at the California Bus Association Convention and Trade Show in Sonoma County in late October, during a session called "Give Me a Break!: What Employers Should Know About California's Meal and Rest Break Requirements."

Complex rules

The topic is of particular interest to motorcoach operators because the state rules are myriad, specific, exacting and often challenging for transportation companies to implement, Mills said in a phone interview.

Broadly, the meal- and rest-break regulations state that employers must provide an unpaid, off-duty meal period of at least 30 minutes for employees who work more than five hours, and that this first meal period must be provided no later than the end of the employee's fifth hour of work.

If an employee works more than 10 hours, a second meal break of no fewer than 30 minutes also must be provided. The second meal break must be provided no later than the end of an employee's 10th hour of work.

In addition, employers must provide paid 10-minute rest periods for employees who work at least 3.5 hours.

These mandatory rest breaks must be offered for every four hours worked, or "major fraction" thereof. Anything over two hours is considered to be a "major fraction" of four.

Some clarification

In 2012, a California Supreme Court decision — in a case involving Brinker Restaurant Corp. — offered welcome direction to employers by clarifying their obligations regarding the rules, said Mills.

Specifically, the court ruled that employers are not obligated to make sure workers take their breaks. Once the breaks are provided, employers do not have to police workers to be sure that no

work is performed.

Employees are free to do what they chose during their breaks, including work.

Despite the clarification provided by the Brinker decision, the meal- and rest-break rules continue to be the grist for lawsuits against companies.

The consequences of failing to provide breaks can be very costly: one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate for each workday per missed meal period, and another for each rest break not given.

"This is where it takes sitting down with your legal counsel and discussing your routes and your meal- and rest-break obligations, and come up with something that is workable for your business. You can't just say, 'I can't do it,'" Mills said.

"Is it going to be inconvenient? Probably. But if you're trying to be as compliant as possible and be litigation adverse, that's the tactic you're going to take."

Here are specific actions Mills suggests motorcoach operators can take to protect themselves from claims:

- Establish an official company policy that spells out when workers are entitled to breaks and how long those breaks are, and include it in the employee handbook.

- Call it out as a stand-alone

policy in the handbook, and require employees to sign forms acknowledging they've read the policy and information on the law. That way, "there isn't a question down the line that they didn't know."

"Yeah, I got this employee handbook, but I never read it."

"Well, no, you've received a specific policy that you acknowledged you read, received and understood."

- Keep detailed records of breaks and use timecards to acknowledge that employees received any and all of their rest breaks during the pay period.

- Conduct training sessions for managers and employees on the rules and the importance of adhering to them. "Because it's not as easy in the transportation industry as it is for other industries. Other places, when the meal bell rings, everyone takes their break. That's easy. Here, you have to continually remind these folks, especially drivers, these are the obligations and this is what you have to do."

- Use electronic monitoring. "You can have the onboard computer system set as warnings if their meal or rest break is coming up. You can even go so far as you can't log back in until you've taken it. If you haven't gone for your full half-hour, you can't log back in the system until the half-hour is completed."

Sprinter production shifting

STUTTGART, Germany — The next-generation Sprinter, a passenger van popular with North American motorcoach operators, will be produced in both Germany and North America.

Mercedes-Benz Vans, the Daimler unit responsible for the company's commercial-van business, said it has begun searching for a plant site, suggesting it could be in the U.S., Canada or Mexico.

"We can cover the growing demand for large vans in the North American market economically only if we produce the vehicles locally in the NAFTA region," said Volker Mornhinweg, head of Mercedes-Benz Vans. "That's why we have decided to produce the next generation of the Sprinter in North America as well."

The U.S. is now the Sprinter's second-larg-

est sales market after Germany; 23,000 Sprinters were delivered to U.S. customers in 2013.

However, Daimler has determined that its current production system for NAFTA-bound Sprinters is inefficient, resulting in excessive delivery times and higher sticker prices.

Because of high import tariffs, Sprinters destined for the U.S. have so far been produced at Daimler plants in Germany, then "partly dismantled in a time-consuming process and reassembled at the plant in Charleston, S.C."

Daimler said the result of all that is "a significant competitive disadvantage" ...since it leads to long delivery times, makes the vehicle more expensive for U.S. customers, and is therefore not economical in the long term in view of the expected growth in demand."

Additional webinars explain Affordable Care Act

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Small Business Majority, an advocacy organization, have extended a webinar series designed to help small employers learn the basics of the Affordable Care Act and what it means for their organization and employees. (See Oct. 15 Bus & Motorcoach News.)

Topics covered include cost containment, the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit, the health insurance marketplace, and employer shared responsibility.

Webinar content is generally the same each week.

Three Affordable Care Act 101 webinars

in English have been added for this month. They will be:

- Thursday, Dec. 4 at 2 p.m. eastern time
- Thursday, Dec. 11 at 2 p.m. eastern time
- Thursday, Dec. 18 at 2 p.m. eastern time

Previously announced webinars in Spanish will be:

- Tuesday, Dec. 2 at 4 p.m. eastern time
- Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 4 p.m. eastern time

To register for one of the webinars, go to www.sba.gov/healthcare and scroll down to the list and links appearing under the headline: "Affordable Care Act 101 Webinars for Small Employers."



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Expo education sessions gain small-operator track

NEW ORLEANS — The United Motorcoach Association has announced its “solution” sessions for UMA Motorcoach Expo 2015, including an educational track geared specifically for small fleet operators.

The initial small fleet operator session is called “Business 101: How Much Should I be Charging, and Insurance Options.”

The session, as the title implies, will cover the basics of business management, how to price services, and insurance requirements and options for various fleet sizes.

“This session will address all three factors, plus give operators the resources to tackle them,” said UMA President and CEO Victor Parra.

Small Fleet Operator Session 2 will deal with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Safety Management Cycle, Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, and the federal charter service rule.

How these issues apply to small fleet operations will be addressed, as well as how to deal with them from a compliance standpoint.

The final small-fleet operator session will offer an overview of three other important areas: the U.S. Department of Defense military bus agreement, equipment maintenance, and filing for tire and fuel tax refunds.

Here's a summary of the key operator and educational sessions scheduled for UMA Motorcoach Expo 2015 here Jan. 18-22:

MONDAY, JAN. 19

9:30-10 a.m. UMA Active Member Meeting. Annual meeting that provides members with updates from association leaders.

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. UMA Maintenance Interchange. This session, led by Kevin Whitworth of Whitworth Bus Sales, is the only place where motorcoach owners, operators and maintenance professionals can participate in an open discussion about common maintenance issues. The session is closed to vendors.

10-10:45 a.m. UMA Legislative & Regulatory Update. Overview of key federal legislative and regulatory initiatives.

Drivers unite

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

which will get its support from members and sponsors.

The association website is at www.pmda-na.org. Membership information is available on the website, including a form that can be printed or downloaded. Eventually, the group expects to institute online membership registration.

The organization mailing address is 1405 Capitol Drive, Unit C, Pewaukee, WI 53072. Phone: (844) 952-7314.

All four founders of the association are part-time drivers for Lamers Bus Lines in Green Bay, Wis., the nation's 16th largest motorcoach company.

11 a.m.-Noon Solution Sessions

Operations: Selecting the Right Electronic Logging Device. The 2014 UMA Membership Survey and Industry Assessment showed that a large number of operators don't have electronic logging devices. With a proposed rule already published mandating ELDs, operators need to be ready to comply. In this session, learn about the different ELDs and assess which device is right for your operation.

Finance: Evaluating Customer Profitability. Significant capital requirements are inherent to our industry. Because this limits the amount of capital available to invest in business development, it forces operators to focus on margins. This may even mean jettisoning marginal customers. Learn at this session how you can determine true customer profitability to make sure you're serving those who are really helping your bottom line.

Marketing: Choosing the Right Marketing Mix. More companies are choosing to expand their marketing channels and shift their marketing resources more heavily toward electronic channels – web, social media, email. Hear from operators who've shifted away from more traditional channels. It will help you select the right marketing mix for your company.

Travel Exchange: How All the Pieces Work Together. Travel Exchange brings together the entire group-travel industry – from motorcoach suppliers and operators to tour operators and travel and tourism suppliers. They all are working toward a common goal: more group travel business. Each plays a role in the group travel experience and all can benefit from understanding what each other's role is and how they can support one another to provide a high quality, safe experience for customers. During this panel discussion, hear different perspectives from within the group travel industry and how understanding each piece can improve and benefit your business.

Small Fleet Operator: Session 1 – Business 101, How Much Should I be Charging, Insurance. New educational track. This session is geared specifically toward small fleet operators. Learn the basics of business management, address the question “How much should I be charging for my services?” and discuss insurance requirements and options for companies your size. This session will address those concerns and give you the resources to tackle these issues within your business.

Howell, who developed the idea for the association, has 20 years of executive experience in national and regional sales and marketing. To assist him, he recruited three fellow, part-time drivers with strong professional backgrounds in areas essential to creating such a group.

Krupkowski has more than 25 years of information technology and web-development experience at several corporations.

The vice president of communications, Joseph Korb, has a background in photography, graphic arts and desktop publishing.

The treasurer, who will eventually become the association comptroller, George Kren, has a bachelor's degree in finance and more than 20 years of experience as a purchasing agent for a major corporation.

2-3 p.m. Solution Sessions

Operations: Increasing Your Revenue with Public-Private Partnerships. This session will consider revenue generating opportunities often overlooked by charter bus companies. These opportunities include commuter, para-transit, school bus, and others. This session will discuss how to build a relationship with local transit agencies and other public entities to secure contract work. A panel discussion will follow a brief presentation.

Finance: Spader Group – Part I. Known for such programs as Total Management and UMA 20 Groups, Spader Business Management has spent more than 30 years educating businesses on how to save time and money, how to develop a strong company culture and high performing staff, how to obtain and retain more customers, and how to see and adjust ahead of the marketplace. A specific topic for this session will be announced before Expo.

Marketing: Sports Marketing. College and professional sports teams alike increasingly rely on motorcoach operators to transport their athletes throughout the sports season. In this session, hear from companies that have tapped into this market and found success in pursuing this unique and loyal customer group.

Travel Exchange: How All the Pieces Work Together – Part II. A continuation of the morning session. (See 11 a.m.-noon sessions.)

Small Fleet Operator: Session 2 – Safety Management Cycle, ADA, Charter Service Rule. New educational track. In this session, geared specifically for small fleet operators, learn about the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Safety Management Cycle, the industry's American with Disabilities Act requirements, and the federal Charter Service Rule. This session will discuss how each of these programs apply to your business and their compliance requirements.

3:15-4:15 p.m. Solution Sessions

Operations: Fatigue Management. A prevalent issue facing the industry, fatigue management can be a preventative tool if properly developed and adopted within your motorcoach operations. In this panel discussion, operators will discuss their fatigue management programs and the benefits derived from them.

Finance: Spader Group – Part II. A continuation of the earlier session. (See 2 p.m. sessions.)

Marketing: Diversifying Services. There's an old axiom everyone is familiar with: “Don't put all your eggs in one basket.” You (and your lender) own some very expensive assets that are occupying space in your yard. This session will show you how to diversify your operations beyond the traditional charter business and expand into new, more profitable markets. This will help put you in a better position to protect against the ups and downs of the charter bus market, and aid in building a more balanced portfolio of revenue-generating services.

Small Fleet Operator: Session 3 – Military Bus Agreement, Equipment Maintenance, Filing for Tire and Fuel Tax Refunds. New educational track. In this session, geared specifically toward small fleet operators, learn about military bus agreements, discuss equipment maintenance issues and solutions, and understand how to file for tire- and fuel-tax refunds.

4:30-5:30 p.m. Bonus Hour of Education

Operations: Smart Driver Training. Learn how to reduce fuel and other operational costs with successful techniques and methods discussed in this session. What you learn here will save you money when you get back to your business.

Finance: Alcohol – What is Your Liability? Ever wonder what your exposure is when alcohol is involved in a group trip? Find out how you can mitigate your risk and protect your passengers and your company.

Travel Exchange: How to Work Best with Tour Operators. Looking to expand your business? Tour operators can help you do that. In this session, learn more about tour operators, how they run their businesses, and ways you can cultivate better partnerships and working relationships to serve your customers.

TUESDAY, JAN. 20

8:45-9:45 a.m. A continental breakfast will be served prior to these sessions.

Operations: Getting Involved in Local Politics and PAC. Take action and have your voice heard. Operators who are involved with political representatives and government units at the local level can tell you how this interaction bears fruit for their companies. Everyone in the industry needs to be actively involved in legislation that will ultimately affect you and your business. In this session, learn the importance of political action committees and how your voice can be heard by local government.

Finance: Tax Planning – Thinking of Selling? Thinking of selling your motorcoach business? Don't forget the tax implications associated with a sale. There are things you can do, with the right information, to minimize your tax exposure. In this session, hear from experts who'll show you how to assure Uncle Sam doesn't take an oversize bite out of the proceeds from the sale of your company.

Marketing: How to Sell on Social Media. With more and more of your customer base active on social media networks, now is the time to take advantage of all the opportunities these platforms can offer. In this session, learn how you can start using social media to advance your company's selling strategies.

Travel Exchange: How All the Pieces Work Together – Wrap up. A wrap-up session from Monday, including Q&A opportunities.

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Recommendation: Reserve room for UMA Expo...now

NEW ORLEANS — Attention UMA Motorcoach Expo 2015 attendees: Organizers of the big show have a question.

If you haven't already booked your hotel room for Expo in New Orleans, what are you waiting for?

UMA reports its hotel block is filling up quickly and it doesn't want anyone to miss out on being where all the action is...and where other UMA Motorcoach Expo and NTA Convention attendees will be.

After all, a lot of networking happens in hotel lobbies, restaurants and bars.

One of the many benefits of having Expo in New Orleans is that the official event hotels are convenient to the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, site of most Expo activities.

For next year's show, there are blocks of Expo rooms at four hotels, three of which are within easy walking distance of the convention center.

The fourth hotel is positioned near the action of Bourbon Street and the convention center.

Here's a special tip for those attending International Motorcoach Group's Safety and Maintenance Forum that happens just before Expo.

The IMG event will be at the New Orleans Marriott. If you don't see availability over IMG's dates through UMA's housing link, please visit IMG's event page to book your room in their sub block at the New Orleans Marriott. That block has been pulled aside for you.

The UMA Motorcoach EXPO 2015 housing bureau is Par Avion Inc., which uses the services and booking website of Passkey International.

You will not be contacted by Par Avion unless there is a question about your reservation. If a company other than Par Avion contacts you, please blow a whistle by immediately contacting the housing manager at (877) 685-2949.

Here are the New Orleans Expo host hotels:

- New Orleans Marriott Hotel
- Hilton New Orleans Riverside
- Hampton Inn & Suites, New Orleans Convention Center Hotel
- Courtyard New Orleans Downtown/Convention Center

Room reservations can be made online or by phone. Online, go to www.motorcoachexpo.com; phone, call (877) 685-2949 (toll-free) or (424) 702-3745 (local).

The Expo website also has the latest information about the show.

2015 Motorcoach Expo: A tire-kicker's paradise

NEW ORLEANS — There is expected to be a record number of new motorcoaches, buses and other equipment on the floor of UMA Motorcoach Expo 2015 here in January.

The show's "Platinum Sponsors," ABC Companies/ Specialty Vehicles, ABC Companies/Van Hool Motorcoaches, Alliance Bus

Group/CAIO, Motor Coach Industries/Setra, Prevost, and Temsa Global/CH Bus Sales, will be bringing plenty of vehicles to the show.

Here's an early list of the Platinum Sponsors' coaches and equipment that will be at Expo in New Orleans:

- ABC Companies/ Specialty

Vehicles plans to bring a: New Flyer Xcelsior, New Flyer MiDi, Ameritrans M-2 Vista, Ameritrans E285, and Alexander Dennis E400

- ABC Companies/Van Hool

Motorcoaches plans to bring a: Van Hool TX45, Van Hool CX45 and Van Hool TDX925

- Alliance Bus Group/CAIO

plans to bring a: CAIO S3645,

CAIO S3436 and CAIO G3400

- Motor Coach Industries/ Setra plans to bring a: MCI J4500, Setra S 417 and one other vehicle

• Prevost plans to bring a: H3-45, Volvo 9700 and X3-45 Commuter

• Temsa Global/CH Bus Sales plans to bring a: TS 45 with lift, TS 35 and TS 30



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Wisconsin operator Keith Krug dies

MEDFORD, Wis. — Keith W. Krug, who used his considerable mechanical and maintenance skills as the basis for founding two bus companies and a towing service, plus — at one point — operating a pair of milk trucks, died here in late October. He was 80.

After graduating from Medford High School, Mr. Krug moved to Milwaukee where he worked at Standard Oil.

He returned to Medford two years later, going to work for the local Ford dealer before opening his own repair garage.

He acquired two milk trucks and their routes, plus three school

buses contracted by the Medford School District.

In 1964, Mr. Krug and his wife, Joan, purchased land in Medford where they built their home and a garage. Mr. Krug worked as a mechanic and continued operating school buses before obtaining the contract to supply all of the buses used by the school district.

He also started a motorcoach operation, called Krug Tours, and enjoyed traveling with groups around the U.S.

Two of Mr. Krug's children, Barb and Bruce, continue to operate the school bus service and motorcoach company. The school bus

operation has a fleet of 25 buses, while the motorcoach business has 6 coaches.

In 1968, Mr. Krug started the towing service, which he later sold to his son Brian.

He also served four years in the National Guard.

Mr. Krug was a member of the United Motorcoach, American Bus, Wisconsin School Bus and Wisconsin Motor Coach associations, and the Wisconsin Towing Association.

Besides Barb, Brian and Bruce, two other children survive Mr. Krug, Jim and Bob. Despite having five children, Mr. and Mrs. Krug also were foster parents.

Lobbyist for N.C. association dies

CLAYTON, N.C. — Gene Causby, the longtime lobbyist for the North Carolina Motorcoach Association, died last month. He was 81.

During a 37-year professional career, Mr. Causby was a teacher, coach, athletic director, education administrator and facilitator, and association executive.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Mr. Causby was asked by North Carolina's director of public instruction to help bring civility and

goodwill to school boards, teachers, administrators, parents and especially students during the early days of school desegregation.

Mr. Causby and a colleague traveled the state, bringing fragmented groups together to find solutions for the schools.

Through wit and courage Mr. Causby and his colleague defused situations and solved problems. He often said it was the most rewarding period of his career.

From 1980-94, Mr. Causby

served as executive director of the North Carolina School Boards Association.

After his retirement, he became a lobbyist for under-recognized groups — the N.C. School Counselors Association, N.C. Drivers Training and Safety Education Association, Visiting International Faculty, School Nutrition Associations of N.C., and the North Carolina Motorcoach Association.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen, and three children.

S.C. public safety official, Col. Anna Amos, dies at 55

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Retired Col. Anna Amos, who achieved a string of notable "firsts" with the South Carolina Department of Public Safety and managed a respected commercial vehicle enforcement program, died at the end of October. She was 55.

Col. Amos served with distinction for 25 years, becoming the first female hired in commercial vehicle safety as a regulatory inspector and later as a safety inspector, advancing to the rank of lieutenant.

She was the first African-American female to head a state law enforcement division in South Carolina, and the first female captain at the Department of Public Safety. She also became the first female to achieve the rank of lieutenant colonel.

From 2000 until she retired in 2008, she commanded the State Transport Police, which enforces commercial motor vehicle laws in South Carolina. She held the rank of colonel.

For her ground-breaking service, she was honored by the South Carolina General Assembly when she retired.

Following her retirement she went to work for the Federal Motor

Carrier Safety Administration as director of safety programs in the Office of Enforcement.

She was the U.S. government representative on the advisory board of the International Registration Plan. The motorcoach industry representative on that board is Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association.

"Anna was truly an extraordinary person and a consummate professional," said Parra. "I'm proud to say she was both a close friend and valued colleague."

"Anna understood how important it was for industry and government to work together to improve commercial vehicle safety. She leaves a huge void on many levels."

Said Ken Presley, UMA vice president and chief operating officer: "Col. Amos seemed to strike the perfect balance of strict but fair, while leading one of the best commercial motor vehicle enforcement teams in the country."

"Her professionalism and dedication to commercial vehicle safety will long provide inspiration; her sense of humor always brought a smile."

She is survived by a son and daughter.

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