

## Driving Motorcoach Expo

### Prevost pursues partnerships, technology to win customers

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Motorcoach operators that buy Prevosts next year won't just be customers of the coach manufacturer, they'll become its partners as well.

That's the goal the bus builder has set for itself as it reves up efforts to sell more coaches by helping its customers achieve two key business goals — reduce operational costs and increase revenues.

"It may not be a new approach but we're really going to try to emphasize this issue about partnerships," says Andrew Kankula, senior vice president for sales and marketing at Prevost.

He plans to push the game plan at the 2010 UMA Motorcoach Expo in Las Vegas in late February, where Prevost Car will emphasize tools that can help operators improve their bottom line — a high-tech electronic management system, new engines equipped with advanced emission control systems, and a variety of entertainment systems.

Kankula says that, among other things, the electronic management system will help control bus maintenance costs, while the new engines will help reduce fuel usage,

### First in a series

and the sound and vision systems will help attract new customers.

"Everything we do — it's part of our mission — is designed to improve the profitability and lower the operating costs of our customers," he adds.

Kankula sees Motorcoach Expo as the ideal place to begin turning customers into partners because the large and diverse audience it draws gives the company the opportunity to measure how operators respond.

"The show is the largest really direct-contact experience we have of the first-level buyer of motorcoaches," he notes.

### Best foot forward

Prevost plans to lead its showcase at the Expo with the Prevost Liaison, a satellite-based tracking system that allows operators to use their office computers to keep a real-time handle on their coaches and how they are performing.

The Liaison, heralded as more efficient and reliable than cellular-based systems, not only tells

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 ▶



Andrew Kankula: Prevost's top sales, marketing executive.

## Motorcoach Safety

### Feds unveil far-reaching plan

WASHINGTON — Federal transportation regulators are gearing up to adopt a series of far-reaching motorcoach safety measures they say will make the industry safer, reduce accidents and save lives.

The Motorcoach Safety Action Plan, released by the U.S. Department of Transportation, calls for steps ranging from mandatory seatbelts and electronic on-board recording equipment, to strengthening the roofs of buses, to getting illegal carriers off the road.

Rulemaking procedures for some of the measures — the seatbelt mandate among them — could start as early as the first quarter of next year, while others would not begin for another year or so. Initiatives that already are underway will be continued and, in some cases, accelerated.

The ambitious plan is the product of an order by U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood who in April called for a fresh look at motorcoach safety is-

ues in response to several high-profile accidents earlier this year and in 2008, and frequent criticism that federal regulators have not done enough to assure the safety of bus passengers.

The action plan was the work of several federal agencies, including the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which is responsible for most motorcoach safety regulations and will be closely involved in carrying out the initiatives.

"We are committed to making sure that bus travelers reach their destinations safely," said LaHood. "These improvements will not only help reduce the number of motorcoach crashes, it will also help save lives and reduce injuries."

While acknowledging the industry's excellent safety history, the report on the plan pointed to several widely publicized accidents with multiple fatalities —

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 ▶

### Industry (generally) embraces plan

The ambitious and game-changing federal plan to improve motorcoach safety in the U.S. has won broad support from the industry, despite the prospect of additional costs and new regulations.

Trade groups, safety consultants, operators and others say they like most of what they see in the Motorcoach Safety Action Plan, which contains such measures as mandatory passenger seatbelts, a ban on texting by drivers, and the increased use of high-tech safety systems.

"While the devil is always in the details, it looks like they got it right," said Ken Presley, vice president of the United Motorcoach Association. "We now have two decades of crash studies and we must apply those lessons in a comprehensive approach to prevent fu-

ture tragedies."

The safety plan was ordered by U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in April. LaHood asked the agencies within his department to come up with a fresh study of motorcoach safety following several high-profile fatal accidents.

"Our hat is off to Secretary LaHood and his team," said Presley, adding that UMA is eager to continue working with federal regulators and others to make motorcoach travel even safer than it is today.

The American Bus Association praised the report as well, saying it supports many of the proposed initiatives and looks forward to working on the issues with the secretary and the federal agencies.

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### FMCSA administrator faces challenges

WASHINGTON — Anne Ferro has moved into the driver's seat at the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the agency responsible for overseeing critical motorcoach and trucking industry safety issues, some of which have been lingering since the agency's creation 10 years ago.

Ferro's confirmation last month by the U.S. Senate hit a few bumps in the road. She was strongly opposed by the Teamsters Union and the safety advocacy community.

At the same time, she had broad support from the

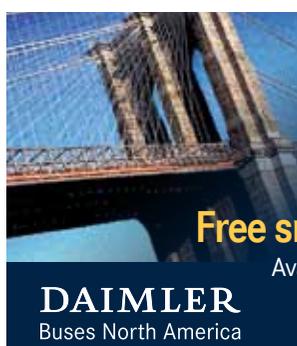
national safety community, groups she will be regulating, and politicians from her home state of Maryland, who cited her record as an effective chief of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration before she was named president of the Maryland Motor Truck Association, her most recent position.

Ferro is the fourth full-fledged FMCSA chief

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Anne Ferro



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# Bus rental outfits catch eye of federal regulators

WASHINGTON — A group of Georgia motorcoach operators who have been looking for help in their struggle to reign in private businesses that rent buses and drivers without any federal oversight may have finally found an ally.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration plans to seek statutory authority to begin regulating the companies, which have been under fire by operators in Georgia and other southern states for years.

The rental or leasing companies currently do not come under any of the federal or state regulations that govern the motorcoach

industry, including safety rules for buses and drivers, mandatory inspections, insurance requirements, and driver drug and alcohol testing.

“Getting them regulated would be very good news for us,” said Jimmy Cantrell of Daniel’s Charters and Tours in Gainesville, Ga. “We’ve tried to do everything we can do down here, but they just keep finding loopholes.”

Brenda Tidwell of Leisure Time Charter and Tours in Emerson, Ga., called the decision by the regulatory agency great news for carriers all across the country.

“Any thing we can do to make our industry safer is great, and this will make it safer,” she asserted.

Both Cantrell and Tidwell have been at the forefront of the effort to get someone to regulate the bus rental industry.

The move by the FMCSA to seek legal authority to regulate the companies is part of a new motorcoach industry safety plan that was put together by the U.S. Department of Transportation and several of its regulatory agencies. The plan contains a series of safety measures, including more inspections of buses and improved enforce-

ment to get illegal carriers off the highways. (See articles on Page One).

The report on the plan said federal authorities are aware of the rental companies and how they operate and that they could endanger the public by placing untrained or even disqualified drivers behind the wheel of motorcoaches transporting passengers.

Motorcoach operators for some time have been warning about the dangers of the rental companies, stressing that people who rent the buses have no idea if they are safe and if the drivers are qualified.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

## Escot grows Orlando operation

ORLANDO, Fla. — Escot Bus Lines of Largo, Fla., has solidified its expansion into the Orlando market with the addition of two buildings that allow it to not only better maintain its own fleet but to provide a variety of services to coaches visiting the popular Florida city.

“We have built a five-bay garage and a separate bus wash facility, complete with a 12,000-gallon fuel tank,” said Escot CEO Brian Scott.

“Combined, the two buildings represent 11,300 square feet of newly constructed work space,” he added.

Escot has been working from the two-plus-acre Orlando site for about two years,

but the new buildings make the branch location both fully operational and self sufficient.

“We are looking to perform outside mechanical work for companies visiting the Orlando area, of which there are a ton,” said Scott. “We can perform light mechanical repairs, including air conditioning, lavatory service, and bus washes.”

Scott said he was also excited about having the new facility because it gives the company a solid foundation for further growth in the central Florida market and provides better access to north and south Florida markets.

Escot currently operates 14 buses out of the Orlando location, which is managed by



Escot Bus Lines' new facility offers maintenance and other services.

Beau Langford. He is supported by Biriam Orta in sales, Maria Piacente and Cody Dopson in operations, and Fred Infante and Joe Brancoccio in maintenance.

“We are...looking forward to not only growing our business, but also to being able

to handle the service needs of visiting coach companies from around the country,” said Scott.

The facility is at 400 W. Landstreet Rd., and can be reached by calling (407) 418-1222.

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# THE DOCKET

## Old FAST border cards become invalid Jan. 5

WASHINGTON — U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced that starting Jan. 5, the older versions of its Free and Secure Trade cards will no longer be accepted as identification to enter or re-enter the country.

Border officers will permit a one-time entry into the U.S. to trav-

elers with old FAST cards, but the card will be seized immediately, and the user will be referred to a FAST enrollment center.

New FAST cards, with enhanced security features, were sent to card holders starting in March 2009.

Anyone who believes he or she should have received a new FAST

card should go to a local enrollment center to either pick up the new card or to apply to have a new card issued, which will take approximately 10 to 14 days to receive.

The Free and Secure Trade program is available to commercial drivers crossing both the northern and southern borders.

## British Columbia licensing modified during Olympics

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The International Registration Plan has announced that license fees for British Columbia are now being prorated on a daily, rather than a monthly, basis.

The change was made to help the province meet expenses associated with the heavy influx of vehicles during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

The B.C. multi-jurisdictional vehicle tax continues to be prorated on a monthly basis, however, and B.C. apportionable fee amounts and fee tables remain unchanged.

An updated fee schedule to reflect that license fees are prorated on a daily basis has been developed, and the fee schedule has been updated to include the formula for the calculation of the multi-jurisdictional vehicle tax.

Questions regarding the changes should be directed to Charito MacKay at (604) 443-4478, or e-mail [charito.mackay@icbc.com](mailto:charito.mackay@icbc.com).

Motor Coach Canada reports that Canadian bus operators going to B.C. for the Winter Olympics have three options for intraprovincial operations: (1) fully plate the vehicle in B.C., (2) be registered under the International Registration Plan, or (3) operate with a nonresident quarterly permit (during the first quarter of 2010).

The nonresident quarterly permit, according to Motor Coach Canada, is a temporary measure to support the winter games' transportation logistics, and is available to any licensed nonresident commercial vehicle for intraprovincial operations within B.C. between Jan. 1 and March 31.

Non-resident quarterly permits are available by calling the provincial permit center's permit line: (800) 559-9688.

Out-of-province carriers are reminded that if a financial responsibility filing has not been made, then insurance will need to be purchased with the permit.

## Big toll increases proposed

### 85 percent hike planned for Blue Water Bridge

PORT HURON, Mich. — Buses and trucks using the Blue Water Bridge to cross into Canada from Michigan could see tolls rise 85 percent under a proposed rate increase.

The Michigan Department of Transportation said it needs the additional \$8 million to \$10 million in revenue the increase would produce to maintain the bridge, which carries Interstate 69 traffic from Port Huron on the U.S. side

to Sarnia, Ontario. The increase, if adopted, would take effect Jan. 5.

Buses and trucks that currently pay Michigan \$1.75 per axle to cross the bridge would have to pay \$3.25 per axle, an 85 percent jump. Passenger cars would pay a flat \$3 toll, compared with the \$1.50 toll they now pay.

Additional information is available on the Blue Water Bridge website at [www.michigan.gov/bluewaterbridge](http://www.michigan.gov/bluewaterbridge).

### 83 percent for seven Bay Area bridges

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Bay Area Toll Authority is considering a hefty increase in tolls on the seven state-owned Bay Area toll bridges.

The additional revenue raised by the proposed toll increase would pay the estimated \$750 million cost of seismic retrofit projects on the Antioch and Dumbarton bridges.

Three-axle motorcoaches would be impacted by either of two toll proposals being considered.

Under option No. 1, the toll

for three-axle coaches would rise to \$11 per axle from the current \$6, and under option No. 2, the toll would jump to \$15 per axle.

The toll for autos would go to \$6 from the current \$5.

The toll hike would affect the Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond-San Rafael, San Mateo-Hayward and San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridges. The change would not apply to the Golden Gate Bridge.

For more information, go to [www.mtc.ca.gov](http://www.mtc.ca.gov).

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# Spring timetable for highway bill

WASHINGTON — Don't look for a long-term federal highway and public transportation bill to hit the floor of the U.S. Senate before spring, with passage problematic after that, says the chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., said last month she was preparing to finish committee work on the new highway bill by spring. Meanwhile she is seeking a six-month extension of the existing law.

"Getting a bill out is what I'd like to do," Boxer told reporters at the conclusion of a meeting with U.S. Department of Transportation officials.

She cautioned, however, that while her committee could finish by spring, a timetable for passage by the full Senate was not her decision.

Currently she is "focused on the six-month extension" of the law that expired in September. Congress has twice passed short-term extensions for the law as part of bills to continue funding the government while completing other overdue long-term spending bills.

The latest extension expires Dec. 18.

Boxer, other Senate committee chairmen and ranking Republicans wrote to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., asking them to bring a six-month extension to the floor for a vote this month.

Previous attempts to pass multi-month extensions have stalled on the Senate floor because of Republican objections.

Those extensions have cut the amount of money available to states by as much as 30 percent, according to USDOT officials. However, since many states have unused funds still to tap, and the winter months generally slow construction spending, the problem is not yet considered acute.

By extending the highway bill as part of continuing resolutions that fund the government, DOT said, it is forced to cut back on how much money it can allow states to spend. The Senate's independent extension would reverse this rescission of funds.

Boxer said that while she continues to favor the longer, 18-month extension that would restore that lost funding and has been supported by the White House, "I can't convince the House."

In the House, several transportation leaders, most notably Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., have steadfastly opposed a long extension, instead preferring to work out a series of short-term stopgaps with the hope of passing new,

long-term legislation.

Boxer said the House's tactics have brought transportation funding to "a crisis point" so they could "double the gas tax."

She said she couldn't support that because "I don't have the votes in this committee to do that, let alone in the full Senate. I'm reflecting reality."

Even if the Senate passed a six-month stopgap, there's no guarantee such an extension would win Oberstar's support.

# Driver marijuana rules unchanged

WASHINGTON — New U.S. Department of Justice guidelines for federal prosecutors in states that allow the use of medical marijuana do not trump the U.S. Department of Transportation's long-standing rules on the use of the drug by safety-sensitive transportation employees, including over-the-road bus and truck drivers.

According to a USDOT compliance notice, the agency said it would not be changing its regulated drug testing program based on

the new guidelines, and that transportation employees are still prohibited from the use of marijuana, medical or not.

Under the agency's Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation, 49 CFR Part 40, at 40.151(e), a transportation employee must test negative for controlled substances.

"It remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee subject to drug testing under U.S. DOT drug testing regulations to use marijuana," the rule says.

# Cap-n-trade: More costly fuel

WASHINGTON — While the media focuses most of its attention on U.S. Senate consideration of health-care reform legislation, that body's cap-and-trade bill has been cleared for floor action.

Democrats on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved the cap-and-trade bill that opponents say would — among other things — cause a spike in the cost of diesel fuel. The committee approval cleared the way for the legislation to move to the Senate floor.

Senate leaders say they hope the final legislation will gain bipartisan support, but that seems unlikely. Senate Republicans boycotted the committee vote, calling the bill a "jobs killer."

The bill would limit greenhouse gas emissions of mostly large energy users through a cap-and-trade program which would require them to comply with emissions reduction mandates by purchasing allowances. Overall, the bill's goal is to reduce greenhouse gas levels by 2020 to 20 percent below 2005 levels.

The measure would not immediately require the transportation

sector to limit carbon emissions.

However, Republicans, some Democrats and other opponents of the bill said it is, in effect, a tax on refiners and other energy producers because it requires them to buy credits that would be passed on to customers as an increase in fuel prices.

One widely circulated estimate is that the bill would increase the price of diesel fuel by as much as 88 cents a gallon.

That estimate is supported by a report by two U.S. senators who say a cap-and-trade policy would send diesel fuel prices soaring.

Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, and Kit Bond, R-Mo., said the cap-and-trade provision in the House-passed Waxman-Markey climate change bill would assess \$3.6 trillion in higher fuel costs on American families and businesses, including \$1.3 trillion in diesel fuel prices.

Proponents of cap-and-trade believe that increasing the price of fuel will encourage the use of more fuel-efficient vehicles or alternative-fueled vehicles, but neither the bus nor the trucking industry have any such options.

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## FMCSA chief

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since the agency was created on Jan. 1, 2000. She takes the helm at a time when the agency has a very full agenda.

It largely will be Ferro's responsibility to oversee implementation of the Motorcoach Safety Action Plan unveiled by the U.S. Department of Transportation last month. (See articles on Page One.)

In the trucking sector, the agency has agreed to revamp the hours-of-service rules for long-haul drivers — perhaps the thorniest issue the agency will have to deal with.

Additionally, the long-delayed final rule that will likely require electronic onboard recorders for some truck and bus operators has been waiting to go to the White House for approval. It is expected to be published early next year.

The biggest regulatory item already slated to come out of FMCSA next year will be a strategic change in the way the agency enforces its safety rules. For years, the agency's enforcement regime was built around the compliance review, a detailed analysis.

That process is thorough but takes a lot of time and resources and touches only a small number

# Keller offers information on safety initiative

NEENAH, Wis. — J.J. Keller, the motor carrier-information storehouse, has launched a free on-line advisory service to help bus and truck operators understand and deal with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Carrier Safety Analysis 2010 initiative.

CSA 2010 is the new safety-rating system that will revamp the way operators are tracked, evaluated and selected for enforcement interventions. It will be based

of carriers. For several years now the agency has been working on a new approach, called Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010.

Under CSA 2010, fitness ratings will be based on performance information such as traffic, hours-of-service or license violations; improper maintenance, or a pattern of frequent accidents. It is a major undertaking.

FMCSA also is considering tougher requirements for new entrants to the industry. A key question is whether or not the agency should require a proficiency exam as part of New Entrant Safety Assurance Process.

In her confirmation hearing, Ferro brought up a perspective that

largely on how drivers and vehicles perform at roadside safety checks and accident records.

The system has strictly prescribed parameters by which the FMCSA will determine how often carriers will be subjected to inspections, letters of warning, facility audits or fines.

It will affect all U.S. operators and those carriers that venture into the United States from Canada and Mexico. It's expected to go into ef-

fect after the middle of next year.

The USDOT has amassed a large amount of data, so it certainly appears to be in operators' best interest to learn as much about CSA 2010 as they can.

Keller's service is described as free, easy to use and you don't have to register for anything to get access to it. Go to [www.fleetmentor.com/CSA2010/Overview1.aspx](http://www.fleetmentor.com/CSA2010/Overview1.aspx).

At 1 p.m. (central time) Dec. 17, Keller is hosting a free online

webinar to familiarize attendees with CSA 2010. It will address the system for evaluating a carrier's performance, the Safety Fitness Determination process, new interventions, and what carriers should do to prepare. Participants also can ask questions.

To register for the webcast, go to [www.fleetmentor.com/CSA2010/Overview1.aspx](http://www.fleetmentor.com/CSA2010/Overview1.aspx), click on the first item in the CSA 2010 Information box.

but Ferro sees a leadership role for the administrator.

"The administrator must take the lead in raising questions and opening up the discussion if we are to realize a commercial vehicle industry where the safest drivers and safest motor carriers are the most competitive, not the other way around."

Tidwell said she was surprised to find the FMCSA measure in the safety study.

"Sure I was surprised because I thought they would not do anything until after there was a bad accident," she said. "I am proud to see them be proactive and do this before something bad happened."

## Bus Rentals

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An added concern, according to the operators, is that the rental customers are responsible for obtaining insurance and many of them are not made aware of that before they drive off the rental lot.

Such issues do not come under FMCSA's regulatory umbrella,

but Ferro sees a leadership role for the administrator.

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# NYC seeks to balance the benefits, burdens of buses

By Veronica Vanterpool

Commuter, intercity and tour buses all benefit the city, but they can create problems for pedestrians and residents.

New York City leaders are pondering ways to address the challenge of encouraging private bus ridership into Manhattan, while managing limited street space and growing community concerns.

This issue, which was the focus of a recent town hall meeting hosted by NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn, has the tour bus industry, private bus carriers, and neighborhood residents at odds with each other despite the shared sentiment that tour buses are good for the city's economy while private bus carriers help the environment and reduce traffic.

(Sixty percent of megabus passengers, for example, reportedly switched from private automobiles.)

But private long-distance providers like megabus and BoltBus and bus tour operators appear largely unregulated throughout the city, especially in Manhattan. They

often park in undesignated spots, idle for long periods at a time, and utilize valuable sidewalk space to load and unload passengers.

Speaker Quinn wants to put an end to the city's lax enforcement of buses and is working to create an inter-agency task force with NYCDOT and the state Department of Environmental Conservation on bus idling.

She also is facilitating discussions between the NYPD and community boards in response to community complaints that enforcement agents seldom ticket buses that idle.

Tour buses create additional concerns.

Residents are mobilizing against double-decker tour buses and speaker systems that diminish their quality of life. There is legislation pending in the New York City Council to address each.

Poor enforcement and leniency by NYPD and NYCDOT may be rooted in a lack of clarity when it comes to the law.

At the town hall, Manhattan borough DOT commissioner Mar-

garet Forgione said that the DOT can only tell buses "where they can have a bus stop and where they can't."

Speaker Quinn disagreed and is looking at ways to increase the city's authority.

In the meantime, Mobilizing the Region looked at the language to try to arrive at some answers.

## How much legal authority does NYC have over buses?

While it is indisputable that New York City has authority to regulate buses generally, including where they can and cannot park (see Rules of New York City Title 34, Chapter 4.08(m)(5), and Chapter 4.10(c) and (i)), legal issues remain, namely whether the city has authority to regulate bus routes to keep buses off narrow residential streets and whether buses fall into the category of "commercial vehicles" that allows double parking under certain circumstances.

The question of whether tour bus routes can be regulated appears to be answered in the Rules of New York City, Title 34, Chap-

ter 4.10(b), which reads:

"Designated routes. No person shall operate or cause to be operated on any street a bus operating pursuant to a franchise or consent of the Department of Transportation of the City of New York which designates the route to be followed, except on the route so designated. No person shall operate or cause to be operated on any street any other bus, other than a charter bus, except over a route designated by the Commissioner [of Transportation] in writing." ("Sightseeing buses" are not the same as "charter buses," and are defined separately in Chapter 4.10.)

While sightseeing buses are licensed and regulated in areas of safety and registration by the NYC Office of Consumer Affairs, their operation is a different matter. The Office of Consumer Affairs licensing website states that the bus operators "must comply with all relevant federal, state and city laws and rules," including the requirement that routes be designated per 4.10(b).

As to whether a bus is legally a

"commercial vehicle," Title 34, Chapter 4 of the Rules of the City of New York has this: "For purposes of parking, standing and stopping rules, a vehicle shall not be deemed a commercial vehicle or a truck unless:...(B) it is permanently altered by having all seats and seat fittings, except the front seats, removed to facilitate the transportation of property..."

Clearly tour buses and charter buses don't fit into this category. Because the buses aren't commercial vehicles, they can't take advantage of a double parking loophole like an unloading box truck can.

A bus can load and unload passengers while "double parked," so long as safety allows. This rule pertains only to layovers and parking.

*Reprinted from Mobilizing the Region, the official blog of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing car dependency in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.*

*Environmental and planning organizations formed the campaign in the early 1990s.*

# Motorcoach auto liability insurance premiums slip lower

WOODBIDGE, N.J. — Insurance premiums for tour-and-charter bus operators drifted lower during the third quarter of this year, according to the Transportation Insurance Pricing Survey conducted by NIP Group.

Intensifying competition and a soft insurance market kept bus industry rates from rising during the three months ended Sept. 30, the survey by the specialized business insurance and risk management intermediary indicated.

Nearly 42 percent of motorcoach operators surveyed felt that premiums were decreasing by 1 to 10 percent during the quarter, with 25 percent indicating rates were declining by 10 to 20 percent, and just under 17 percent who believed rates were dropping by 20 to 30 percent.

Just over 16 percent of operators thought there was no change in rates during the third quarter.

Among school bus contractors, 36 percent thought rates were de-

clining by 1 to 10 percent and a like percentage indicated rates were sliding by 10 to 20 percent. Much smaller numbers — 7 percent — believed rates were dropping by 20 to 30 percent or were not changing.

Within the limousine segment, 33 percent believed rates were down 1 to 10 percent and 33 percent suggested rates were declining 10 to 20 percent.

Worker compensation rates, however, were somewhat firmer

than auto liability premiums in the ground transportation industry during the third quarter, with 46 percent of those surveyed indicating rates were down 1 to 10 percent, but nearly 42 percent believing rates were either flat or going up by 1 to 10 percent.

When asked for their overall opinion of the transportation insurance market, 44 percent said it was soft, while 36 percent indicated the market was flat or unchanged.

"TIPS results indicate that the market has reversed direction and is softer now compared to (the second) quarter," said Richard Augustyn, CEO of NIP Group.

"Nearly all signs of rates leveling off have been replaced by signs of intensifying competition. This change in direction is not what we were expecting based on last quarter's results. We will continue to monitor TIPS results to see how this plays out during the key January renewal period."

## How to contact us

To submit or report news, Letters to the Editor, articles, news releases or to report corrections:

E-mail: [bsankey@busandmotorcoachnews.com](mailto:bsankey@busandmotorcoachnews.com)  
 Fax: (405) 942-6201  
 Mail: 3108 NW 54th Street  
 Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
 Call: (866) 930-8421

To subscribe or inquire about your subscription:

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 Fax: (405) 942-6201  
 Mail: 3108 NW 54th Street  
 Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
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To advertise or to mail advertising-related materials:

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 Mail: 2200 N. Yarbrough, Suite B  
 Box No. 336  
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# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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**Mike Waters, Attendee**  
COACH AMERICA/FRANCISCAN LINES

Expo has always provided operators, large and small, the opportunity to see up close new vehicle equipment, supplies, and literally every item a bus operator will need to survive. It also gives us old timers the chance to see each other again and to meet new friends and colleagues through networking facilitated by UMA.

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**Esther Morissette, Exhibitor**  
**TURBO IMAGES**

As an industry supplier, the most significant benefit of exhibiting at UMA is the unique opportunity to meet face-to-face with our active customers and potential ones. The cost of traveling across the country to meet each of them would actually be far greater than the cost of exhibiting at UMA itself! The second one but none the less is the industry exposure that this gathering offers compared to other industry related events.



**Ronald Bast, Attendee**  
**RITEWAY BUS SERVICE, INC.**

The UMA Motorcoach Expo is the ideal venue to expand our network contacts as well as nurture existing relationships. The importance of maintaining these associations is essential.

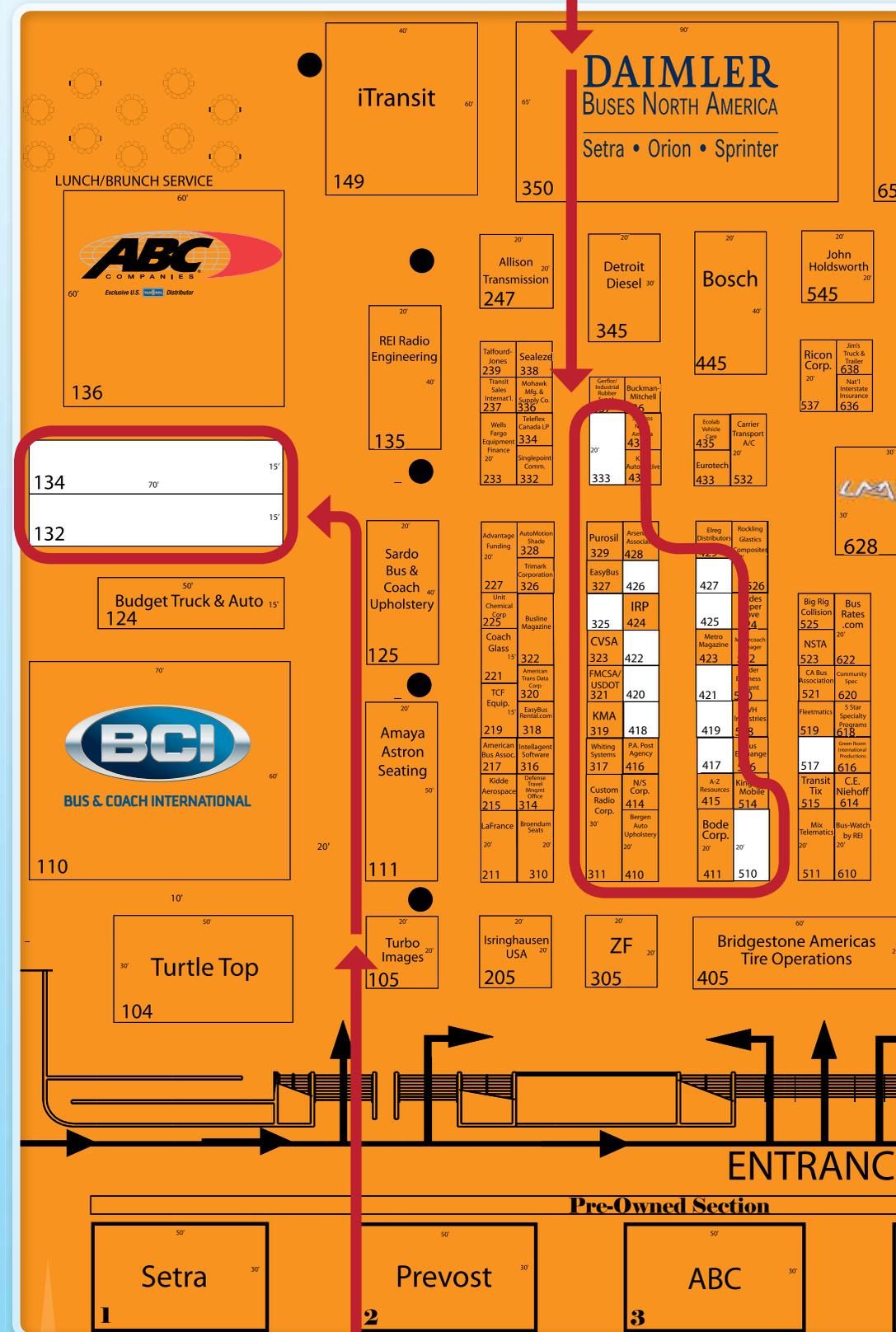


**Bob Greene, Exhibitor**  
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This is THE Show. If you are an operator in the industry, this show offers the education needed to succeed, as well as access to the vendors. As an exhibitor, you can't afford not to be here.

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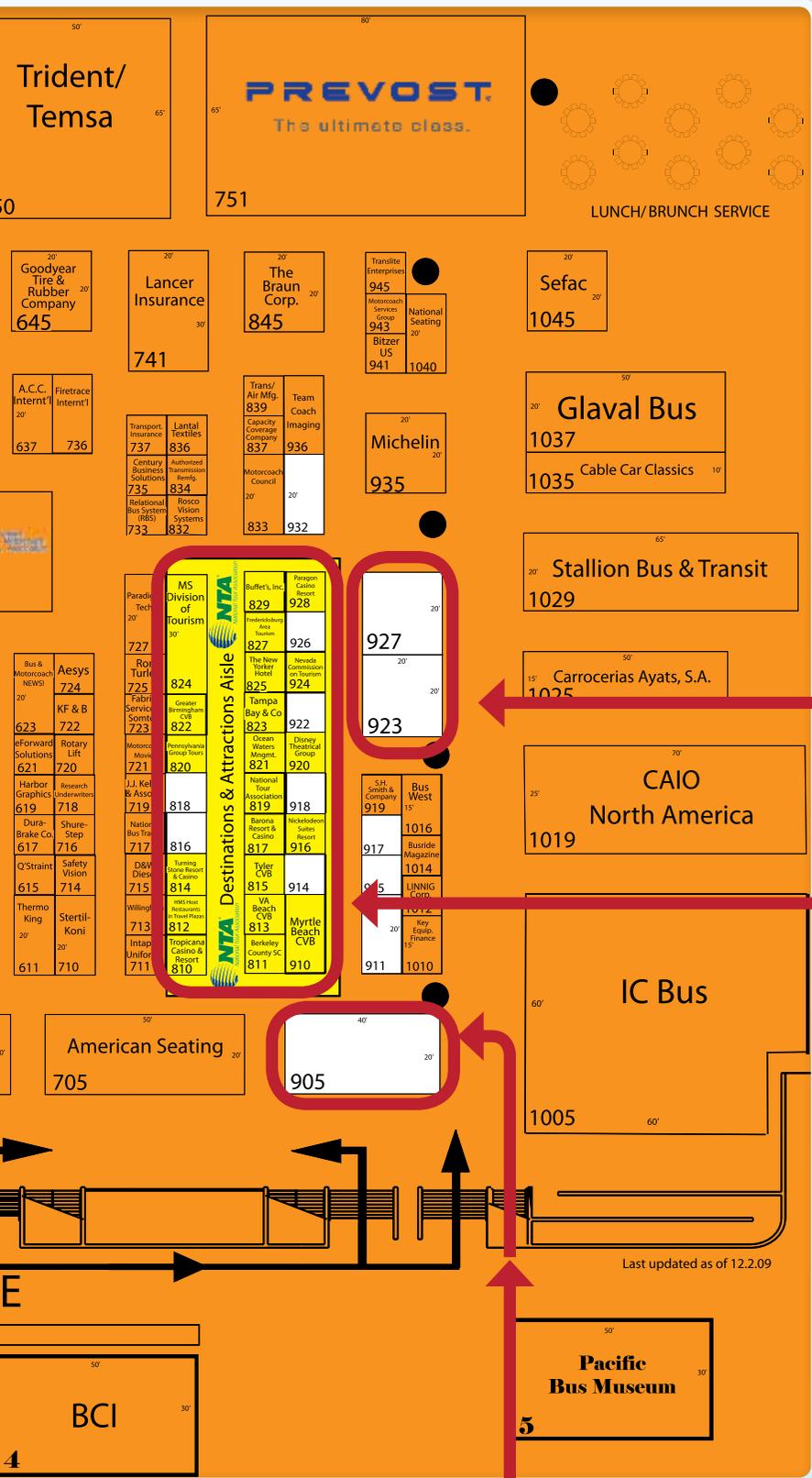


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**Sharon Robinson, Exhibitor**  
**MISSISSIPPI DIVISION OF TOURISM**

My first experience with UMA Expo was in 2008 in San Francisco and I exhibited with my partners from Mississippi. We had a good show and my partners booked business at the Expo. They were excited and eager to participate in the 2009 Expo and we actually increased our booth space.



**Audrey Bialas, Exhibitor**  
**PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**

The UMA Motorcoach Expo provides us with the forum to extend our reach to some of the industry we don't see anywhere else. It allows us to develop a pulse on current trends for the year. The networking opportunities really help build and cement the relationships which are so key to business growth.



**Brenda Kissko, Exhibitor**  
**MIDLAND, TEXAS CVB**

My favorite part of UMA is the fact that they limit the number of DMO's that attend so that we can get more one-on-one time with the operators.



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ABC Companies .....	136	Elreg Distributors Ltd.....	429	Paradigm Technology Consulting, LLC .....	727
ACC International, Inc.....	637	Eurotech Inc. ....	433	Paragon Casino Resort.....	928
Advantage Funding .....	227	Fabric Services/Somtex.....	723	Pennsylvania Group Tours .....	820
Aesys Inc.....	724	Firetrace International.....	736	Prevost .....	751
Allison Transmission .....	247	Fleetmatics .....	519	Purosil .....	329
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American Seating.....	705	Gerflor/Industrial Rubber Supply .....	337	Relational Bus Systems (RBS).....	733
American Trans Data Corp.....	320	Glaval Bus.....	1037	Research Underwriters .....	718
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Authorized Transmission Remanufacturing.....	834	Greater Birmingham CVB .....	822	Rochling Glastic Composites .....	526
AutoMotion Shade.....	328	Green Room International Productions, Inc.....	616	Rodes Roper Love, Division of Euclid Insurance Agencies LLC.....	524
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Berkeley County South Carolina.....	811	INTAPOL Uniforms .....	711	S.H. Smith & Company.....	919
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Ron LeBlanc, Exhibitor  
TEAM COACH IMAGING

I have attended the UMA Motorcoach Expo for the past 8 years. This is definitely the most exciting and rewarding trade show in the industry. Over the years, I have met great people and have made trusted friendship relationships. UMA has always been a very joyful and colorful show, and the key people that organize it are very professional in making our business easier to achieve our goals and succeed. Don't miss the Las Vegas Expo, I was there the last time and it was great !!!!!

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## megabus joins green program

COLCHESTER, Vt. — megabus.com, the large intercity curbside service owned by CoachUSA, has joined the Green Coach Certification program being developed by the University of Vermont.

megabus hopes participation in the program will bolster its efforts to encourage people to switch to greener travel options.

Under the University of Vermont program, participating companies' qualifying vehicles are outfitted with "Green Coach Certified" labels to highlight their environmental performance, similar to the system used for electrical appliances.

The initiative is part of a larger research project at the university aimed at laying the foundation for a long-term environmental certification program for the motorcoach

industry and the passenger transportation sector. (See March 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

David Kestenbaum, a member of the Green Coach Certification research team, said: "We hope this program will help consumers recognize and celebrate the most environmentally friendly forms of transportation."

megabus.com has received "Green Coach Passenger Miles" certification for meeting or exceeding an average of 148 passenger miles per gallon.

The 81-passenger, double-decker Van Hool coaches operated by megabus cover 305 passenger miles per gallon of fuel. Two of the double-deckers transport nearly as many passengers as three standard 54- to 57-passenger coaches, reducing carbon emissions and fuel

## ABC shuns Christmas cards for giving

FARIBAULT, Minn. — ABC Companies is hosting a food drive during the holiday season to help those individuals "who really need it most." ABC said the drive would be conducted in lieu of sending out Christmas cards to colleagues and friends.

The company's seven sales and

service locations are hosting the food drive with collections of non-perishable items to be given to local food banks. ABC will match each item donated with a \$1 contribution up to \$1,000 per location.

Employees are being encouraged to participate and it welcomes the support of customers as well.

## Nominations sought for Green Highway Award

LAS VEGAS — Nominations close this month for the United Motorcoach Association Green Highway Award presented annually to a motorcoach operator at the UMA Motorcoach Expo.

The award was created to promote the motorcoach industry as an effective solution for reducing carbon emissions, and to encourage industry leadership on environmental issues.

usage by one engine. megabus.com also has achieved "Green Coach Clean Engine Technology" certification for running

2007 USEPA-compliant engines. Dale Moser, president and COO of megabus, said: "The eco-badge initiative shows our customers they

are positively impacting the environment by taking megabus.com instead of driving or using other forms of intercity transportation."

Nominations are due Friday, Dec. 18. A nomination form can be found at [www.motorcoachexpo.com](http://www.motorcoachexpo.com). Look for the Green Highway Award notice on the website splash page and click on the link to download the form.

Questions should be directed to Amy Stalknecht of UMA — called (800) 424-8262, or e-mail [astalknecht@uma.org](mailto:astalknecht@uma.org).



Next session begins January 6, 2010.

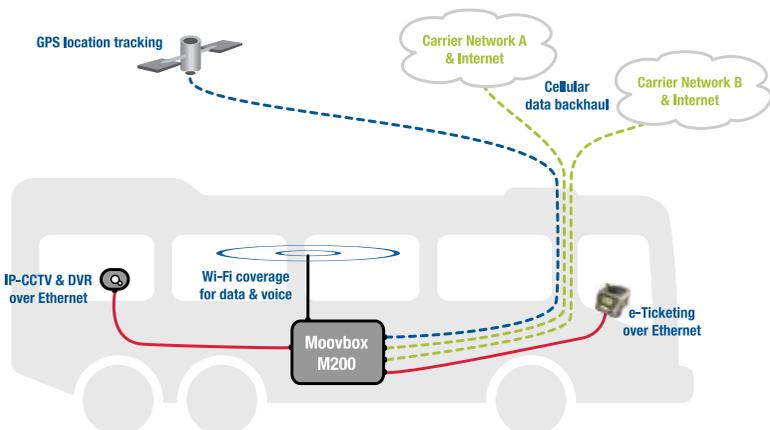
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## Industry likes plan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"ABA's position has always been that safety is our top priority," said Peter J. Pantuso ABA president and chief executive. "Government data show motorcoaches to be the safest form of surface transportation, but we are committed to making the safest even safer."

### A smart approach

Steve Kepler, interim executive director of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, called the report clear and comprehensive and said he was generally pleased with the initiatives.

"Most pleasing, though, is that it was based on science and that they looked at the data, and that's very important," he said.

The motorcoach industry has been critical of politicians and others for sometimes proposing new safety standards without first developing credible studies to show the need for them.

"Overall, the report is a step in the right direction. Much work will need to be done and many agencies will need to work together for the safety of the public. We look forward to the support of the DOT," said Michelle A. Silvestro, assistant vice president at National In-

terstate Insurance Co.

Matt Daecher of Daecher Consulting Group, a leading motorcoach industry safety consulting firm, emphasized that based on past accidents and the results of bus crash tests, some of the many regulations proposed in the report certainly are worthwhile.

### Operator support

Motorcoach operators, who would bear the brunt of the new expenses and the new regulations, were equally supportive.

"I think it will increase the professionalism of our industry and I am all for everything we can do to raise the level of professionalism," suggested Godfrey LeBron, vice president of Paradise Trailways in Hicksville, N.Y., and chairman of UMA.

Presley suggested that if the safety measures are advanced, they will help set the direction of the industry in improving safety for years to come, noting that the Passenger Carrier Safety Division of the FMCSA currently has a great team with tremendous depth, focus and resolve.

"One thing seems clear to me, the motorcoach in the near future will likely be very different than today's motorcoach, and so will the operating companies," he said.

"The business, compliance and execution knowledge to operate a motorcoach company is already increasing significantly and will continue to do so."

Although there was much praise for the steps the government plans to take to improve safety, there also were many concerns.

Kepler said he worries about the regulatory agencies being able to secure the funding to carry out many of the proposals.

"It is critical that they now seek the resources to get it done. They have to make sure the departments have the appropriate level of resources internally to get it done and that the states be given the necessary resources to handle the increased inspections and enforcement," he said.

### Costly solutions

Presley said he becomes concerned when he sees expensive technology, such as electronic on-board recording devices, proposed as solutions.

"Hours-of-service monitoring is not near as critical to our industry as fatigue and time management, combined with medically fit drivers," he said. "But I am encouraged this plan recognizes those issues as well."

Daecher expressed some ap-

prehension about the creation of a customer-complaint database.

"Without an obvious way to judge accuracy of such complaints, access to this database must be limited to enforcement and carrier personnel," he added. "Complaints must be properly monitored and registered to remove the possibility and consequences of false reporting if the database is used for any enforcement input."

Although the cost to the industry associated with many of the proposals was not addressed in the report, some in the industry raised the issue.

### Dichotomy feared

Daecher warned that the additional cost to carriers that operate by the book will increase the cost gap between them and carriers that operate illegally.

"This cost gap will make it more enticing for carriers to not meet some or all of the regulatory requirements. Therefore, mechanisms to more effectively discover and revoke the operating authority of illegal operators is necessary. To achieve this, additional funding and manpower for enforcement purposes will be necessary," he said.

He noted, too, that cost also could hamper initiatives in the re-

port that call for more emphasis on drivers with sleep disorders.

"The large question which remains is how the cost of meeting any proposed regulations regarding testing and treatment pertaining to sleep disorders is managed between those involved," he said. "Carriers may likely be unwilling to foot the cost of testing due to the transiency of drivers, and many potential or existing drivers would not likely have insurance coverage to pay for such testing."

Kepler said he was disappointed the report did not include incentives to offset some of the costs associated with many of the recommendations.

"We had hoped they would have included seeking tax incentives for the industry to help defray the costs of some of the safety improvements that were suggested," he said. "We would like to see tax credits for coaches, trucks, school buses and even transit buses for installing advanced safety systems. But that was missing."

### Silver lining?

LeBron, however, suggested that some of the costly recommendations could prove to be a financial benefit. "We keep putting more computer equipment on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 ►



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## Industry likes plan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

board and I think that will save money in the long run," he said. "Onboard recorders, for instance, can help with payroll, human resource issues and insurance claims and that should be a help."

Other suggestions were offered as well. Pantuso stressed that structural changes to motorcoaches

should all be done at one time and not piecemeal. "You can't change the windows one year, the roof design the next year and the emergency egress a year later," he said.

Daecher called for regulators to consider driver age issues. "Age-related risk factors should be considered to further insure older drivers are safe or at least to pinpoint any limitations they may have in driving a motorcoach or other pas-

senger transportation vehicle," he offered.

Silvestro said she would like to see accident event recorders be a part of a rulemaking procedure.

Despite optimism by many in the industry that federal regulations will move the initiatives quickly and successfully, Daecher hinted that the rulemaking schedule just might be too ambitious for everyone.

## Safety plan unveiled

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a crash in Texas that killed 17, another in Utah that killed nine and a third in California that also killed nine — that highlight the need for new industry safety standards.

Most of the fatal accidents were traced to driver issues, roll-overs and ejections.

The report noted that in a study of 16 fatal motorcoach accidents, driver-related problems were responsible for 60 percent of them, with driver fatigue blamed for 36 percent, medical conditions 18 percent, and inattention 6 percent. Another 20 percent were caused by the condition of the vehicle and just one crash was due to road conditions.

A much broader study of 54 accidents, in which 162 passengers and 24 drivers were killed, showed

that 76 people died after being thrown from buses that rolled over and another 15 were killed when they were ejected from buses that ran off the road and struck something, but did not roll over.

To address the accidents, the government said it will conduct formal rulemaking procedures to require onboard recording devices to better monitor driver hours and manage driver fatigue; prohibit drivers from text messaging and limit their use of cell phones and other devices while they are behind the wheel; mandate passenger seatbelts on coaches, and develop a new enforcement model to identify high-risk carriers and drivers.

### More action planned

The report also identified a series of other steps regulators could take without holding formal rule-

making procedures.

Among them are implementing a pre-employment safety screening program; developing a national drug and alcohol testing database; accelerating research on driver distraction issues; stronger state inspection programs, and establishing motorcoach knowledge standards for persons applying for authority to transport passengers.

Also, improving highway signage; setting roof-crush requirements on new coaches; doing more research on electronic crash-avoiding warning systems; evaluating the feasibility of more stringent flammability requirements and fire detection equipment, and improving escape procedures for passengers, especially children, the elderly and the disabled.

The report also took aim at two major safety issues that have long

## Image campaign seeks director to sell getting *Motorcoachified*

DENVER — The Motorcoach Council wants to hire a campaign director to help promote the *Get Motorcoachified* program, and market *Get Motorcoachified* bus wraps to operators.

The council would like to fill the position in time for the individual to travel to ABA Marketplace and UMA Motorcoach Expo in January and February.

The *Get Motorcoachified* campaign to be promoted by the new hire is designed to boost ridership on private coaches and buses.

Bus wraps and a variety of taglines have been developed touting the ways in which both travelers and the environment will benefit from more people using motorcoaches for their travel.

The person hired by the council would work as an outside contractor.

The position has a number of goals and responsibilities:

- Get 100 or more of the industry's motorcoaches to participate in the campaign and display campaign graphics within the first 90 days of taking the position.

- Quickly develop a marketing plan consisting of goals, objectives, strategies, tactics, timetables and budget

- Utilize industry publications as part of the promotional effort

- Partner with trade publications in the group travel and tour industries to promote the campaign

Persons interested in applying for the position should send a resume and list of marketing and sales accomplishments to: Victor S. Parra, Motorcoach Council board member. E-mail: [vparra@uma.org](mailto:vparra@uma.org) or fax: (703) 838-2950.

upset the country's nearly 4,000 motorcoach operators — illegal companies and bus and driver rental companies.

It said regulators would increase their oversight of unsafe carriers and those that try to evade sanctions, as well as seek statutory

authority to regulate the rental companies.

Operators for some time have been urging regulators to do more to get rogue carriers off the highways and find a way to manage the rental companies.

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## USEPA certifies 2010 Volvo engines to new standards

WASHINGTON — The 2010 engines of Volvo, which supplies engines to Prevost Car, have been certified by federal and California environmental regulators.

Volvo becomes the first diesel engine manufacturer to gain official approval for its 2010 reduced-emissions engines.

Volvo said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board certified its 11- and 13-liter engines.

All heavy-duty Volvo engines

use selective catalytic reduction technology to meet the 2010 emissions standards.

Rival engine manufacturers Cummins Inc. and Detroit Diesel Corp. also have filed 2010 certification applications with EPA and CARB for their SCR engines, but have not yet received approval.

“EPA’s certification of these engines is a crucial milestone in Volvo’s journey to producing the cleanest diesel engines in the world,” said Scott Kress, Volvo’s senior vice president for sales and

marketing.

The USEPA has been tightening U.S. emissions standards on nitrogen oxide compounds and particulate matter from diesel engines for much of this decade, having done so most recently in January 2007.

On Jan. 1, the federal standard for NOx, a major component of smog, drops to 0.2 gram per brake horsepower-hour from 1.2 grams per unit of output.

While Volvo received approval for its heavy-duty engines, Cum-

mins, the only independent engine maker, is seeking approval for heavy-duty and midrange products.

“Cummins has submitted all required paperwork and supporting documentation for the EPA certification of our 2010 on-highway engines. We have been working closely with the EPA throughout the year in preparation for the certification process and therefore don’t anticipate any issues with EPA and CARB certification for our 2010 products,” said Christy

Nycz, spokeswoman for the engine business of Cummins.

Detroit Diesel Corp., a division of Daimler Trucks North America, filed papers with EPA in late September for its DD13 and DD15 models.

Navistar, the maker of IC brand buses, International brand trucks and MaxxForce engines, will be seeking certification for three heavy-duty and four medium-duty engines. It is the only OEM using exhaust gas recirculation, or EGR, shunning SCR.

## Detroit Diesel ‘re-engages’ bus, motorcoach industry

REDFORD, Mich. — Detroit Diesel Corporation has made it official: It’s back in the North American motorcoach and bus engine business — to stay.

The No. 1 supplier of engines to the motorcoach industry for decades announced last month its “re-entry” into the U.S. and Canadian bus and coach market.

Early last year Detroit Diesel informed its bus builder customers that it was exiting the motorcoach and bus markets, with one exception — it would sell engines to its

sister company, Daimler Buses of North America, seller of Setra coaches. (See March 15, 2008, *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Then, last month, Detroit Diesel officially confirmed it would “resume its commitment to pursue the dominant position it (has) held in the (bus and motorcoach) industry for more than 50 years.”

Such an announcement had been expected since late this past summer when industry executives began reporting that Detroit Diesel was in talks with bus builders, po-

tential customers and others about remaining in the bus market. (See Oct. 15 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Included in the Detroit Diesel announcement were comments from executives at two long-time customers — Motor Coach Industries and Greyhound Lines.

“MCI is pleased to hear about Detroit Diesel’s re-engagement and future support of our industry,” said Terry Loewen, powertrain systems manager at MCI. “Detroit Diesel had been an important supplier to MCI for many

years, and we look forward to the return of their leadership, technological advances and commitment to this market for decades to come,” said Loewen.

Added Dave Leach, president and CEO of Greyhound: “We have worked with Detroit Diesel for many years and welcome their re-engagement in our industry.”

In its announcement, Detroit Diesel noted that its engines have suited the industry well since the 1950s.

It said 2010 buses and coaches

equipped with reduced-emissions Detroit Diesel engines would see 5 percent greater fuel efficiency over similar USEPA 2007 technology, while reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and nearly eliminating nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter emissions at the tailpipe.

“Detroit Diesel’s platform of engines for the bus and coach industry will be manufactured at its Redford, Mich., operation and will be supported by the company’s network of 275 North American distributor locations,” it added.

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# GPS is a great driver aid but trust it only so far

By Dave Millhouser

It was pitch black when the coach stopped.

I was sleeping in the back, and a voice whispered it was my turn to drive.

JR, the other driver, and I passed each other in the aisle — in a dance reminiscent of Sumo wrestling. I eventually settled into the driver's seat.

JR had been kind enough to pull into a 24-hour gas station, so coffee was available, but the highway was nowhere to be seen. We were in western Kansas and the only light, in any direction, came from the stars.

Celestial navigation is not my strong suit, so I turned to the passenger in the front seat and asked if she knew which direction led to the highway. She said "I thought bus drivers were supposed to know that stuff."

In modern times, this would have been a no-brainer. A glance at the GPS, and we'd have been off. Since we didn't have this electronic icon to man's reluctance to ask for directions, I had to ask the gas station attendant.

Global Positioning Systems have become a great asset to the transportation industry, saving time and embarrassment. In some mysterious manner they commune with a bunch of satellites and tell us where to go (even showing us where we are on a map).

A few crafty rascals have been using them since marine units became portable, but those puppies only understood straight lines and had no respect for roads.

There are a number of different variations available and like most technology they come with both benefits and risks.

Drivers often own portable units, which they can configure as they like. Most have video displays and a voice that talks them through a trip. Some have internet access that can identify traffic patterns and suggest alternate routes. Most have the ability to display speed, which can be useful for drivers who want to check the accuracy of the coach's speedometer. Many have a database of roadside services.

Once you own a GPS, the satellite service is free but detailed mapping and web access can cost.

Coach manufacturers now offer dash-mounted systems that offer the same features as a portable, in some cases offering the option of displaying the coach's location on the passenger's video monitors. Tour groups seem to enjoy this feature, but if you don't want them to know where they are (or how fast you're going), it can be switched off.

Many of these units can be programmed to generate a route appropriate to the vehicle... you don't want to be driving your bus on a route generated for a trail bike.

One specialized variation of the coach-mounted GPS is a system that notifies the driver of nearby obstructions, based on comparing the current position to a list of known low clearances. It doesn't have a mapping display and is only effective if the database is current. A glance out the windshield can save a major headache (pun intended).

It's important to keep the unit's maps current. Many offer the ability to, for a price, download the latest information. It's an inexpensive way to avoid closed roads, and find shortcuts.

GPS' benefits are obvious, but they are a tool, not a god. If that booming voice says to turn left into that wall... ignore it. This is ADVICE, not an order (and it's coming from a gizmo that doesn't really care). Drivers still need to take that occasional peek through the windshield because they, not the electronic do-dads, are responsible for the result.

Drivers always should have an understanding of their route.

The GPS needs to be able to see several satellites to provide good information. When satellites hide behind buildings, tunnels or bridges the unit may become schizophrenic... and the voice your driver hears is no longer a friend. This usually happens in the bowels of a large, strange city... when

drivers REALLY need it to work.

It can take an eternity (or several minutes) for the unit to figure out where it is, and begin to make sense.

Years ago, five coaches were conveying westward on Interstate 80, when we stopped to fuel. We cleverly put Dave, who was the weakest link, at the head of the group, based on the assumption he had lots of help following him.

Departing the fuel stop, Fearless Leader Dave proudly turned onto the ramp marked "I-80 East" and put the hammer down. No amount of honking or flashing of lights could deter him ... so, the other four buses turned west, sadly bidding him adieu.

No matter how simple things seem or how much help you've got, you've gotta look out the windshield, read the signs and have an understanding of where you're heading.

Waterboarding could not make me divulge Dave's last name.

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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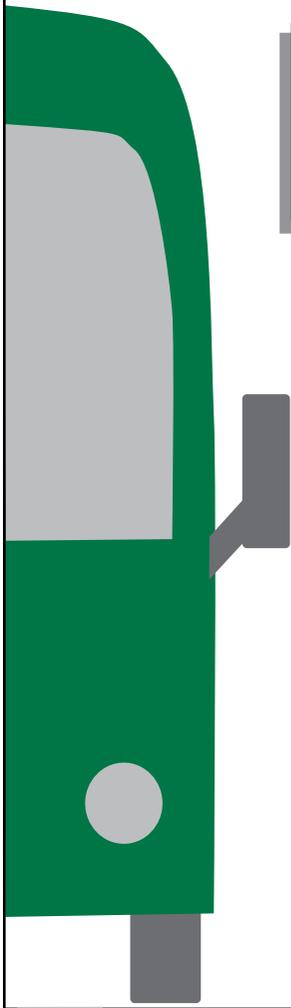
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## PrevoSt

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

operators where their coaches are at all times but how well all of the on-board systems are functioning. It monitors fuel efficiency and electronic equipment systems; it reports on how safely coaches are being driven and any out-of-route mileage, and it sends location and time reports when a coach is stopped, it finds preferred routes that minimize unnecessary driving.

Already in use in the industry, the Liaison recently helped police in Canada locate a coach that had been stolen and arrest a man suspected of stealing it.

PrevoSt also will have mock-ups of its 2010 Volvo-produced engines, which have been designed using SCR, or selective catalytic reduction, technology to meet the new and more stringent federal emission standards. Volvo Bus Corp. owns PrevoSt and supplies its engines.

The company's premier entertainment systems that include a wide range of products from satellite radio receivers, to 17-inch flip-down monitors, to live television, to scenic-view cameras, also will be on display at Motorcoach Expo.

**Diverse line-up**

PrevoSt will be bringing a full



*BoltBus has become a major PrevoSt customer.*

line of coaches to the show, including the X3-45, its popular touring bus that Greyhound Lines and BoltBus have added to their fleets, and the Volvo 9700, a lower-cost coach that was introduced a year ago.

Meantime, it would appear that the company's accelerated effort to market its coaches and other products during a tough economic period — Kankula calls it the worst ever — is the right strategy for the times.

Kankula, who joined the company earlier this year after a successful 10-year stint at Umicore and before that three years at Excel Industries, says inquires from operators have been on the rise lately and that might be an indication something good is brewing.

"We have been seeing some delays in terms of purchasing deci-

sions, but we're also experiencing more inquires on the availability of coaches in the future," he says. "But it still will be a challenge convincing people that this is a good time to buy."

PrevoSt hopes to meet the challenge by improving the value of its coaches by reinvesting in its products, a move many companies slow or stop doing when economic conditions sour.

"Every company goes through their research and development budget looking for ways to trim costs, but on the other side you've got to take the approach that while I want to reduce my cost, I can do that by investing as well," Kankula suggests.

"You've got to continue to invest in your ability to improve your product."

**Big vs. small customers**

Kankula says that's just what PrevoSt has been doing and, ultimately, the value being added to the products leads to the customer.

That's the philosophy the company has used in its relationship with two of its newest and largest customers, the line-run giant Greyhound Lines and BoltBus, the fledgling East Coast curbside service that Greyhound and Peter Pan Lines own.

"They are part of the customer base that I think we have done an excellent job of demonstrating what the value of our product brings, not only in the operation of the coach, but also in the experience of the passenger," Kankula says. "We expect to maintain a very strong relationship with them."

He says serving a company as

large as Greyhound has proven to be little different than working with smaller operators.

"They concentrate on the very same things that regional or smaller operators do," he says. "They want efficiency in their systems, greater uptime and less idle time, and at the end of the day you've got to be able to demonstrate the value you bring to them."

While building value into coaches is critical for a manufacturer to be successful, PrevoSt views two other issues — safety and green — as becoming equally important down the road.

Kankula thinks new riders, especially young ones, are going to be demanding both when they make a decision to use a motorcoach for their daily commute to work or for leisure travel.

**Taking the lead**

He stresses that PrevoSt has been out front on both issues by being an early supporter in installing three-point seatbelts on its coaches and being the first motorcoach manufacturer in North America to earn an International Organization Standardization or ISO 14001 environmental management standard.

"We have been very much committed to green, not only on our coaches but in how we produce them," he adds.

Kankula also says PrevoSt remains high on bus-building in Canada and at this time is not looking to manufacture at other locations. "Canada is very much part of our culture and that's what makes a PrevoSt a PrevoSt," he says. "I think as new markets open up that have a desire for the value of the PrevoSt, it would very much open up an opportunity to be able to produce it elsewhere, but there is nothing on the drawing board right now."

While seated motorcoach sales have declined during the current economic slump, the bus shell market, a key element of PrevoSt's business, has been harder hit.

"The entertainment and corporate side of the (shell) market still is experiencing pretty similar volumes as what they did a year ago," says Kankula. "There has been some impact on the pricing, but the level of activity really hasn't dropped off as much."

That has not been the case with the motorhome sector, which has fallen dramatically. "We are getting inquires, but getting somebody to spend the money it takes to buy a new motorhome still is a huge decision," he adds. "They are taking their time, that's for sure, but we're cautiously optimistic about it."

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**Seeking Campaign Director for Get Motorcoachified Image Campaign**

The Motorcoach Council is seeking a marketing and sales professional to work as an outside contractor to boost participation in the motorcoach industry's first nationwide image campaign entitled, "Get Motorcoachified." The campaign is designed to boost ridership on private motorcoaches and buses. The primary vehicle for promoting the value of motorcoach transportation will be the motorcoach itself. To that end, specific graphics and a variety of taglines have been developed touting the ways in which both travelers and the environment benefit by more people using motorcoaches for their transportation needs vs. other forms of transportation—cars, planes, trains.

The initial focus of this campaign and the immediate responsibility of this individual will be to promote and drive placement of the Get Motorcoachified graphics on buses.

**Position Goals and Responsibilities:**

- Get 100 or more motorcoaches to participate in the campaign and display campaign graphics within the first 90 days.
- Within the first two weeks, develop a marketing plan consisting of goals, objectives, strategies, tactics, timetables and budgets
- Submit the plan to direct report (board member of the council) for review and approval by the Motorcoach Council
- Utilize all available industry publications
- Reach out to trade publications in the group travel and tour industries to promote the campaign and increase the deployment of the Get Motorcoachified graphics.
- Provide weekly progress reports with recommendations for course corrections, should they be necessary.
- At the end of the contract period, the campaign director shall provide a complete activities report and recommendations for next steps

Interested individuals should respond with a resume and list of marketing and sales accomplishments to:

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# Myrtle Beach hosts coaches; food/wine festival planned

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — This popular Atlantic Coast shopping, dining, entertainment and golfing mecca held its seventh annual Holiday FantaSea (formerly the Motorcoach Festival) this month and hundreds of bus travelers got an early Christmas treat.

To encourage and foster future travel to the area, more than 1,500 group tour travelers were treated to food, entertainment and gifts at the Alabama Theater during the two-day event. During each day of the FantaSea, one lucky participant received a \$500 gift certificate to a local shopping destination.

Bus groups participating in the holiday festival originated from Michigan, Tennessee, Florida, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The Holiday FantaSea was sponsored by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Coastal Network Cooperative, a local entity that promotes group travel. The event was not open to the general public.

Thousands of motorcoach tours visit the Myrtle Beach area each year, making it one of the top-five motorcoach destinations in the U.S., trailing only Branson, Mo., New York City, Washington, D.C., and Nashville, Tenn.

Area theaters, stores, restaurants and hotels rely on group tours, particularly during the winter months. The holiday season provides an opportunity for visitors to experience the holiday shows at local theaters, as well as shopping, say local travel officials.

“Group tours are vital to Myrtle Beach’s visitor base,” said Danna Lilly, director of sales at the Myrtle Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“This annual event gives us a wonderful opportunity to promote Myrtle Beach as a premier destination and to increase off-season tourism.”

This year’s Holiday FantaSea came just days after a group of local businesses and restaurants announced that Myrtle Beach, and

the string of nearby coastal communities known as the Grand Strand, were getting their own food and wine festival.

Coastal Uncorked Food and Wine Festival will run May 16-23 and will feature a restaurant week, wine tasting tour, “Iron Chef”-style cooking competition, and

cooking demonstrations and tastings in and around Myrtle Beach.

“Our city is based on tourism, so we want to promote tourism, and we want to give back,” said Heidi Vukov, owner of Croissants Bistro and Bakery, a sponsor of Coastal Uncorked. “This will help retail, this will help everybody.

This is something everyone in our city can participate in.”

Representatives from several restaurants and other businesses got together a few months ago and decided the needed a wine and food festival, Vukov said.

“The sky’s the limit,” she said. “We’re hoping this is something

that grows and grows and could be comparable to what you might find in larger cities.”

A trolley will transport attendees from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. each day of the festival for wine and beer tastings, cooking demonstrations, live music and wine dinners. For information, call (843) 916-2000.

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### A Thank You

I am so grateful for the many condolences and words of encouragement conveyed while our family mourns the passing of my Mother.

This period once again reminds me that the bus and motorcoach industry is made up of exceptional individuals and I am indeed most fortunate to be associated with you.

My sincerest thanks...

*Ken Presley and family*



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