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FACT: Buyers at 2013 UMA Motorcoach EXPO at Travel Exchange in Orlando report spending a per company-average of

\$589,187 on motorcoach equipment!

FACT: Buyers at 2013 UMA Motorcoach EXPO at Travel Exchange in Orlando report spending a per company-average of

\$44,556 on components, parts and services!



"We were really enthusiastic about this show before we came, and being here for the first time it's really shown to us that UMA is the place to be!"

*Exhibitor **Jonathan Stanley**
Audio Conexus, Kingston, Ontario*



Attendance

Up 23%

Attendance by buyers of motorcoach products and services was up 23% in 2013



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Expo education sessions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

practice at their companies — as soon as they return home," said UMA President and CEO Victor Parra.

Here's a summary of the educational sessions scheduled for Expo '14:

Monday, Feb. 17

11:00 a.m.-noon (*Concurrent Solution Sessions*)

Making the Right Hiring Decisions As Demand Picks Up (Operations)

As business picks up, so does your need for quality employees who can handle the growing demands of your company. In this session, learn when the right time to hire is and who the right candidates are to foster your business' success and growth.

Website Optimization: Increasing Your Site's Traffic — Part I (Marketing)

More and more people are going to the internet first to find the products and services they need. Discover how you can increase traffic to your company website and build your customer base. Topics to be discussed will include SEO (search engine optimization) and PPC (pay per click) strategies. Part 2 will be held in the Expo Exhibit Hall.

Public/Private Partnership (Finance)

Interested in growing and diversifying your business? This session will provide important insight into ways you can approach your local transit authority to gain profitable contracts and position your company as a passenger transportation leader in your community. Public/private partnerships can deliver remarkable value to the local transit budget; especially when utilizing "capital cost of contracting" formulas. With your help, transit providers can expand local services by having bus and motorcoach companies compete for commuter work using often overlooked formulas.

Travel Itineraries vs. Hours of Service — Making it ALL work together (Travel Exchange)

Learn to work with the customer to develop the right itinerary to comply with hours-of-service rule requirements and still deliver an enjoyable and safe traveling experience.

2:00-3:00 p.m. (*Concurrent Solution Sessions*)

FMCSA Safety Management Cycle – Part I (Operations)

The Safety Management Cycle is the signature tool behind the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration investigative process. This compliance process seeks to integrate your policies and procedures in a systemic manner that will result in safer, efficient and likely more profitable operations. This session is followed by a hands-on workshop session to be held Wednesday in the Exhibit Hall that will help you build a roadmap for integrating the Safety Management Cycle into your operation.

Converting Price Shoppers to Value Buyers (Marketing)

Many customers may feel inclined to purchase services from the lowest cost provider. However, after attending this session, you will learn how, through a proper sales and marketing approach, to move prospective cus-

tomers from making price-only decisions to helping them appreciate the value and service your company offers.

The Performance Puzzle: Strategies of Successful Operators with a Focus on Managing Maintenance and Costs — Part I (Finance)

A discussion of emerging trends, utilizing Spader 20 Group Trends, and the methods high-performing operators use to sustain exemplary performance. One of the trends this session will focus on is escalating maintenance costs. After attending the session, you will walk away with strategies top performers are using to manage their equipment maintenance and costs associated with it.

Developing a Tour Operation (Travel Exchange)

Entrepreneurs in Travel present a session on building the next generation of online group tour packaged travel. Want to learn the latest technology in creating group packaged tours? Interested in generating additional income? In this session, find out how easy it is to build your online tour product offering and start receiving bookings right away. Check it out at www.entrepreneursintravel.com.

3:15-4:15 p.m. (*Concurrent Solution Sessions*)

Understanding the Affordable Care Act (Operations)

Concerned with how Obamacare may affect your business? In this session, learn how to prepare your business for this law. We will lay out the "who, what and how" you need to know to comply with the employer requirements under the law when it goes into effect for businesses Jan. 1, 2015.

Buying Media (Marketing)

Hear from some of the industry's best on what medium (radio, internet, TV, print) best works for them to reach their desired audience and, most importantly, works within their budget.

The Performance Puzzle: Strategies of Successful Operators with a Focus on Managing Maintenance and Costs — Part II (Finance)

A continuation of the discussion of emerging maintenance cost trends, utilizing Spader 20 Group Trends, and the methods employed by high-performing operators to manage equipment maintenance and costs associated with it.

NTA Destination Pavilion Open House & Ice Cream Social (Travel Exchange)

New this year. In lieu of holding a Travel Exchange solution session, we encourage attendees to take advantage of the NTA Destination Pavilion Open House. To help you build new partnerships, we have blocked time where UMA attendees can catch a glimpse of what destinations have to offer. You are invited to attend the NTA Destination Pavilion Open House and Ice Cream Social on Monday, Feb. 17 from 3-4:30 p.m. Shop the different regionally grouped booths to learn about the best of what each destination has to offer.

Motorcoach Marketing Council Operator Tool Box

Want to increase your exposure in local markets? You will not want to miss this session on the Council's newly released "Operator Tool Box." Learn about all the valuable items in the Tool Box and how you can use them to market and grow your business.

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Tuesday, February 18

Education in the Expo Exhibit Hall 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Vehicle and Driver Certification that Improves Company Profitability and Visibility by Reducing Fuel Consumption, Reducing Environmental Impact and Increasing Public Awareness.

This session will introduce the Certification for Sustainable Transportation programs that are designed to help operators reduce costs, save fuel and promote their services. The session will be interactive and audience members will hear from UMA operators currently using these programs, as well as Dave Kestenbaum, the director of the Certification for Sustainable Transportation, who will introduce the eRating vehicle certification and 'Eco-Driver' and 'Idle Free' certification programs designed for drivers. Attendees will learn about successful Certification for Sustainable Transportation techniques and methods they can take back to their operations and implement on their own.

Tires, Tires, Tires

Recently, considerable regulatory focus has centered on tires, weight, speeds, heat build-up, and load capacity ratings. This hands-on session will inform owners and management how to select the correct tire, assessing axle-weight loads, proper maintenance for safe operations, longer tread wear, and lower tire cost.

10:15-11:15 a.m.

Bus Operators Beware! Plaintiff Attorneys Have You in Their Crosshairs presented by Lancer Insurance Co.

Paul Berne (claims) will focus on the strategies and tactics the plaintiff bar has developed to portray motorcoach companies in the worst possible light, and provide video examples of two of the nation's leading plaintiff attorneys developing successful cases against companies like yours.

Bob Crescenzo (safety) will review some of the critical training and recordkeeping exposures that plaintiff attorneys target, and offer recommendations on how you can better prepare for that event you hope will never happen.

Website Optimization: How to Maximize Your Sites Potential During Development — Part II

With more and more bus operators developing an online marketing strategy, this session will work to highlight how to best communicate your online strategy to your web developer to ensure you have SEO (search engine optimization) success, website best practices in place, and the right content management tools for use post launch.

11:30-1:00 p.m. Break 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Driver Background and the Safety Management Cycle presented by Amerisearch Background Alliance

Recent enforcement techniques require a

more comprehensive management approach to mitigating risk and regulatory compliance. Changes include policies, procedures, roles, responsibilities and monitoring. All this starts with good hiring practices. This session will help the owner and management integrate driver background checks with the Safety Management Cycle and Safety Management System's Driver Fitness.

2:15-3:15 p.m.

Improving Your Odds — Implementing a Continuous Safety Improvement Program presented by National Interstate Insurance Co.

Due to constant industry, regulatory and legal changes, this session will focus on the importance of implementing a continuous safety improvement program. To improve your risk exposure, topics of discussion will include building a safety program based on three effective safety principles, structuring a valuable safety culture, using the FMCSA Safety Management Cycle and utilizing a focused safety approach.

3:30-4:30 p.m.

Technology and the Motorcoach Experience — Comfort/Safety/Security presented by REI

Motorcoach manufacturers incorporate numerous kinds of technology when designing coaches to assure passenger comfort, safety and security. Motorcoach operators add customer service, quality drivers and a variety of travel solutions customers look for. This presentation will show how technology can enhance the passenger's experience in those same categories while providing return on investment for both manufacturers and operators.

California here I come...

Well, maybe. You just received a charter to the Golden State, which means you must comply with the state's Diesel Risk Reduction Plan. This session will provide important guidance for out-of-state, as well as California-based carriers, regarding compliance and avoiding substantial financial penalties.

Wednesday, February 19

Education in the Expo Exhibit Hall 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Motorcoach Marketing Council Operator Tool Box

Want to increase your exposure in local markets? You will not want to miss this session on the Council's newly released "Operator Tool Box." Learn about all the valuable items in the Tool Box and how you can use them to market and grow your business.

Brakes

Braking systems remain a major factor in out-of-service orders. Designed for owners and management, this session will include hands-on visuals that will result in a better understanding of the subtleties of brake maintenance, repair and avoiding those costly, embarrassing out-of-service delays.

9:45-10:45 a.m.

FMCSA Safety Management Cycle – Part II

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New at Expo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

switches, magnetic clutches, mobile electronics, GPS and fleet management systems, and much, much more.

"Exhibit space for UMA Motorcoach Expo 2014 is about 90 percent sold out at this point and we can't believe how many first-time suppliers we will have in L.A.," said Victor Parra, UMA president and CEO.

"It's a great feeling to know that word of what a great show we had in Orlando has gotten around

and so many new suppliers — that either we've never had or haven't been with us for a few years — want to be with us in 2014."

"It makes Expo that much more valuable to our operators to have such a wide variety of products and services to peruse while walking the aisles."

Here are the new and returning Expo '14 exhibitors (so far):

- Aims Power (DC power inverters)
- Auto Meter Products (gauges and accessories)
- Awash System (bus washers)
- Brooker Transportation Agency

(insurance)

- Clean Energy (natural gas for vehicles)
- DAS Companies (travel products; mobile electronics for drivers)
- Fleetmatics (global positioning and vehicle monitoring systems)
- Kendrion (Shelby) (switches, actuating devices, lights and control components)
- Lang US (magnetic clutches)
- Lazzerini Sri (seats)
- Leece-Neville Heavy Duty Systems (alternators, starter motors)
- Meridian Speciality Vehicles (shuttle buses and vans)
- MGM Brakes (brake parts and

systems)

- Motorcoach Tire Sales (tires)
- On-Site Analysis (oil, coolant testing)
- PEX German O.E. Parts (brake and chassis system components)
- Planet Halo (mobile video recording system and fleet tracking)
- PSECO (bus washing systems)
- Ramos Oil Co. (fuels/lubricants)
- Rand McNally (GPS and fleet management)
- Ron Turley Associates (software systems)
- RUD Chain (automatic chain systems and chain products)
- Serck Services (radiators, A/C

condensers, charge air/oil coolers)

- Shopbuses.com (online bus sales)
- SMI (Transpec Worldwide) (safety equipment)
- SuperSprings International Inc. (suspension products)
- Unit Chemical (toilet chemicals)
- Verizon Networkfleet (GPS and fleet management)

UMA has set up a web page listing new exhibitors with links to their websites.

Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/UMA2014new>.

To learn more about Expo, go to www.motorcoachexpo.com.

Expo education sessions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

A continuation of Tuesday's hands-on workshop that will help you build a roadmap for integrating the Safety Management Cycle into your operation.

Wednesday, February 19

**Concurrent Solution Sessions/
Bonus hour of education
1:45–2:45 p.m.**

Using Electronic Logs as a Management Tool (Operations)

Learn how electronic logging devices (ELDs) are more than just electronic log books and have developed into an important management tool for driver accountability and state

mileage reporting.

Smart Ways to Raise Prices (Marketing)

Are you undervaluing your motorcoach services? This session provides very good and practical advice on how not to and how to increase your prices in ways the consumer may find more palatable.

Managing Fuel Costs (Finance)

Managing fuel costs is critical to keeping your fleet operating profitably, which is not an easy task with volatile fuel prices. In this session, identify ways to bring down wasteful consumption, as well as ways to make smart purchasing decisions when it comes to fuel.

Fuel Efficient Driving 101 — 'Eco Driver' Certification

This session is for drivers, mechanics, train-

ers, owners, and managers to learn about and receive the Certification for Sustainable Transportation 'Eco-Driver' driver certification, which can be used to help save fuel, save money and reduce a company's environmental impact. We all know driving techniques can have a great impact on passenger safety, comfort and fuel efficiency. The course will explain the science behind eco-driving and will teach drivers how to employ eco-driving techniques in their regular driving routines. Research shows that individuals who adopt eco-driving techniques commonly increase their fuel efficiency into the double-digits and have lower accident rates. Topics covered include but are not limited to avoiding jack-rabbit starts and stops, watching speed, planning ahead, and watching RPM levels.

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Reducing Unnecessary Idling — 'Idle Free' Driver Certification

This session is for drivers, mechanics, trainers, owners and managers to learn about and receive the Certification for Sustainable Transportation 'Idle Free' driver certification. During this program Dave Kestenbaum, director of the Certification for Sustainable Transportation program, will lead participants through the 'Idle Free' training program which is currently being adopted by companies throughout North America to help eliminate unnecessary idling. The session includes experts describing the health impacts of idling, engine manufacturers sharing information about engine wear, and fellow drivers discussing their reasons for going idle-free.

“ We have been with **Protective Insurance Company** since 2008. In that time, we have always felt like **everyone at Protective really cares** about the **safety and success** of our company and the motorcoach industry. ”

Gregg Isherwood
President
Custom Coach and Limousine



Nominations sought for 'green' operator award

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The United Motorcoach Association is seeking nominations for its Green Highway Award, which is presented annually to a coach operator during UMA Motorcoach Expo at Travel Exchange.

The award, which is sponsored by Motor Coach Industries, was

introduced at UMA Motorcoach Expo in 2008.

It recognizes motorcoach travel as a viable solution for reducing carbon emissions, and encourages industry leadership on environmental issues.

The award will be presented to an operator that has demonstrated

the greatest commitment to "green stewardship" in the areas of internal corporate initiative, external corporate stewardship, or community and industry-wide green leadership.

The award will be presented in February during Expo in Los Angeles.

Nominations are due Friday, Jan 3. A nomination form can be found at www.motorcoachexpo.com under Quick Links.

Questions should be directed to Maggie Vander Eems at UMA: Call (800) 424-8262, or e-mail mvandereems@uma.org.

CARB rules

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ever that fleet is that I'm running somewhere else is not of your concern, per se, just so those buses entering into California are compliant with the best emission control device on it. On the other hand, if I'm in a border state, and I'm bringing in a whole bunch of buses, all the buses I'm bringing in are going to have to meet your requirement by now?"

A: "That's correct. If they haven't opted into the phase-in. A lot of out-of-state companies know that they do business in California, opted into the phase-in and are bringing their fleet into compliance. Or...they come into California, and it's a '96 engine, it has to have a filter on it."

Q: "Say you're a carrier that pro-rates into California, but you're based in Arizona or in Nevada. What did you need to have reported into the database?"

A: "Basically, if you are an out-of-state carrier and you do business in California, you need to comply with our regulation just like any other California carrier."

"So, you can either have reported, and bring your fleet into compliance with the phase-in. Or, if you haven't reported, then you have to follow the model-year compliance schedule for any vehicle that comes into California."

Q: "Last spring, we heard that if we sub-chartered to another company, we are supposed to have a copy of their...ID number from the state of California, so that we can prove that we knew they're in compliance. Is that true?"

A: "That's correct. Under the Truck and Bus Regulation, motor carriers and brokers, if you hire a vehicle subject to the regulation, you have to be sure that they are in compliance. The way to do that is a lot of times, they just print out their...certificate and that's your due diligence."

Q: "If I'm out of compliance, I now realize I'm out of compliance, what do I do about it?"

A: "ARB does have a self-reporting policy, which allows us to mitigate penalties, etc., and help a company come into compliance."

"So, you have that option. The best thing to do...is come into compliance as soon as possible."

Q: "What is ARB's position if there is no available retrofit for a vehicle?"

A: "If there is no available retrofit, you have a form online that you can fill out. You do have to get letters from the installer saying we don't have anything that can be put on....The information is on our website."

"We can't force you to put one on if there's nothing available."

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YOUR INVITATION TO ATTEND

See. Learn. Meet. Connect.

Critical issue: Drivers MUST know what's under them

By Dave Millhouser

It was a near tragedy.

My buddy Dave was giving a scuba exhibition to a bunch of school kids, and began by showing them how to don a wetsuit.

The trouble began when he began removing his street clothes and remembered, in a nick of time, he was not wearing a bathing suit. He was within a nanosecond of having a scuba demonstration turn into a biology lesson.

Sometimes it's a good idea for coach drivers to give consideration to what they have (or DON'T have) on the buses they're driving.

Technology is making giant strides (sometimes forward) and modern vehicles come equipped with tons of new standard and optional safety features. Anti-lock brakes, automatic traction control, global position systems, electronic stability control, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, tire pressure monitoring, seatbelts ...and a partridge in a pear tree. Each, when properly used and maintained, can make a significant contribution to safety.

All this innovation (and more) has been introduced incrementally.

Unless you replace all your coaches every year, the likelihood of every vehicle in your fleet having all the same features is small.

Winter road conditions are particularly demanding of both drivers and technology. Assuming your fleet is like most, sporting a variety of technology, it's critical for every driver to know and understand which gizmos are on the coach they're driving.

It sorta breaks down into two segments.

What is ON the bus they're driving, and is it working that day? For example, in slippery conditions, stopping technique is much different on a bus with functioning ABS, than when the ABS is non-existent or broken.

Spinning tires on ice can break a differential if a single wheel catches...an unlikely outcome if the ATC is working.

If you're having trouble with the acronyms, you're supporting my point.

Most of these technologies give some sort of indication they're installed on the coach — and operational. Coach brands and models may differ in how they're configured, but it's important a driver

knows what's there, and if it's working.

If a feature isn't operational, often the coach isn't dispatched, but what if something fails in the middle of a job?

Do you really want to replace a coach mid-trip if the adaptive cruise control fails? Substitute many of the new technologies in that sentence. It's both disruptive to your customers and expensive, particularly when it's a feature that half your fleet doesn't have anyway. Coaches traveled many millions of safe miles without tire pressure monitoring systems, for example, because drivers knew how to check tires.

I lied...there is a third segment.

Driver training really should include education on how these systems work. There are a couple of reasons for that.

When one fails, what implications does it have for how the bus should be driven? A biggie is ABS. When you've got it, and want to stop on ice... just stomp that brake pedal. When you don't have it, a little delicacy is required. Reversing those behaviors lengthens stopping distances.

Understanding the basics of how these electrowizards work allows a driver to make good decisions about a couple of things. Is a broken system significant to safe operation in the current environment? If so, it's time to either repair or replace the coach.

If the failed technology is not critical, what changes in driving style are called for? That decision should factor in the experience of the driver and existing conditions.

Old geezers may have a bazillion safe miles in coaches that have no ABS. Alternatively, you may want to quickly replace a younger driver who has only driven modern equipment if certain systems fail in bad weather.

Dickie was driving a Scenicruiser east on Interstate 80 in a Nebraska blizzard. For reasons he never could quite explain, he decided to swerve onto an exit at very high speed. What happened next was, well, unforgettable.

Dickie made two assumptions that turned out to be false. He figured that buses were too heavy to slide, and that ALL his brakes were working.

Turns out the relay valve was frozen, so his front brakes respond-

ed with enthusiasm, while the rear ones sat there waiting for instructions. Instead of heading onto the exit, the Scenic went for the median, which fortunately had about 10 feet of drifting, dry snow in it.



Dave Millhouser

Ever see video of a nuclear submarine doing an "emergency blow surfacing exercise?" That was Dickie. First, the coach tunneled into the drifts and then, according to witnesses in trailing buses, exploded out the top with great vigor.

There's no way of knowing how things would have gone if the brakes had worked correctly, but Dickie's incorrect assumption that they were "present and accounted for" made for great entertainment.

For the record, the bus was empty, so no one was hurt. We very were tempted to leave it (and Dickie) there till the spring thaw.

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



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Seatbelt rule

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Individuals flung around inside or tossed outside a crashing motorcoach frequently suffer horrible injuries.

"While travel on motorcoaches is overall a safe form of transportation, when accidents do occur, there is the potential for a greater number of deaths and serious injuries due to the number of occupants and high speeds at which the vehicles are traveling," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. "Adding seatbelts to motorcoaches increases safety for all passengers and drivers."

Jackie Gillan, president of the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a Washington, D.C.-based group that has been at the forefront of the seatbelt-in-motorcoaches campaign for years, praised the mandate, calling it a cost-effective and commonsense way to limit passenger deaths and injuries.

Industry supports rule

The United Motorcoach Association and others in the industry joined in support of the rule, noting that the new rule was based on scientific evidence, which the industry had long insisted was essential before issuing any rule governing seatbelts.

"Science ultimately shaped the final rule — not policymakers, not lawmakers and not even lobbyists," observed UMA President and CEO Victor Parra.

"The rule was developed based on research, crash testing and, fundamentally, sound science. That's why we supported the proposed and final rule. And why we worked so hard to insert a provision (in highway legislation) that all future agency rulemakings be based on sound science," Parra added.

"We applaud Administrator Strickland and the entire NHTSA team for their focus and dedication," said UMA Vice President Ken Presley. "The final rule issued by NHTSA concluded with what UMA has requested for over a decade — research and conclusions rooted in sound science."

Presley said motorcoach operators with whom he had spoken were especially pleased the rule exempts existing buses, which had been a major concern of operators who warned that the high cost of retro-

fitting their buses — estimated at between \$6,000 and \$34,000 depending on the structural integrity of each bus — would be prohibitive and could force some small operators out of business.

Crash tests critical

NHTSA said the results of extensive crash testing the agency conducted in 2009 were critical to its decision to both go ahead with the seatbelt mandate for new buses and exempt existing buses from it.

The agency said the testing clearly showed that passengers were much safer during a crash if they were belted in their seats and that retrofitting older buses would be beyond the means of bus owners and not feasible.

The American Bus Association called the rule an "important step" in a larger process of vehicle and operational changes being pursued by federal transportation regulators.

The motorcoach industry's leading independent seat supplier, Amaya-Astron Seating Group, issued a statement, welcoming the rule.

"For more than four years, Amaya-Astron has built seats that comply with the 2016 standard for strength," said Amaya.

"In fact, Amaya-Astron was the first bus seat manufacturer in North America to design, test and build lap/shoulder belts into its products for the over-the-road bus market.

"Amaya-Astron seats have been in-vehicle tested in most every over-the-road bus built in the USA and Canada to (federal requirements). This means bus builders and operators can meet the new standards today."

Freedman Seating said it "was excited about having the opportunity to support North American bus builders in meeting the new regulations.

"Freedman Seating began producing lap/shoulder-belted seats in 2004....Every Freedman three-point seat meets the rules of the 2016 standard today. They all comply with the load bearing and strength requirements."

NHTSA is studying additional safety measures for motorcoaches, including windows that are less likely to pop out from the force of a collision and stronger roofs that can withstand crushing during rollover accidents. Regulations addressing those issues could be

out sometime before the end of 2014.

"ABA looks forward to further research into these areas," the trade group said in a news release.

Bus builders ready

Although the seatbelt rule is considered a major step in advancing bus safety, it is expected to have little practical impact on many bus manufacturers because for the past three years they have either included three-point belts on their passenger seats or offered them as optional equipment.

The manufacturers said they took the early action in anticipation of the federal mandate and in response to operators who say a growing number of their customers have been requesting buses with safety belts.

NHTSA said the rule likely will add about \$2,100 to the cost of a new bus and raise life-time fuel costs by more than \$1,000.

The push for safety belts on motorcoaches began in 1968, after 19 passengers were killed in a bus crash in California and investigators said the lack of seatbelts contributed to the high number of deaths.

The National Transportation Safety Board issued its first official call for safety belts on buses shortly after the accident and has repeated the recommendation numerous times since.

Many in the motorcoach industry initially were cool to the idea, stressing — erroneously, as later research demonstrated — that "compartmentalizing" was helping save lives and preventing injuries, and there were no scientific studies showing that safety belts would save lives in coaches.

Crashes are impetus

A series of high-profile fatal bus accidents in 2007 and 2008 softened the position of many who were not on board with the NTSB call for safety belts.

Later, the results of the federal government's crash tests in 2009 provided strong evidence that convinced them to favor the recommendation.

Congress, prodded by some in the motorcoach industry, stepped up its involvement with the passage in 2012 of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act or MAP-21, which mandated regulations requiring passenger safety belts be in-

stalled in motorcoaches no later than one year after enactment of the legislation.

"With UMA members, board and committee guidance, the UMA legislative team worked tirelessly with Congress to shape this final rule," noted Presley.

Seatbelt usage

While the rule puts an end to discussions about the need for seatbelts in motorcoaches, it opens a new challenge for federal regulators and the motorcoach industry — convincing passengers to use them.

Numerous operators who have buses with seatbelts have reported in the past that riders are reluctant to buckle up, including those who belong to groups that specifically asked for buses equipped with the restraints.

NHTSA suggested that passenger use of the safety belts on buses will increase over the years just as it did in automobiles, noting that it rose from 58 percent in 1994 to 84 percent in 2010.

It contended, too, that three-point restraints will be cost effective with just a usage rate of only 4 to 5 percent.

Generational differences

As much as anything, the issue of seatbelt usage may be generational in nature. Many operators report that children riding their buses equipped with seatbelts will invariably buckle up because they always have while riding in an automobile. At the same time, many adult bus riders will ignore the belts because they've never used them on a bus.

To encourage passenger use of seatbelts, UMA suggested the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration revise its guidance for pre-trip announcements to include instruction reminders and directions for passengers regarding the use of seatbelts.

The ABA recommended the U.S. Department of Transportation initiate a strong effort to encourage seatbelt use, including incentives or sanctions to states to enforce seatbelt use rules and the USDOT should support such efforts in highway law reauthorization.

Federal regulators said they are aware of the issues and are looking into the suggestions advanced by the two trade groups, individual operators and others.

Van Hool/ABC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Xtreme Event 2013. The two-day coming-out party/trade show attracted 173 operators and spouses from 76 bus companies, plus 26 vendors from 14 industry suppliers, and a handful of trade press.

It also was announced at the event that:

- A subsidiary of ABC has entered into an agreement with British bus builder Alexander Dennis to assemble high-capacity, low-floor double-decker buses.

- ABC will distribute the New Flyer MiDi 30- and 35-foot low-floor transit buses to the private bus industry.

The twin unveiling of the CX and TX models came near the conclusion of an evening event at Universal Studios Florida, where ABC, Van Hool and Detroit (Diesel) took over one of the theme park's streets and Pantages Theater.

Following an outdoor buffet and presentation by key ABC executives — Tim Wayland,

Roman Cornell and Clint Guth — in the Pantages, attendees filed out of the theater to find the new coaches ready for oohing and aahing.

The next day there was a full slate of activities at ABC's sales, service and headquarters complex in Winter Garden.

The day-long Xtreme Event included briefings on the CX and TX coaches, plus Ameritrans' newest cutaways, which are produced by ABC's Ameritrans subsidiary; presentations on various ABC divisions, including finance, parts and fleet services; test rides, and a vendor showcase, featuring companies that are important suppliers to ABC.

"The introduction of these two new coach models...clearly demonstrates our commitment to our customers," said Filip Van Hool, CEO of the company bearing his family name.

Added Dane Cornell, chairman and CEO of ABC Companies: "The revamp of our flagship T- and C-coach models reflects a committed strategic shift in Van Hool product development, designed to more closely align our equipment offering with our customers'

priorities."

The TX is 3 3/4-inches taller than the T2100 models, giving it a height of 146 1/4 inches, roughly an inch taller than the Prevost H3-45. All of the increase went below the beltline, meaning the under-floor luggage capacity expanded to 464.4 cubic feet, a 24.4-cubic-foot increase over the T2145 and roughly 5 1/2-cubic-feet less than the H3-45.

Other significant changes made to the TX include lengthening the wheelbase by a foot, which reduced the rear overhang by a foot; improving the interior air flow by 55 percent with six new double-shaft, brushless, extended-life motors; moveable reading-light modules that make it far easier to change the seating configuration; a more European-like dashboard, and an interior lit by LED lights.

New features include:

- Power driver's toll-window that's heated and has tinted, tempered glass
- Passenger courtesy shelves in restroom
- Integrated exterior light clusters

New standard safety features include:

- Daytime running lights
- Static aiming lights
- Kidde fire-suppression system
- Back-up camera

The CX has style upgrades, plus expanded passenger and driver features. These include:

- Front and rear bumpers featuring integrated light clusters at headlight and taillight positions, plus daytime running lights
- LED luggage compartment lighting
- Eberspacher auxiliary heater

Louis Hotard, ABC's technical guru, said Van Hool has made great strides trying to "commonize" maintenance parts and other components for its two U.S. models.

"From the drive wheels back, the CX and TX are virtually identical," he said.

One key aspect of the CX is that once they come off the assembly line in Macedonia they are driven 1,100 miles to the Van Hool plant in Belgium where the passenger seats, new wheels and tires are installed.

It likely is the most extensive shakedown run of any coach sold in North America.

NTA President Lisa Simon leaving assn. after 28 years

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Lisa Simon, president of NTA (formerly the National Tour Association), announced last month she's leaving the leading North American business-building association of travel professionals at the end of the year.

Simon, who has been with the association for 28 years, seven as president, said she reached the decision "in the spirit of mutual benefit."

"I have been with NTA for most of my professional career, and during that time, we have seen an incredible amount of growth and change. I believe this is the right time for me to find new challenges and the right time for new leadership to take the association into its next phase of growth."

Cited as Simon's No. 1 accomplishment at NTA was her leadership in helping NTA co-locate its annual convention with the United Motorcoach Association at Travel Exchange.

Additionally, she guided the association in developing a strategic business focus on growth travel markets, including China in-bound

and faith-based travel; led an initiative to expand NTA's international presence, and helped with the organization's transition from a management firm to a self-managed association.

"I have worked with NTA for nearly half of its 62-year existence and have loved every minute of it," said Simon. "But I have always believed that change brings growth and excitement, and I know this change will bring that to me and to NTA."

Mark Hoffmann, NTA chairman and CEO, noted Simon had "formed a very strong bond with the members over the past 28 years, and we will sorely miss her experience, her steady leadership and her strong advocacy for our membership."

Added Vic Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association: "It's hard to put into a couple of sentences all Lisa has accomplished in her long career at NTA. She built a strong base to ensure that the changing needs of the



Lisa Simon

Calendar

JANUARY 2014

11-15 ABA Marketplace 2014, Music City Center, Nashville, Tenn. Info: www.buses.org.

13-15 IMG Maintenance & Safety Meeting 2014, Music City Center, Nashville. Info: www.imgcoach.com.

FEBRUARY 2014

16-20 UMA Motorcoach Expo 2014 at Travel Exchange, Los Angeles Convention Center. Info: www.motorcoachexpo.com.

16-20 NTA Convention 2014 at Travel Exchange, Los Angeles Convention Center. Info: www.ntaonline.com.

travel and tourism community were continually met. She impressed me with her skills, her knowledge and, most of all, her strong leadership. Without question, Lisa Simon will be missed."

Simon will complete her contract and remain with NTA through the end of the year. The NTA board plans to conduct a national executive search for a replacement.

Beginning Jan. 1, Catherine Prather, NTA senior vice president of strategic development and a long-time member of the organization's staff, will serve as interim president.

Minnesota operators pick leaders, alter meeting date

PRIOR LAKE, Minn. — The Minnesota Charter Bus Operator's Association has elected officers, added a new board member, and changed the date for its annual meetings.

Steve Hale of Cavalier Coaches in Owatonna, Minn., was elected association president, moving up from vice president. He succeeds Jim Hey of Southwest Coaches in Marshall, Minn., who remains a director.

Chosen vice president was Troy Voigt of Voigt's Bus Service in St. Cloud, Minn. Mike Moran of Reichert Bus Service in Baxter, Minn., will serve another term as secretary-treasurer.

Newly elected to the board was Rob Wicklund of Bemidji (Minn.) Charters. Leaving the board was Joe Krois of Minnesota Coaches in Duluth.

The association, which conducted its 2013 meeting at Mystic Lake Casino-Hotel here last month, plans to change the date of its annual gathering from late November/early December to closer to mid-November.

The 2014 meeting will be Nov. 21-22.

Based on further input from members, the association likely will alter its bylaws to accommodate the date change.

During a meeting with association directors, Victor Parra, president and CEO of the United Motorcoach Association, complimented the board on having "one of the tightest groups I have associated with in all of the United States."

"You guys should be proud of your organization and what you provide for your membership," Parra said.

He also commended the association for maintaining a relationship with the Minnesota State Patrol and MNDOT.

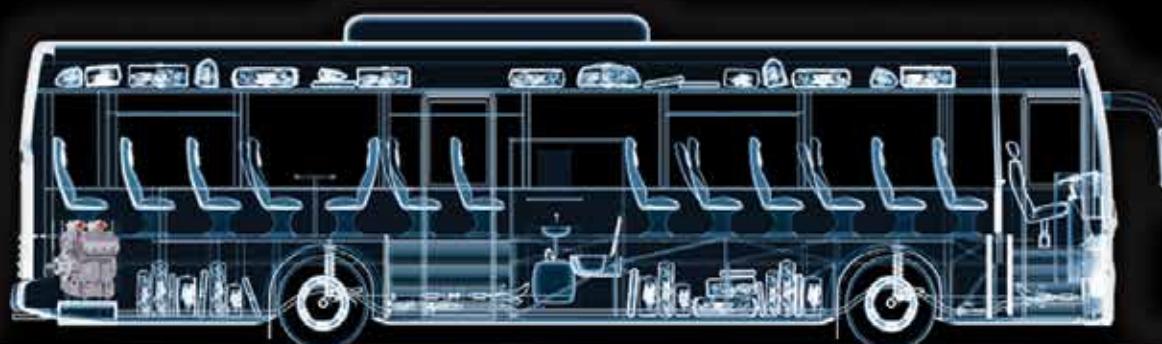
"There are some states that will not even talk with their state patrol members. When I come to Minnesota I see there is a great relationship between the carriers and the DOT."

"It may not always be all fun and sunshine, but you work together toward the common good."



Steve Hale

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Massachusetts operator of school buses busted for idling

METHUEN, Mass. — Periodically during the past decade, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has cracked down on unnecessary idling by bus operators in Massachusetts.

It happened again last month.

North Reading Transportation, a private school bus operator, paid a \$33,000 fine from the EPA for excessive idling.

According to a news release issued by the EPA, the company chose to settle.

As a result, North Reading

Transportation is implementing a series of idling reduction measures, including training all drivers, posting anti-idling signs, performing periodic "walk-throughs" of school bus lots to assure no excessive idling occurs, and notifying all school districts of its policy against excessive idling.

In addition, the company will install block heaters in nearly 200 of its school buses, and also install engine shutdown devices.

The EPA said the company responded quickly and already has

implemented a number of the idle-reduction measures.

Earlier this year, an EPA inspector spent hours observing school buses operated by North Reading Transportation in bus lots in Lowell, Lynn, Wilmington and Methuen, the release said.

The EPA said the company's excessive idling was in violation of federally-enforceable motor vehicle idling limits contained in the Massachusetts air quality state implementation plan.

The regulations establish rules

for all motor vehicles operating in the state, and, with few exceptions, limit idling to no more than five minutes.

John McCarthy, the president and owner of North Reading Transportation, was quoted as saying "there is some gray language in the law." But that he didn't "disagree with everything they said."

"We understand what they were looking for, now," he said.

"We've had drivers that idled longer than they should have. Rather than go back and forth with

them...we've chosen to add some devices into the vehicles so they can't idle more than five minutes."

Over the years, the EPA has hit both public and private bus operators with hefty fines for excessive idling.

Two private operators were hit with \$650,000 and \$237,000 fines during the past decade, and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority paid a large fine earlier in the decade. (See Sept. 1, 2009, and July 1, 2003, issues of *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

Obamacare

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

health insurance."

The National Retail Federation, which has been working to ease the law's requirements for its members, was less generous.

"If the law is so burdensome for the administration to implement, just think how hard it is for small businesses, which are focused on growing a company, hiring new employees and assisting customers," said Neil Trautwein, the group's top health policy official.

Ohio's insurance director, Mary Taylor, a Republican who is also lieutenant governor, said in a written statement that the delay adds to the struggles of small businesses and "only further complicates an already chaotic insurance market."

Small businesses buying coverage will still be eligible for tax credits to bring down the cost, according to the administration.

Starting next year, small businesses can claim a credit of up to 50 percent of their contributions to premiums for insurance purchased through SHOP, and the administration is telling business owners that buying marketplace plans through

Obesity label could impact insurance costs

CHICAGO — Classification earlier this year by the American Medical Association of obesity as a disease effectively declared that one-third of all Americans have a medical condition requiring treatment.

Now, experts are saying the obesity classification will have a major impact on health and workers' compensation insurers.

In reaction to the change, the California Workers' Compensation Institute studied 1.2 million worker comp claims to examine the potential impact of the obesity classification.

Claims from 2005 to 2010 that included the co-morbidity of obesity paid losses on average that

brokers, agents and insurers will count for that tax credit.

During the past two months there has been a stream of missed deadlines related to implementation of the Affordable Care Act, including a postponement for a Spanish-language sign-up tool.

The administration pushed back the enrollment deadline for individuals: People who sign up by Dec. 23 can get coverage that starts on Jan. 1.

In an earlier delay, businesses

said. Edwards was the resident whose Get-off-your-big-fat-tour-bus-and-experience-San-Francisco sign attracted attention to the issue, the *Chronicle* reported.

In the end, the board voted 5-0 in favor of the ban; one member abstained.

Waters expressed little optimism the rule can be undone in the near future.

"In this case, it's a done deal. Once a no-tour-bus rule passes, it's not going to get reversed," he said. "It's like a fever, one neighbor talks to another, and another, and it's not just an annoyance, it's a campaign. They're out for it."

Now, visitors will have to use public buses, drive an automobile or walk to visit the area.

were 81.3 percent higher than claims without the co-morbidity.

These employees also lost 80 percent more time from work than the claimants without the condition.

The obesity classification means doctors now will point out obesity as a condition that needs to be addressed as part of a whole work comp treatment plan.

An example of this would be an employee who needs to lose weight before undergoing back surgery.

The obesity reclassification also increases the likelihood that physicians will be compensated for treating obesity. And that, of

with more than 50 workers were given until 2015 to meet the requirement to provide health insurance without paying a penalty.

And the deadline date for individuals to avoid penalties for failing to get coverage was pushed back six weeks.

The administration also announced a schedule change in next year's open enrollment season. It will start on Nov. 15, 2014, a month later than originally scheduled, and finish on Jan. 15, 2015,

course, is likely to result in higher health insurance costs.

According to the report, employers also can expect an increase in injured workers who could claim obesity as a compensable consequence of an injury.

For instance, if an injured employee gains weight due to a lack of mobility or as a side effect of a medication prescribed during recovery, he or she may be able to receive treatment for that condition.

This, say some specialists, is yet another argument for employers to make a commitment to modified work during an employee's healing period. Keeping a worker engaged and mobile will counter some of

these unintended outcomes.

The AMA's decision to reclassify obesity also is another reason why employers should commit to wellness strategies that help employees drop and maintain a healthy weight.

Some employers encourage their employees to use the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's obesity cost calculator to quantify the impact of obesity and to gain support for wellness initiatives or to validate program return on investment.

The bottom line is that employers will feel the impact of obesity in health insurance and workers' compensation costs.

move was a response to anger over a wave of more than 4 million policy cancellations.

The series of delays was seized upon by Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., chairman of the House Small Business Committee.

"In the midst of the angst and uncertainty that small businesses and Americans feel about Obamacare, (the small business) is just more proof that the law is unworkable and bad for small businesses," Graves said.

L.A. reins in Hollywood tour buses

HOLLYWOOD — A new ordinance has booted tour bus companies from Hollywood's Walk of Fame, and changed the way they can attract business.

Vendors are no longer allowed to walk up to tourists on the Walk of Fame and solicit them for tours of the Los Angeles area.

Now, tourists have to approach the operators, who are located at kiosks or storefronts on private property.

Any tour bus companies attempting to operate on the Walk of Fame are being asked to move or shut down completely.

The Walk of Fame is arguably

the most famous stop on the itinerary of most international visitors to Los Angeles/Hollywood. The walk is along Hollywood Boulevard in front of the Chinese Theatre and the adjoining Dolby Theater.

Los Angeles City Councilman Mitch O'Farrell spearheaded the effort that resulted in passage of the ordinance. Tour operators were setting up on the sidewalk with no permit, they blocked the sidewalk, they sold tours and people were required to pay cash, said O'Farrell.

City leaders said the companies aggressively harassed tourists.

Michael Daves with Prime Time Hollywood Tours said he had seen rival tour company workers come to blows. He described the situation as the "Wild Wild West of tours."

O'Farrell said it was a public safety and quality of life issue, and that the city needed to raise the standards.

The goal of the ordinance is "to improve the tourist experience."

Because of the aggressive tour vendors, plus transients and street performers who crowd the area, Los Angeles officials have added 60 police officers to patrol Hollywood Boulevard.

S.F. tour buses

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

At the end of the trial, though, residents turned out in force at a pair of MTA meetings to voice their concerns and unhappiness.

At a board meeting last month, MTA staffers offered two options: A complete ban on large commercial buses, with the exception of commuter shuttles, and a partial ban that would have allowed buses access along Hayes Street. Both options called for a tour bus loading zone on Fell Street.

Residents attending the meeting favored the outright ban by an overwhelming majority, reported the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

"This is unsafe," Kelly Edwards

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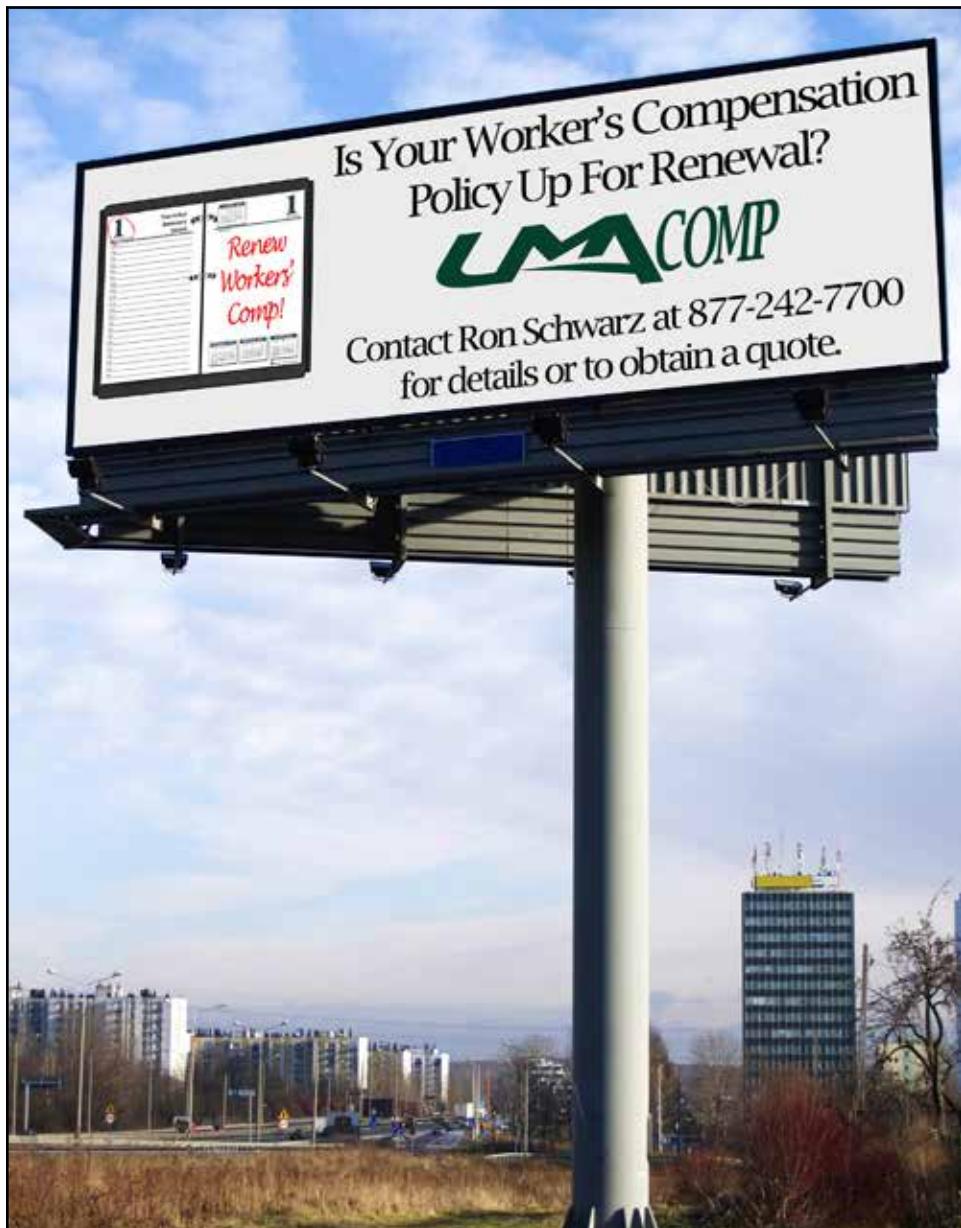
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Austin ordinance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"The offending ordinance expresses authority preempted by federal law, plain and simple," said Ken Presley, vice president of industry relations at UMA.

"Congress is very explicit in preempting states and their political subdivisions from granting or requiring authority to operate within their jurisdictions. Imagine just for a moment if every city in the nation enforced a similar ordinance. The charter bus industry would essentially grind to a halt."

In late June, the Austin City Council approved an ordinance (No. 20130620-051) pertaining to "Ground Transportation Passenger Services."

According to the UMA suit, the ordinance "usurps power to regulate 'Operating Authority' for interstate and intrastate charter bus operators by imposing upon those operators discriminatory and unduly burdensome municipal requirements as a precondition to traveling within city limits."

"The power to regulate operating authority is reserved to the United States through the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (hereafter 'TEA-21')..."

"TEA-21 was enacted to ensure the U.S. Department of Transportation, rather than the states or their political subdivisions, has plenary and exclusive authority to create, oversee and enforce charter bus operating authority requirements," the UMA suit states.

The suit, filed by UMA attorney Dan R. Mastromarco, contends "UMA and its members have been and are being injured as a result of the ordinance."

The suit asks the court to issue a declaratory judgment that the ordinance is preempted by federal law and therefore is invalid.

Until the ruling can be made, UMA requests a preliminary injunction, staying enforcement of the ordinance by Austin.

"The fatal infirmity of the ordinance is that it conflicts with federal law which grants the U.S. Department of Transportation, not the Austin City Council, the power to grant or revoke operating authority," the suit argues.

"The ordinance ignores the national interest for a streamlined and harmonized system of national transportation. The ordinance, by developing incongruous overlay of quasi-safety, aesthetic and consumer-related regulations, is designed with the intent of discouraging passenger carriers located outside of Austin...from offering service to and within Austin. It is designed to accord local carriers that 'hometown advantage.'"

A spokeswoman for the Austin

city legal department declined to comment on the suit because it had not received a copy.

'(The ordinance) is designed to accord local carriers hometown advantage.'

City 'standards'

The Austin ordinance imposes detailed safety regulations, such as requiring that motorcoaches meet unspecified safety standards; carry a chemical fire extinguisher within the driver's reach; carry a spare tire, jack and lug nut wrench; be equipped with two-way communication equipment; and be equipped with air conditioning.

The ordinance imposes a longer list of aesthetic requirements. The vehicle must be reasonably clean, carry matching wheel covers and bear paint that "may not be noticeably rusted, flaked, scraped or faded." Damaged trim, paint and upholstery must be repaired. All portions of the interior upholstery must match in color. All vehicles operated by a company must carry matching logos.

The operator must carry a dossier on the driver, an annual vehicle inspection by the state, evidence of more than 30-minutes advanced booking and a trip ticket identifying the group transported, a phone number for a passenger, and the fare information charged.

And... "no more than five newspapers, periodicals or other publications may be kept within the vehicle at any one time."

Violations could be addressed by the Austin police or other enforcement officials through the issuance of citations charging operators with a Class C misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine of up to \$500.

Unintended consequence

Motorcoaches apparently were included in the Austin ordinance as part of an effort to redress a regulatory gap between shuttle and taxi services.

"Although charter (bus) services were swept within the purview of (the ordinance), that result was likely unintended," said Mastromarco. "Concerns over charter bus operations neither arose during the hearing, nor can be found in the legislative history."

The ordinance — intentional or not — imposed local regulations on motorcoach charters.

Severe impact

"I hope the city of Austin has prepared its local tourism industry for the negative consequences" of

the ordinance, Presley said.

If the ordinance is permitted to stand, it will harm motorcoach charter operators and other tourism businesses, according to an affidavit filed with the UMA suit.

"Without relief from this ordinance, based on my experience, there will be a severe impact to hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues as tour operations begin withdrawing their marketing efforts because the charter bus companies refuse to travel to Austin," stated Paul Arcediano, president of R&R Limousine and Bus.

The Austin-based company employs 150 people and operates more than 100 vehicles, mostly charter buses, Arcediano said.

"R&R services large accounts in the corporate and hospitality markets and is a go-to company for the larger destination management coordinators and consultants in Austin."

"The ordinance will profoundly affect my business. Through the ordinance, unless a fee of \$375 per bus is annually paid, the city will revoke operating authority, impound my vehicles and cite me for offenses. This will cost significant resources for a business that operates on thin margins."

Arcediano said he was informed it would cost his company more than \$15,000 to comply with the Austin operating authority fee requirements.

Greyhound v. New Orleans

A 1998 federal court decision cited in UMA's Austin suit granted Greyhound Bus Lines an injunction against a similar ordinance enacted in New Orleans. That ordinance required bus operators to obtain a "certificate of public necessity and convenience" before they could operate on New Orleans streets. Bus drivers were required to pay a fee to obtain a permit to operate in the city.

The federal district court noted that New Orleans had arrested Greyhound drivers for delivering charter passengers from hotels to the city's convention center. The city's lawyers argued that the U.S. Congress intended that local authorities retain the right to regulate taxicab or limousine livery services.

Wrote the court: "The city's strained logic cannot transform the square-peg definition of 'charter service' into the round-hole understanding of 'livery service.' Greyhound's operations clearly qualify as charter service."

"The supremacy clause of the United States Constitution provides that the laws of the United States 'shall be the supreme law of the land...thus, a state law or municipal ordinance that conflicts with federal law is without effect.'



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