

Happy New Year!

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION

## MOTORCOACH EXPO 2009



**Back to Orlando.** UMA Motorcoach Expo opens a five-day run in America's Playground on Jan. 21. Expo was last in Orlando six years ago, when the industry was in the midst of a recession. That downturn failed to dampen Expo '03 attendance or enthusiasm, just as the current slowdown won't appreciably slow Expo '09. See special section that begins on page 7.

## Where to park 10,000 buses in D.C.?

WASHINGTON — It's beginning to look more and more like motorcoach operators planning to send coaches here for President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration later this month should plan for the worst... but hope for the best.

And it might be prudent to let customers know sooner, rather than later, they likely will face huge crowds, protracted waiting, long lines, plenty of hiking, lots of bumping and pushing, and limited creature comforts. Plus, it's winter, it's January, and it's D.C.

District of Columbia transportation planners are estimating that as many as 10,000 charter buses could arrive in the Washington area for the inauguration ceremo-

ny and parade, creating an unprecedented logistical challenge.

That number does not include scores of midsize buses and vans organized by churches and other groups.

The prospect of a massive number of charter coaches, carrying as many as a half-million people, is having an enormous impact on all aspects of the transportation planning for the event.

For example, widespread street closures — for security reasons — will prevent coaches from dropping passengers off at or close to events, so officials have been working on a plan for where buses will park and how their passengers will get to the parade route.

The D.C. Department of Transportation has decreed that motorcoaches coming for the inauguration will be required to follow specific guidelines. No. 1, operators will be required to register and obtain a \$50 D.C. trip permit — if they come into the district and don't have apportioned license plates and list Washington, D.C., on the cab card.

As of mid-December, DCDOT was sending carriers looking for parking to "ClickandPark.com," the official event parking contractor for the inauguration, and the operator of the parking lots around RFK Stadium. ClickandPark.com is a collaboration of Gameday

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## Where's the money?

### Texas foot dragging puts operators in real crunch

Instead of "Don't mess with Texas," that state's famous anti-littering slogan, motorcoach operators from across the country soon may be chanting: "Don't work with Texas."

At least that's the growing sentiment among operators who sent buses and drivers to the Lone Star state this past summer to help evacuate people from the paths of four major storms.

Most say they're still waiting to be paid for their work, and they're fed up with the lack of communications and run-around they say they've been getting from state officials.

So outraged are these operators that many insist it's unlikely they'll

return to Texas the next time it needs a large contingent of coaches.

Victor Parra, president of the United Motorcoach Association, has written a strongly worded letter to the governor of Texas, Rick Perry, asking him to personally intervene and accelerate the payment process.

At issue are payments for evacuations the carriers worked for the last two storms of the season — Hurricanes Gustaf and Ike — that struck in early September.

While larger companies involved in the evacuation operations have managed to get by during the long wait for their money by borrowing, most of the smaller

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## Safety briefings, security are issues at UMA forum

STERLING, Va. — If you haven't yet started giving your passengers safety briefings, now is a good time to get started because if you don't you could be partially to blame for the voluntary briefings becoming mandatory.

Matt Daecher, president of the Daecher Consulting Group, says federal regulators are holding to a pledge they made just over a year ago that if not enough operators are delivering the safety message on their own, the suggestion will be turned into a requirement.

"If you aren't doing it yet, then you really should be," he urged operators attending the fifth annual United Motorcoach Association Safety Management Seminar.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration issued a

formal recommendation in late 2007, calling on operators to provide a safety message to passengers, informing them of the safety features of the motorcoach, including how to use window and roof exits to evacuate the bus.

The message can be delivered live by the driver, prerecorded on video or audio tape, or in a brochure.

Safety regulators issued the suggestion after a bus accident in which passengers complained they had no idea how to quickly exit the vehicle or what to do after they got outside.

Peter Chandler of the FMSCA, who also spoke at the seminar, noted that the warning about the message becoming mandatory still stands, although he said a

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## Want to cut insurance costs? Check your hiring practices

STERLING, Va. — If your insurance costs are running out of control, it might be time to look at your driver hiring practices.

Lancer Insurance executive Ron Fuller makes a strong case for such a personnel review, emphasizing that motorcoach drivers are the key to controlling the cost of insurance and accident claims.

He told an audience of motorcoach executives attending the fifth annual United Motorcoach Association Safety Management Seminar here that they can help themselves by hiring the best drivers they can find, putting them through a formal training program, and keeping tabs on them once they are out on their own.

“You should have fundamental procedures and follow them,” he said. “Deviate from them and there could be problems.”

Fuller said operators need to be even more meticulous these days because the current driver shortage has made things more difficult, not only raising the cost of recruiting but also increasing the potential of hiring the wrong people to drive their buses.

“And hiring the wrong people can also hurt your company’s image and reputation,” he noted.

Fuller emphasized that operators need to know the important risk factors in hiring drivers, and look very carefully at applicants who are aggressive, impatient, inattentive, inexperienced, unhappy, or have numerous violations or serious medical problems.

“If you do hire them, then you better manage them because if you don’t, it is going to cause problems,” he cautioned.

He recommended, too, that applicants from other companies who have current medical cards be required to have a new medical examination from the hiring company’s doctor to make sure the driver did not falsify the record. Such a disclosure, he said, could anger a jury if the driver was involved in an accident and the case went to court.

Fuller said an important part of the training given to new drivers is teaching them what to say if they are involved in an accident.

“They should say very little,” he stressed.

## Policies can help forestall issues with older drivers

STERLING, Va. — Air traffic controllers have to hang it up when they turn 56.

Airline pilots have to call it quits when they reach 65. So do most law enforcement officers.

Commercial bus drivers, though, can stay behind the wheel until they are 70, 75, 80 and even older. And, many of them do just that.

Because federal transportation regulators have not set a maximum age at which bus drivers must retire, many are kept on until they no longer can handle the bus safely, they lose their licenses because of too many traffic violations, or they have a serious accident that puts them out of commission.

This can cause tough challenges and special problems for motorcoach operators who are fearful of age discrimination complaints or civil lawsuits if they let senior drivers go.

Daecher Consulting Group President Matt Daecher says although dealing with situations involving older drivers can be difficult, it can be done.

Speaking at the fifth annual United Motorcoach Association Safety Management Seminar, the

safety specialist said the key is writing a company policy that addresses older driver concerns, but is enforced among all drivers.

“You have to treat everyone alike,” he emphasized.

Daecher suggested that a workable policy could single out drivers who have too many near accidents, medical problems that affect their driving skills, or who shy away from nighttime driving or difficult runs.

While those issues might apply mostly to older drivers, if a younger driver is released because of the same reasons, then legal ramifications would be diminished.

He said the policy could also require drivers who appear to have health issues to have physical examinations once a year rather than the currently required two years. He suggested, too, that operators obtain a copy of the long medical examination form so they have a full picture of the driver’s health and know of any ailments they have and medications they are taking.

“If they’re on medicines, you need to know about it because it could have side effects that could impact their driving,” he said.

## Greyhound Canada beefs up security

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Greyhound is tightening security at its major Canadian bus terminals, including screening passengers with hand-held metal detectors.

The beefed-up security comes roughly five months after a horrific attack in which a man was headed by a fellow passenger on a Greyhound coach near Portage La Prairie, Manitoba.

The new measures do not stem directly from that event, according to a Greyhound spokeswoman, but

are the result of a two-year study aimed at improving security.

“We believe these measures that we’re implementing make the most sense and will be the most effective at this point in time for our type of transportation,” said Abby Wambaugh of Greyhound.

Passengers are being screened with a magnetometer for weapons and required to stow their luggage in the baggage bays rather than take on board, the company said.

Greyhound said it would take

other security steps that it was not announcing publicly. The new measures are at company terminals in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, and Winnipeg.

Greyhound currently conducts hand metal-detector screenings at random terminals in the U.S.

The company did not release the cost of the increased Canadian security but said it was “several million dollars” and was hoping the Canadian government would pick up part of the tab.



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# THE DOCKET

## CDL, medical record to be merged

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has issued a rule that will lead to the merging of commercial driver licenses and medical certificates into one electronic record.

The FMCSA said the long-discussed combining of the two documents will help keep medically unfit truck and bus drivers off the road.

Under the final rule issued by the FMCSA, states will be required to merge their CDLs with a driver's medical examination certificate.

When fully implemented in three years, the combined CDL

will streamline recordkeeping obligations for states and CDL holders, while providing instant electronic access to the CDL holder's medical certificate by state and federal enforcement officials.

The combined CDL/medical document, along with a new registry of medical examiners (see story below), are part of the FMCSA's "continuing commitment to ensure that only medically qualified individuals are allowed to operate an interstate truck or bus," said FMCSA Administrator John Hill.

Currently, most states give bus and truck drivers an eye exam before testing them for their CDL,

but never even look at the medical certification card.

That card is something drivers must keep on them at all times while driving a commercial vehicle. They are ticketed, of course, if they don't have it on them but typically don't need it to get a license.

Under the new rule, those seeking to renew or obtain a CDL will have to have their medical certification and present it at the time they take their CDL test. That means drivers will have to obtain their medical certification first. If they don't have it they can't be tested and receive their CDL.

## Feds propose medical examiner system

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has announced plans to improve standards and set uniform requirements for the medical personnel who examine bus and truck drivers for CDLs.

The new standards and requirements are contained in a proposed rulemaking that was issued at the same time as the new FMCSA rules requiring states to merge the commercial driver's license and

the driver's medical examination certificate. (See story above.)

The proposed rule establishing a National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners is designed to assure physical qualification exams of CDL holders are performed by qualified medical practitioners and are administered in a uniform and consistent manner.

The rulemaking also would create a training and testing program, plus a national registry of

medical personnel who are qualified to conduct exams of interstate truck and bus drivers.

The new system would weed out medical examiners who fail to meet or maintain the minimum standards by removing them from the national registry.

The proposed rule can be found at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), docket number FMCSA-2008-0363. Public comments may be submitted until Jan. 30.

## UMA, ABA issue get-tough recommendations to Obama

WASHINGTON — The United Motorcoach Association and the American Bus Association are urging the incoming administration of President-elect Obama to adopt a get-tough policy with rogue bus operators and start-up companies wanting to enter the industry.

The call for a crackdown on "existing problematic carriers" and individuals and companies seeking new passenger carrier operating authority was contained in a joint statement issued by the two associations and passed along to members of Obama's U.S. Department of Transportation transition team.

The associations asked the incoming administration to move quickly to get rotten operators off U.S. highways and keep potential bad apples from ever hitting the roadways. And they urged the new administration to show no mercy to new operators.

"The motorcoach industry asserts that passenger carriers operating without benefit of compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations pose a great risk to highway safety. By focusing on existing problematic carriers, as well as preventing entry to future ones,

the (FMCSA) possesses a great opportunity to improve highway safety, reduce fatalities and injuries, and improve parity among compliant carriers," the associations said in their joint pronouncement.

UMA and ABA said such a crackdown could be done most efficiently through a targeted approach aimed at individuals and companies requesting new passenger carrier operating authority.

Currently, an individual or company seeking operating authority from the U.S. Department of Transportation need only submit an application, a registration fee, evidence of financial responsibility (usually in the form of insurance), and the name of a process agent(s).

There is no requirement the new operator demonstrate knowledge of federal motor carrier safety laws and regulations or the ability to conduct safe operations.

"The FMCSA performs a new-entrant review — currently characterized as an 'educational review,' usually within nine months of a passenger carrier receiving initial operating authority from the FMCSA," the associations noted.

"The gap between receipt of operating authority and a review is risky and exposes passengers to needless potential harm, regardless of the length of time. The review also lacks veracity and establishes a poor precedent with new-entrant operators when a more important message regarding the significance of compliance with the laws and regulations should be made.

"The industry believes the FMCSA should not grant any operating authority prior to determining an applicant's... likelihood to comply with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations and operate safely, through testing and other methods," the associations said.

Additionally, UMA and ABA called on the Obama Administration to quickly adopt a policy, within 90 days of taking office, of targeting new companies with an immediate compliance review after they have been granted operating authority.

"Passenger carriers (that) fail to comply with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations should be treated equally, and no considerations should be afforded new entrants," said the associations.

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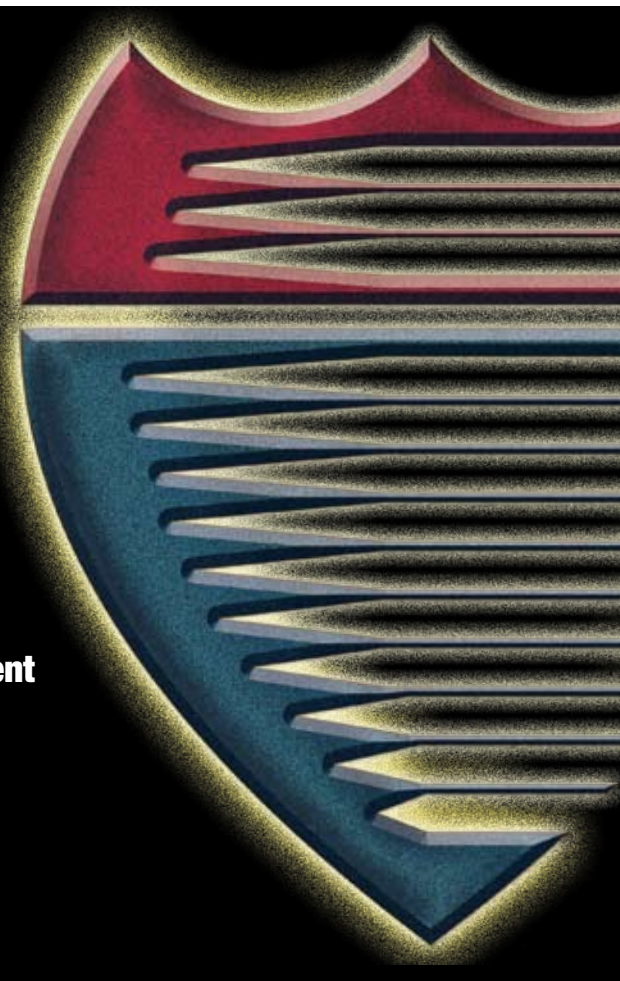
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# Coach industry continues to battle trip fee in D.C.

WASHINGTON — Efforts by the motorcoach industry to force the repeal of a law that requires charter bus operators to pay a \$50 fee to bring a coach into the District of Columbia have struck another bump in the road.

But it isn't expected to slow the drive to quash the controversial fee that was put in place by the D.C. Council a year ago and is costing motorcoach companies thousands of dollars.

In the latest development in the case, the D.C. Court of Appeals rejected a request to allow attorneys for the industry to have more than the usual 15 minutes to deliver oral arguments in their appeal of a Superior Court ruling that upheld the law.

The motion, which was filed by the United Motorcoach Association with the support of others involved in the case, including the American Bus Association and the District of Columbia, would have about doubled the time lawyers from both sides would have to

argue their cases.

UMA attorney Dan R. Mastromarco, who filed the motion, said he anticipated it would be denied because giving lawyers additional time for oral arguments is highly unusual.

He argued in his motion that extra time is needed because the lower court decision is so confusing and complex that the panel of appeals court judges is likely to have a difficult time understanding it.

"The red light timing the lawyers will go on long before the court even understands the issues because they have been so muddled as a result of the lower court's confusing record," he said.

Mastromarco pointed out that the rejection of the request for additional time was made without prejudice, meaning it can be filed again after dates for filing briefs and delivering oral arguments are set by the court. "And we just might do that," he added.

He said he was motivated to file the motion by concerns that once

the judges realize the complexity of the lower court decision and the issues, they would question the lawyers as to why they had not requested additional time to present their arguments.

Under the statute establishing the trip fee, out-of-town charter carriers are given three options to operate legally in the district: Establish their businesses in the district; purchase apportioned registration tags in their home state each

year, and pay the district a fee based on the number of visits each coach makes to the district, or purchase a six-day, \$50 trip permit for each of their buses that enters the district.

Lawyers for the industry maintain the first option is out of the question for established carriers, the second violates federal regulations, and the third is unconstitutional.

UMA and others in the industry have been trying to overturn the

statute since shortly after it was adopted, first by trying to work with the district Department of Motor Vehicles and tourism organizations, and then appealing directly to the D.C. Council.

When their efforts failed, an industry coalition made up of UMA, ABA and the National Tour Association challenged the law in Superior Court. However, Judge Jeanette Clark upheld the measure and the coalition appealed.

## Diesel prices continue to drop

Diesel fuel prices are closing out 2008 at about half the level they were at mid-year and more than 80 cents a gallon less than they were a year ago.

The national average price of diesel has fallen to around \$2.50 a gallon, down roughly \$2.25 a gallon from the record of \$4.76 set July 14.

The \$2.50 national average puts diesel at its lowest level since Feb. 19, 2007, when it was \$2.49 a gal-

lon. At year-end 2007, diesel averaged \$3.34 a gallon nationwide.

Gasoline also continues to fall in price, declining to a national average of just under \$1.70 a gallon. Gas has fallen \$2.415 a gallon since its \$4.114 record set July 7, and is at its lowest level in almost five years, since it was \$1.69 a gallon on Feb. 23, 2004.

In some areas, near refineries, gasoline is selling for less than \$1.50 a gallon, with promotional

prices as low as \$1.30.

Crude oil has dropped to around \$40 a barrel, its lowest price in almost four years.

The highest diesel fuel prices are in New England and central Atlantic states, with the cheapest diesel, believe it or not, in California where it is around \$2.40 a gallon.

Other regions with below-national-average prices include the Midwest, Gulf Coast, Rocky Mountains and West Coast.

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## Buses in D.C.

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Management Group, International Event Services and Dedicated Hosting Services.

Parking fees at RFK will be \$50 per bus, plus a \$10 service fee, and buses are required to arrive at the parking lots between 4:30 and 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 20. For more information or to reserve a parking place, go to <http://2009inauguration.clickandpark.com>.

The website also has information on shuttle buses that will run from RFK to downtown and about taking the D.C. Metrorail from near RFK to downtown. There is a link on the website to purchase Metrorail tickets.

Many coach operators are expected to try to park at outlying Metrorail parking lots, but that may prove problematic.

Officials are estimating that

from 2 million to 4 million people may try to attend the inauguration. The high number is more than double estimates of just a month ago. (See Dec. 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*.)

In addition to the traditional parking venues, like RFK Stadium and Metrorail stations, organizers have identified more than 100 parking locations for charter buses in the region, including shopping malls, college campuses and elsewhere.

Some visitors could be shuttling in from as far away as Six Flags America in Bowie, Md., and the racetrack at Laurel Park, Md. Closer-in spots under consideration include Wolf Trap in Vienna, Va., and Arlington National Cemetery.

Officials also are looking at such district facilities as the Carter Barron Tennis Center, East Potomac Park and Hains Point, and

Washington Nationals Park.

"Finding a big piece of tarmac to park buses isn't the main issue," said City Administrator Dan Tangherlini. "Getting people from that chunk of pavement to where they want to be — that's where the big issue is going to be."

Additionally, there will be last-minute rolling street closures dictated by the Secret Service, not to mention the possibility of snow and freezing weather.

"The logistical issues associated with this are huge," said Greater Washington Board of Trade President Jim Dinegar.

Being inundated with motorcoaches is not exactly new to Washington. Organizers of the Million Man March, held Oct. 16, 1995, predicted 11,000 charter buses would come to Washington. The march, a gathering of African American men from across the country, is often cited as a benchmark because of

the large crowd it drew.

But one analysis suggests there were only 2,500 buses, including school buses, for that event.

Inaugural planners also point out that the Million Man March is not particularly relevant for planning purposes today because of drastically heightened security concerns after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Washington Metro is expected to play a critical role in the movement of people on Jan. 20.

Calling it the biggest challenge in the 32-year-old agency's history, General Manager John B. Catoe Jr. told a Metro inaugural planning group to prepare for "everything that could possibly happen" with crowds five to 10 times as large as Metro's typical ridership of 500,000 for the Fourth of July celebration on the Mall.

Because the Metro system can't accommodate everyone, officials are preparing for many to

have to walk to events or are setting up shuttle bus service from many areas to downtown.

The transit agency will run an unprecedented 15 hours of consecutive rush-hour rail service on Inauguration Day. Even so, Metro officials say they can accommodate only 4,700 buses, or roughly 235,000 people, at Metrorail station parking lots, according to senior planner Jim Hughes.

More than that would overwhelm the system, officials say.

If Metro takes 4,700 busloads of people that means city and regional officials need to find parking for the remaining 5,300 buses.

Coach operators should watch for information from industry trade associations as city plans are completed and disseminated.

The United Motorcoach Association has set up a special website with the latest information. Go to <http://www.uma.org/inaugural.asp>.

## UMA Safety Forum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

minimum number of carriers delivering the message or a timetable for deciding if the message should become mandatory has not been set.

"We'll just monitor the situation," he said.

He noted that less than 30 percent of the operators in the country were giving the briefings when his agency checked earlier this year. He said he hopes the number is much higher now because the review was done prior to the agency making materials available to companies to help them with the briefings.

Daecher stressed there is no excuse for not giving the briefings because, in addition to the materials available from the FMCSA, a substantial amount of information, including canned announcements and printed materials, also is avail-

able free of charge from UMA and many other organizations, most of which is available for downloading from the internet.

"There are a lot of products out there now, so there's really no reason for not doing it," he emphasized.

### Crashes complete

On other federal safety issues, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported it has completed a series of motorcoach crashes it staged as part of an extensive study into the possible need for passenger restraints on motorcoaches and new manufacturing standards for coach roofs and windows.

Roger Saul, who directs one of the two federal centers where the research is being done, said the data from the head-on, sled and rollover crashes now is being analyzed along with information from numerous other sources and it

could be some time before the final results are in and recommendations can be formulated.

In addition, he said related testing of fires on the interior and in the wheel wells of buses and passenger evacuation procedures is just getting under way and much of that work is not expected to be completed until sometime in 2010.

Although Saul would not say, there were indications that some recommendations on the passenger restraint issues could be delivered before the other tests are complete.

### Security focus

Steve Sprague of the Transportation Safety Administration reported that the TSA is moving forward with a national risk assessment program, and motorcoach operators soon will be asked to participate by serving on focus groups that are

being formed to identify possible terrorist threats against buses.

"What we are asking for is for you to take an active role in the security of your businesses," he said.

Also in the works, he said, is a requirement that motorcoach companies will have to offer special training to their employees so they can recognize possible threats and know where and how to report them to authorities.

Part of the plan, he said, is to make sure police and other law enforcement officials take the reports seriously. "We don't want people to feel like they just reported a UFO," he added.

Bill Mahorney of the FMCSA reported that models for the FMCSA's proposed new regulatory structure, as it applies to motorcoach companies and drivers, is being tested in Colorado, Georgia, New Jersey and Missouri.

The FMCSA Comprehensive

Safety Analysis initiative allows regulators to direct their resources on the worst of the worst companies by using improved data to more easily and quickly identify high-risk carriers and drivers. It is expected to be put in place nationally sometime in 2010.

Mahorney said regulators will be able to look at problems over a longer period to zero in on the causes.

"If a driver has the same problem while working for a number of different companies, then it is a driver problem. But if a company has the same problems with a number of different drivers, then it is a company problem," he said.

The pilot program has led to contacts with 2,100 carriers in the four states, most of which have typically not received FMCSA attention in the past.

Of those, more than 1,800 were issued warnings alerting them to potential safety problems.

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# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

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Randlemann, N.C.

James Brown Sr.  
Magic Carpet Tours  
Richmond, Va.

Steve Brown  
Brown Coach  
Amsterdam, N.Y.

Bob Foley  
ABC Companies  
Faribault, Minn.

Gladys Gillis  
Starline Transportation  
Seattle

Robert Hume  
Travel Mates Trailways  
Harrisonburg, Va.

Daryl G. Johnson  
J & J Charters  
Crosby, Texas

Dale Krapf  
Krapf Coaches  
West Chester, Pa.

Godfrey Lebron  
Paradise Trailways  
Hicksville, N.Y.

Joan Libby  
Cavalier Coach  
Boston, Mass.

Marcia Milton  
First Priority Trailways  
District Heights, Md.

Michael Neustadt  
Coach Tours  
Brookfield, Conn.

Jeff Polzien  
Red Carpet Tours  
Oklahoma City

Tom Ready  
Ready Bus Lines  
LaCrescent, Minn.

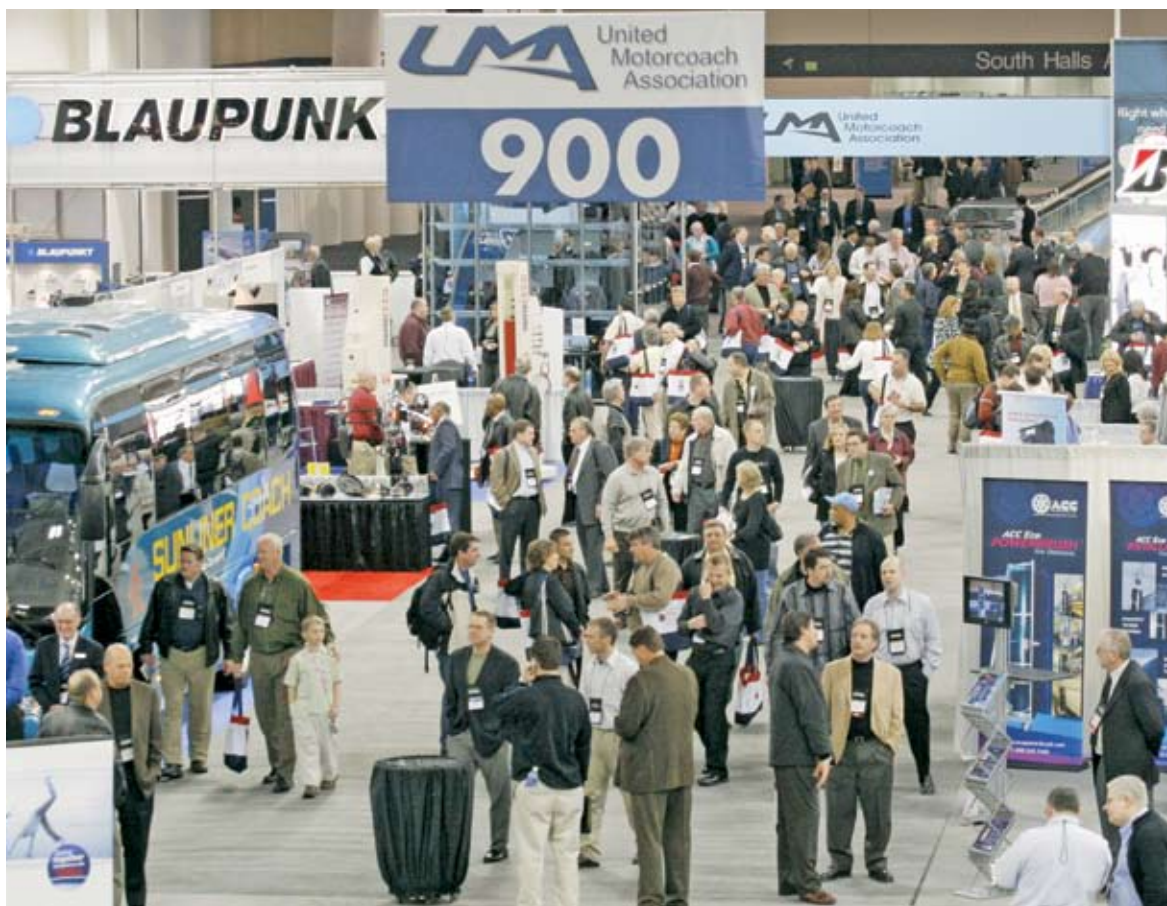
Brian Scott  
Escot Bus Lines  
Largo, Fla.

Michelle Silvestro  
National Interstate Insurance Co.  
Richfield, Ohio

T. Ralph Young  
Young Transportation  
Asheville, N.C.



# MOTORCOACH EXPO 2009



The show floor is always the hub of activity at UMA Motorcoach Expo.

## Schedule of Events

### Wednesday, Jan. 21

**9 a.m.–5 p.m.** Expo Registration, Entrance to South Hall B, Orange County Convention Center  
**1–5 p.m.** State Association Summit, Peabody Orlando, Plaza Ballroom B-C  
**6–8 p.m.** Welcome Reception, Peabody Orlando, Plaza Ballroom D-E

**Thursday, Jan. 22** — All events at the Orange County Convention Center unless otherwise noted. Shuttle Service from convention hotels provided.

**7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.** Expo Registration, Entrance to South Hall B, Orange County Convention Center  
**8–8:30 a.m.** Continental Breakfast & Networking Opportunity, Outside Room S-330  
**8:30–9 a.m.** Opening Session: Welcome Remarks & UMA Active Membership Meeting, Room S-330  
**9–10 a.m.** Dawn of a New Age Panel Discussion, Room S-330  
**9 a.m.–4 p.m.** Maintenance Interchange, Room S-331  
**10–10:45 a.m.** Legislative and Regulatory Update, Room S-330  
**10:45–11 a.m.** Break  
**11 a.m.–Noon** Concurrent Solution Sessions  
 Marketing and Sales: Reaching the International Customer, Room S-230 F-H  
 Finance: Obtaining Financing in a Tough Economy, Room S-230 C-E  
 Operations: New Places to Recruit New Drivers, Room S-230 A-B  
**11 a.m.–Noon** UMA Associate and Travel Partner Membership Meeting, Room S-329  
**Noon–1:45 p.m.** Operator Lunch: Getting Mentally Ready for the Dawn of a New

Age, Room S-320  
**1:45–2 p.m.** Break  
**2–3 p.m.** Concurrent Solution Sessions  
 Marketing and Sales: Achieving Maximum Results through Unconventional Marketing Techniques, Room S-230 F-H  
 Finance: Coop-ition – The new Watchword for the Motorcoach Industry, Room S-230 C-  
 Operations: Training Drivers to Better Manage Fuel Consumption, Room S-230 A-B

**3–3:15 p.m.** Break  
**3:15–4:15 p.m.** Concurrent Solution Sessions  
 Marketing and Sales: Working with Your Local Transit Authority\*\*, Room S-230 F-H  
 Finance: Coop-ition – The New Watchword for the Motorcoach Industry (cont'd), Room S-230 C-E  
 Operations: 2010 Engine Emission Issues, Room S-230 A-B  
**4–4:30 p.m.** Maintenance Competition Registration, Room S-331  
**4:30–6:30 p.m.** Exhibit Hall Opens for Sneak Preview, South Hall B

**Friday, Jan. 23**  
**7–10 a.m.** Maintenance Competition, Escot Bus Lines' maintenance facility  
**7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.** Expo Registration, Entrance of South Hall B, Orange County Convention Center

**8–8:30 a.m.** Continental Breakfast and Networking Opportunity, Outside Room S-330

**8:30–9:30 a.m.** Education Session: Expectations of Tour Operators and Charter Operators, Room S-330

**9:30–10:30 a.m.** Concurrent Solution Sessions  
 Marketing and Sales: Leveraging the Internet to Boost Sales, Room S-230 F-H  
 Finance: Managing Accounts Receivable\*\*, Room S-230 C-E  
 Operations: Specing a Vehicle for Operating Efficiencies, Room S-230 A-B

**10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.** Exhibit Hall Open, South Hall B  
**11 a.m.–2 p.m.** Lunch on Exhibit Hall Floor, South Hall B  
**6:30–11:30 p.m.** 6th annual UMA Vision Awards Banquet, Peabody Orlando, Plaza Ballroom

### Saturday, Jan. 24

**9 a.m.–Noon** Expo Registration, Entrance to South Hall B, Orange County Convention Center  
**9 a.m.–Noon** Exhibit Hall Open, South Hall B  
**10 a.m.–Noon** Brunch on Exhibit Hall Floor, South Hall B

### Sunday, Jan. 25

**7 a.m.–4 p.m.** 5th annual Ray Dupuis Memorial Golf Tournament, Falcon's Fire Golf Club  
**7 a.m.–4 p.m.** Post-Show Tour to Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Tampa, Escot Bus Lines

\*\*Bus & Motorcoach Academy Continuing Education Credit

## Expo special events add sparkle

ORLANDO, Fla. — UMA Motorcoach Expo 2009 will feature three signature hospitality events specifically tailored to provide fun for everyone attending the industry trade show during its five-day run here later this month.

First up is the Welcome Reception on Wednesday, Jan. 21, where attendees can meet and mingle with colleagues while sipping cocktails

## An Invitation to Expo

By Victor Parra  
 President & CEO  
 United Motorcoach Assn.

I'm thinking: Didn't we just wrap up that final night in San Francisco where everyone — mostly everyone — dressed in rock n' roll black tie?

You remember the night when our "surprise visitor" barged in and everyone thought we had arranged for a new source of entertainment for our Vision Awards Banquet?

Well, believe or not, we're on the eve of UMA Motorcoach Expo 2009, set for Jan. 21-25 in Orlando, and much has occurred in the past year that has dramatically altered the landscape of our industry.

The significant changes we're seeing today in our marketplace and in our operating environment suggest we may be entering one of the most critical and — potentially — most lucrative periods in our industry's history.

The magnitude of these changes can be compared to what we experienced when our industry was deregulated in 1982.

We are moving toward the Dawn of a New Age in the Motorcoach Industry.

For example, the revised charter bus rule — which went into effect April 30 — is opening the door for hundreds of charters and for contract work with professional and college sports arenas, county and state fairs, and other such events around the country. These are opportunities that never existed before.

In addition, travelers from around the world are coming to tour the U.S. in greater numbers than before the 9/11 tragedy. Their needs and expectations are very different from our current U.S.-based customers.

or nibbling hors d'oeuvres.

The two-hour reception, which begins at 6 p.m., is a great place to make contacts and get ready for the exhibition and education sessions. It will be conducted at the Expo headquarters hotel, the Peabody Orlando in the Plaza Ballroom.

The second event takes the form of the Exhibit Hall Sneak Preview — from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday,

But these opportunities are being accompanied by major challenges as well, such as the volatility of fuel prices which is making it difficult to price future charter orders.

Also, the potential of new federal regulations resulting in changes to our equipment design. On top of these developments, the new EPA requirements, scheduled to become effective in 2010, mean our capital equipment and operating costs are sure to rise...

### What does all this mean?

All signs indicate that we are at the very beginning of a new era in the motorcoach industry, an era loaded with profitable opportunities but fraught with serious threats to our industry and to your businesses.

Navigating successfully in this new marketplace will require new knowledge, new skills and perhaps an entirely new way of looking at your business.

That's where the UMA Expo can help you. We'll begin the "how-to" process with a brand new and exciting group of hard-hitting sessions. We'll bring you the best minds in and out of our industry to help you tackle these issues and help you leave with solid, doable strategies and tactics.

What's in store for our industry won't be for the faint of heart.

What lies ahead is risk, mixed with great upside potential, for those ready (I do mean ready) for the Dawn of a New Age in the Motorcoach Industry.

I hope to see all of you in Orlando.

Jan. 22. During this period attendees will have the opportunity to sip cocktails while getting a first peak at exhibitors' booths and displays.

Last, but certainly not least, the 6th Annual Vision Awards Banquet will be from 6:30 to 11:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23. The banquet and awards event will take place at the Peabody Orlando in the Plaza Ballroom.



Victor Parra

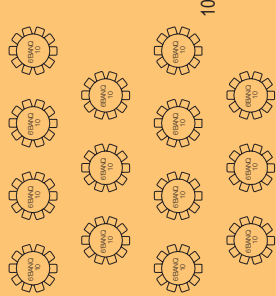


ORLANDO, FLORIDA 2009

# January 22 - 24, 2009 Orange County Convention Center

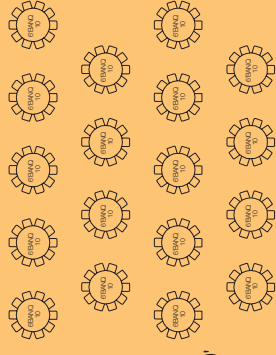
Gerflor/Industrial Rubbe	657
Groeneveld	510
Harbor Graphics	860
Harper Regional Svc Centre	629
Hershey Harrisburg RVB	716
HMS Host Restaurants	709
IC Bus	907
INTAPOL Uniforms	441
Intec Video Systems	548
Int'l Motor Coach Group	650
ISRINGHAUSEN Inc.	869
iTransit Inc.	801
J.J. Keller & Associates	437
Jim's Truck & Trailer	635
John Holdsworth & Co. Ltd.	669
Key Equipment Finance	606
Kidde Aerospace & Defense	409
Kingston Mobile Electronics	633
Kirk's Automotive Inc.	445
KMA Transportation	611
La France Industries	447
Lancer Insurance Company	861
Lantal Textiles	661
LINNIG Corporation	651
LMB Logowear	834
Lucas Oil Products	508
March of Dimes	750
Marriott Hotels of N.O.	714
Metro Magazine	812
Michelin North America Inc.	523
Midland Conv./Visit. Bureau	722
Mississippi Div. of Tourism	729
Mix Telematics	614
MOR/ryde	755
Motorcoach Council Inc.	838
Motorcoach Manager	528
Motorcoach Movies	435
Museum Bus Transportation	965
National Bus Trader	654
National Coach Marketing	615
Nat'l Interstate Insurance	739
National Motorcoach Network	828
Nat'l School Trans. Assn.	749
National Seating	407
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Old Country/HomeTown Buffet	
Ryans Grill, FireMountain	734
Olde English District	708
Orlando/Orange County CVB	715
P.A. Post Agency	751
PAA Insurance Solutions	848
Paradigm Technology	538
Pennsylvania Dutch CVB	711
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Safeguard A Div. of IMMI 839

Summit Seating Magazine 934  
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Auto 831

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MS Division of Tourism

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REI Radio Engineering 967

Bergan Auto Upholstery 563  
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Turtle Top 146

60' x 20' 138

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Sardo Bus & Coach Upholstery

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Berkeley County SC

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Euro tech, Inc.

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Metro Magazine

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Primac

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Coach Trans. Components

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Tropicana Casino & Resort

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Motion Shade

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Exchange Magazine

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Coach Glass

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Turning Stone

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# Expo education sessions help operators meet future

ORLANDO, Fla. — UMA Motorcoach Expo 2009 will feature more than a dozen focused educational sessions designed to help coach company owners and managers make their operations more successful.

The two days of workshops, presentations and panel discussions cover a variety of topics in three principal areas: Marketing and sales, finance and operations.

Here are the educational sessions scheduled for Expo '09:

## Thursday, Jan. 22

**9 a.m.–4 p.m. Maintenance Interchange.** This session, which is closed to vendors, is the only place where motorcoach owners, operators and maintenance professionals can participate in an open discussion about common maintenance issues.

**9 a.m.–10 a.m. Dawn of a New Age.** This high-profile panel session will focus on the impact of the new charter bus rule and how important it can be to our industry's future. Learn what other motorcoach operators have done to take over contracts previously performed by transit authorities, challenges they experienced during the transition, and everything they had to do to execute effectively.

**10–10:45 a.m. Legislative & Regulatory Update.** Attendees will be brought up to speed on key federal legislative and regulatory initiatives, as well as gain insights into

what we can expect from the new administration and 112th Congress.

## 11 a.m.–Noon Concurrent Sessions

**Marketing & Sales: Reaching the International Customer.** The number of inbound international travelers continues to grow. This session will discuss ways to reach the international customer and ensure that the services you deliver meet their expectations.

**Finance: Obtaining Financing During a Tough Economy.** Attendees will learn what they need to do to secure financing for that new or pre-owned coach or other business purposes during the nationwide credit crunch.

**Operations: New Places to Recruit Drivers.** Hiring drivers remains at the top of our industry's "most-wanted" list. But where do you find them? This session will feature operators who have uncovered new places to recruit drivers and succeeded in bringing them into their driver pool.

**Noon–1:45 p.m. Operator Lunch: Getting Mentally Ready for the Dawn of a New Age.** Attendees will learn to transform their thinking about the current changes taking place in the motorcoach industry, and receive real tools on how to manage change, reexamine their business and allow it to reach the next level. Learn how to take risks, fail successfully, unleash limitations and be a catalyst for change that allows your business to

explode in ways you never thought possible.

## 2–3 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

**Marketing & Sales: Achieving Maximum Results through Unconventional Marketing Techniques.** One of the main challenges our industry has historically faced has been in the area of marketing. In challenging and uncertain times, marketing is key to assure your business can navigate through the most taxing times. This session will present basic, easy-to-implement and inexpensive techniques to maximize your ROM — Return on Marketing, increasing sales and boosting profits.

**Finance: Coop-ition — New Watchword for the Motorcoach Industry.** With the new charter bus rule going into effect operators may be required to reach out and work with competing companies to fulfill a large charter order. It may even mean working and sharing resources with the local transit operator. Ultimately, it means cooperating with competitors, hence the term coop-ition. In this session operators will learn what they will need to do be successful in the future.

**Operations: Educating Drivers to Better Manage Fuel Consumption.** Have you trained your drivers to be mindful of how much the consumption of fuel eats into your bottom line, eroding profits and potentially reducing employee benefits? Find out what companies are doing to teach their drivers how to better manage fuel when they are on the road.

## 3:15–4:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

**Marketing & Sales: Working with Your Local Transit Authority.\*** Working with your local transit authority does not have to be contentious. Learn how to forge a meaningful working relationship with your local transit agency. This session will help you understand their needs and how they even might be compatible with yours to help assure the integrity of the charter bus rule remains intact.

**Finance: Coop-ition — New watchword for the Motorcoach Industry** (continued).

**Operations: 2010 Engine Emission Issues.** It seems like just yesterday we were gearing up for 2007 engine emission standards. Well, one year from Expo, we'll see a new batch of engines coming off the assembly line built to meet even more stringent

emissions standards. Learn what the engine manufactures and OEMs are doing to get ready for this next generation of engines.

## Friday, Jan. 23

**8:30–9:30 a.m. Expectations of Tour Operators and Charter Operators.** This panel of leading coach and tour operators will explore how to marry the needs of each party to maximize the benefit to the customer. Panelists will discuss the needs of tour operators versus those of motorcoach operators. The session will cover hours-of-service, safety, accessible buses and other ADA issues, how to find a good bus company, drivers working with escorts, and other customer service issues — what the tour operator wants for their customer.

**9:30–10:30 a.m. Marketing & Sales: Leveraging the Internet to Boost Sales.** More and more charter orders, contract work, corporate shuttles and other lucrative pieces of business are coming through the internet. Are you tapping into the best resources available so that next search finds your website? Are you optimizing search engines so your company appears first in a search engine? Attendees will find out how to boost sales by learning what larger companies do to make sure they are listed first when potential customers are searching for one of their products/services.

**9:30– 10:30 a.m. Finance: Managing Accounts Receivable.\*** Too often companies allow owed monies to age well beyond 30 days, often forcing them to dip into reserves, or worse, borrow money at high short-term rates to pay bills. In the meantime, the customer hangs on to its dollars, leaving the coach operator strapped for cash. Learn how to get paid in a timely manner while still maintaining a solid and long-term business relationship with your customers.

**9:30–10:30 a.m. Operations: Spec'ing a Vehicle for Operating Efficiencies.** When buying a vehicle, do you think about what you should do at the point of sale to ensure that that coach operates at peak profitability from the moment you put it into service? What should you be looking for in a new vehicle? Find out from other operators how you can assure the vehicle will turn a profit from the point of purchase.

\*Bus & Motorcoach Academy Continuing Education Credit

## IMG Forum set for mid-January

ORLANDO, Fla. — The 2009 International Motor Coach Group Maintenance & Safety Forum will be conducted here Jan. 19–21.

The event will feature maintenance and safety clinics hosted by selected industry organizations, including IMG alliance partners and federal agencies, which will address current issues and hot topics important to IMG members. Also included will be operator workshops, a vendor discussion panel, and the annual Best Idea Competition.

The IMG forum brings together the organization's owner/operator members, com-

prised of nearly 60 motorcoach companies, along with preferred vendors, for three days of networking, information and idea exchanges, problem solving, soft- sell relationship building, and education.

"Community Spec always looks forward to the IMG Safety and Maintenance conference. It allows us to directly engage the IMG shareholders and their employees and showcase our services in a very intimate and personal manner and not in a trade show cattle-call format," said Ryan Kelly of Community Spec Inc., an Athens, Ga.-based consulting company that specializes in grant writing.

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## Motorcoach Council to bring message to Expo, Marketplace

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Motorcoach Council will seek to expand its industry visibility in January by participating in two major events, the UMA Motorcoach Expo 2009 here and the American Bus Association Marketplace in Charlotte, N.C.

The Motorcoach Council is an association comprised of coach operators, trade organizations, manufacturers, suppliers and travel and tourism industry professionals. Its goal is to increase public awareness and use of over-the-road bus transportation.

At Expo and Marketplace, the

council will work to build its membership and spread its message to a broader group of coach operators.

Earlier this year, the council appointed Finelight, a brand direct advertising and marketing agency based in Bloomington, Ind., as its ad agency of record. Finelight will lead the council's national consumer and business-to-business marketing efforts.

"We are delighted to partner with Finelight," said Todd Holland, president of the council. "Finelight brings a wealth of communications experience that we believe will be extremely benefi-

## Bridgestone plant gets 'green' award

MORRISON, Tenn. — The Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire plant in Warren County, Tennessee, is the first tire plant to earn the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification is a recognition of outstanding environmental building design and utilization that rarely is given to existing manufacturing sites.

The Bridgeton Firestone plant was opened nearly 20 years ago

and is only the second existing manufacturing site in the country to earn the certification.

The plant has a track record of environmental performance, including its use of clean energy hydrogen fuel cells in automated-guided vehicles in the plant.

Energy-efficient lighting, high-tech fans and resource-conserving fixtures in restrooms are also part of the plant's environmental conservation efforts.

The plant has significantly reduced energy consumption, as well as water consumption by

more than 8 million gallons a year.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification was designed by the U.S. Green Building Council to encourage the development of more sustainable buildings. It is used by the USEPA to certify its buildings and promote energy and resource efficiency, waste reduction and pollution prevention practices, indoor air quality standards, and other environmental initiatives for both new construction and existing buildings.

cial in spreading the council's message to consumers and the entire

industry."

For additional information

about the council, go to: [www.MotorcoachCouncil.org](http://www.MotorcoachCouncil.org).

## LaFrance expands 'green' fabrics

ORLANDO, Fla. — LaFrance Industries will introduce an expanded collection of eco-friendly motorcoach seating fabrics at Motorcoach Expo here this month.

LaFrance says its Ritz Repreve® is the only independently certified, eco-friendly motorcoach seating fabric available in North America.

"LaFrance supports energy and resource conservation and sustainability by using Repreve recycled yarns in an energy efficient system," said the company. "LaFrance is committed to leading the market in developing environmentally friendly products for our customers."

The Repreve fabrics have been specifically developed for use in motorcoach and bus interiors, said Danny Grant, vice president of sales for LaFrance.

The fabrics also are lighter, stronger and more durable than similar type transportation fabrics and will be produced on the company's high efficiency looms, said Grant. LaFrance is the only U.S.-based producer of plush motorcoach upholstery fabrics.

The Repreve story will be featured on the Discovery Channel in January. Find additional information at [www.repreve.com](http://www.repreve.com).

## Michaud unveils retooled website

BRENTWOOD, N.H. — The website of Michaud Bus Sales Inc., [www.BusesOnline.com](http://www.BusesOnline.com), has been upgraded and redesigned.

Michaud Vice President of Sales Jim Michaud said the web portal was revamped based on suggestions from customers.

New and added features on the website include a search engine, a photo gallery archive, maps and better financing tools.

But the biggest improvement, said Michaud, is more detailed de-

scriptions and photos of the coaches being offered for sale.

"We are proud of our 'no-nonsense' approach to selling buses, and wanted to convey that through our updated website. I think we were successful in accomplishing that," said Michaud.

Michaud Bus Sales is one of the largest dealers of pre-owned coaches in the U.S.

Contact the company at (877) 642-4283, via the new website or at Motorcoach Expo.

## ASA introduces bus microphones

ELKHART, Ind. — ASA Electronics is offering three new microphones to the bus industry, with the introduction of the Jensen JMIC1 hand-held microphone, the Jensen JMICBOM boom microphone and the Jensen JMIC1 hostess microphone.

The hand-held mic features a push-to-talk button, a thumb-wheel variable gain control, metal mounting clip and hardware, standard four-pin connector and an eight-foot coiled cable. It's designed for drivers.

The boom mic is made up of a

JMIC1 unidirectional dynamic microphone attached to an 18-inch metal gooseneck with a 59-inch straight cable. This mic allows for what Jensen calls "stunning sound" with a secure apparatus.

The hostess mic boasts a JMIC1 unidirectional microphone that connects to 10-foot coiled cable and mounting gear.

For more information, contact ASA Electronics at (866) 688-3135, or an authorized distributor.

Additional information is also available at [www.asaelectronics.com](http://www.asaelectronics.com).

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# 32 reasons to attend Expo '09

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Paratge Can Call, KM. 1, Arbuçies, Spain 17401  
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Bus/coach manufacturer

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145 Claireport Crescent, Ste. 4, Toronto, ON M9W 6R6  
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Web: [www.datatraxtechnologies.com](http://www.datatraxtechnologies.com)  
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## Embassy Suites Lake Buena Vista

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Ph: 407-239-1144  
Web: [www.embassysuiteslbv.com](http://www.embassysuiteslbv.com)  
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## Eurotech Inc.

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## Harper Regional Service Centre

10 Diesel Dr., Toronto, ON M8W 2T8  
Ph: 416-259-3281  
Web: [www.harperpowerproducts.com](http://www.harperpowerproducts.com)  
Bus washing, diesel repair, service, parts, bus transmissions, engines

## Hershey Harrisburg RVB

17 South Second St., Harrisburg, PA 17101  
Ph: 717-231-2988  
Web: [www.hersheyharrisburg.org](http://www.hersheyharrisburg.org)  
Attractions/destination/hotels, CVBs, marketing

## iTransit, Inc.

1424 W. Anderson St., Orlando, FL 32805  
Ph: 407-648-8737 Web: [www.i-transit.com](http://www.i-transit.com)  
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## LMB Logowear

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## March of Dimes

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## Motorcoach Council Inc.

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# Hours-of-service rules: They don't fool Mother Nature

By Dave Millhouser

It was ironic, nearing the end of a 14-hour work day and my buddy invited me to a lecture on, of all things, sleep deprivation.

The Australian triple-trailer truck driver turned sleep expert was so engaging, and informative, that not only did I stay awake for the whole meeting but I may have actually learned a few things.

My early years in the industry were spent driving buses for a non-profit that was completely unregulated. Twenty-hour driving stints were common.

The fact that we managed to operate millions of miles, without hurting anyone, was not a tribute to skill. No driver is skilled when he or she is tired. We survived because of dumb luck, or a protective God. (I'm going with the theological alternative.)

Most of us understand that all human beings experience a sort of dead zone just before dawn. Everything just sloooooooows way down. That's when a huge percentage of accidents occur, many of them leaving telltale tire tracks trailing off the

pavement at predictable angles.

Our Australian mentor managed to surprise us with a number of additional facts. A driver, part of a test, wired up, knowing he was being observed was still not be able to combat the effect of fatigue. No amount of coffee, or awareness, can overcome it. The only solution is a break.

The other eye opener (a little sleep pun) was that a similar dead zone happens during the afternoon. It's less pronounced but just as real, with accident statistics to prove it.

He went on to provide tons of information on how useful different sleep intervals were, and other worthwhile stuff. It's all out there, and immensely helpful. Many of the best insurance companies will gladly help you find it.

The tragic March 2007 pre-dawn fatal accident in Atlanta, where a coach went airborne off a poorly marked ramp, taught a number of lessons. One hasn't been discussed enough.

It appears that both the company and the driver did everything right. The driver's hours of service were fine, and he was fresh from 10

hours in a hotel room. Pre-dawn drowsiness, and a confusing traffic pattern, conspired with lethal results.

The point is, while it's important to abide Uncle Sam's hours-of-service regulations, they are a weak attempt to mirror Mother Nature, and her laws matter more.

Mother Nature can't be beat but there are some ways to accommodate her.

Line schedules can be designed with breaks and meal stops during the dangerous hours. Even a few minutes out of the driver's seat can be helpful.

Charter companies can sometimes convince their clientele that driving through the night is not the safest way to go. When the customer insists, properly placed relief drivers, and scheduled breaks can help.

On long hauls, some operators satisfy Uncle Sam by getting 15 driving hours out of two drivers, without having to pay for a hotel room. Uncle Sam may be OK with this, but it irritates hell out of Mother Nature. Trust your Mother.

A couple of things to consider... Make the prevention of sleep

deprivation a key component, not just of your safety program, but as a part of your sales process.

Use all the information your insurance company, and other sources, can provide. Drivers need to know it and your sales folks need to understand the implications, as they consult with customers on how to structure charters and tours. Sell safety.

Try to resist accepting business you know is risky. If you can't change the customer's mind, turn them down. You may save their lives, and worst case, you give an unreasonable consumer to the competition. Let the competitor bet their company's future.

Finally, your driver is still the key. You can provide time and comfortable lodging, but it's tough to MAKE them rest.

One coach driver has faced jail time because, after an accident, he showed up on a casino's security camera videotape from the preceding night. His employer provided ample time off, and a room, but he chose to spend the night gambling. Investigators spotted him on the tape, and he was charged. Drivers

need to understand that part of their job is taking care of themselves.

Commercial vehicle accidents involving tired drivers are now a hot button with the public. We may be one of the few industries where you can go to jail for working too hard, but that's exactly what has happened to some drivers. If there's an accident, safety will trump economics every time. As it should.

A number of guys still knocking around the coach industry worked for that same nonprofit. Times were different, and we were young and naïve. Our boss was a great leader and teacher, but he had one tiny weakness. He dealt with tired drivers by saying "What's the matter, you afraid of the dark?"

Don't do that.  
Dave Millhouser is a bus industry marketing consultant and freelance writer. Contact him at: dave\_millhouser@hotmail.com.



Dave Millhouser

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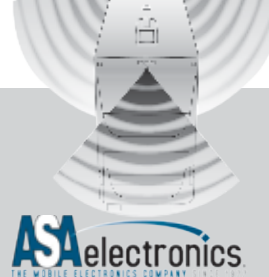


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## Texas payments

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

carriers that don't have ready lines of credit or long-established banking relationships, or their banks

have stopped lending, are in dire need of their money.

These operators are worried that if they aren't paid soon, they'll miss coach loan payments that could cost them their buses or force

them into bankruptcy.

"We're a big company and we were able to go to the bank and get a little help, but most smaller companies won't be able to do that because credit is really tight," said Jeff Polzien of Red Carpet Charters in Oklahoma City.

In his letter to Gov. Perry, Parra said many UMA members are facing "financial ruin" because Texas has failed to meet its contractual obligation to pay for services on a timely basis.

### Running on empty

Among those facing tough times is Turner Tours of Southfield, Mich., which exhausted most of its reserves on driver pay and other expenses incurred during the evacuation work and now is facing its slow season without much back-up money.

"The situation is just crazy," said Yvonne Turner. "We're getting into our lean time when we rely on our reserves and we can't get our money."

H. & R. Tours in Boonville, N.C., is facing a similar situation. "We've already paid all of our expenses for drivers, fuel and motel bills and we haven't even gotten a dime from them yet," said Ray Robbins, company president.

And Travel Lynx Charter and Tours in Shelby, N.C., is beginning to wonder how much longer it can hold out. "We are in desperate need of payment from the state of Texas," said Mark Bumgarner, president. "We are in jeopardy of losing our coaches if payment is not received soon."

The company actually took a double hit, according to travel manager Jenny Boone. In addition to not getting paid by Texas, she said the company lost revenue during the evacuations because it had to subcontract scheduled charter work to other companies.

She said two of the three drivers and coaches the company sent to Texas were not being used for any rescue work and she asked state officials to release them so they could return home and handle regular charters. "They said no and told me the drivers could be arrested if they tried to leave," she added.

Robbins said he faced the same problem but the state agreed to release one of his coaches and it was able to return home in time to work charters.

### Radio silence

Adding to the frustration of the operators is the lack of communications they have encountered in recent weeks. Their telephone calls are not being answered and their e-mails are being ignored.

"That's the worst part," said Robbins. "They won't even talk to you about it now."

Boone said the last e-mail response she received was in late November when she asked for a timetable for possible payment. It drew a curt response informing her that her vouchers were being reviewed and she would be notified when the work was completed. "Now they're opening my e-mails, but not responding to any of them," she said.

Various Texas officials have offered a series of excuses for what is happening and have told different stories to different people.

Several have said they do not have enough help to process the hundreds of invoices they have received and they are working as quickly as they can. Some have blamed the hold up on the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Others have reported that different state departments are involved in the payment procedure and they have no idea what is happening in offices outside of their own department. And still others have said state auditors are reviewing the vouchers and are requesting more information from the companies, further delaying the process.

Operators apparently are not buying any of the explanations.

### Bye-bye credibility

Polzien said that after he sent his bills for Gustav and Ike, they were kicked back to him with requests for more data, including copies of driver logs. Much of the information, he said, has never been required for any of the many past transportation jobs he has done for the state. "I believe this was a deliberate attempt to slow down the payment process," he said.

Turner noted that after learning state officials were pointing fingers at FEMA for the delays, she called the federal agency and was told that Texas is being treated just like other states — "they send in their vouchers and they get their money."

"I don't believe the payments are being held up at the federal level at all," she said. "That's just not true, especially since the state had just told us that it was because of the audits that were being done by the state."

Ted R. Maddy, state coordinator for resources and logistics for the Texas Governor's Division of Emergency Management, blames the problems on a combination of things: two disastrous storms occurring one after the other, the large number of contractors that have sent vouchers at the same time, numerous vouchers that have not been filled out properly, and

too few people to process the bills at both the state and federal level.

"These things do not just happen at the snap of the finger," he said.

He said the process is complicated by the fact that FEMA is paying 75 percent of the cost for Gustav and 100 percent of it for Ike and there are different steps the state must follow for each of them.

In addition, the staffs have been overwhelmed by the number of bills it has received from the nearly 800 contractors — around 170 of them bus operators — that took part in the emergency transportation efforts. The contractors included companies that provided food, shelter, fuel, medical services, portable sanitation facilities, dumpsters, debris removal, and other services.

"And all of their bills have come at the same time, he said. "And I can guarantee you that no one company or bus driver fills out their paperwork the same way."

### That's great, but...

Maddy noted the state requires vendors that supply services and goods to the state be paid within 30 days unless there is a dispute or the paperwork is filled out improperly or is missing required information. Those that don't get their money on time are paid interest on what they are owed.

"So the coach operators will be getting a little extra money, too," he added.

Although he said he knows what's holding up the payment process, he could not say how soon everyone will be paid. Some motorcoach operators and other vendors, he said, have been paid for Gustav and checks are going out steadily.

"We understand that we called on these people to help us, and they did," he added. "Now we just have to work our way through this."

UMA Vice President Ken Presley, vice president of the United Motorcoach Association, called the situation "bad business" and warned that it may be endangering lives because at some point operators will refuse to participate in future evacuations and no one will be able to blame them. "They cannot afford to subsidize the state of Texas," he asserted.

His suggestion that operators may turn down future Texas transportation work appears to be becoming a common theme among many of the frustrated operators.

"I dare say we won't be going back to Texas again," said Boone.

Added Polzien: "From Texas' standpoint, if they want to call and get a bunch of buses at the snap of a finger, then they'll have to get a handle on this real soon."

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# California's CARB adopts tough emissions regulation

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The California Air Resources Board has approved a landmark regulation aimed at reducing pollution emitted by older heavy-duty diesel trucks and buses.

The approval came despite criticism and protests from upwards of 100 business groups and testimony the regulation would drive small truck and bus operators out of business.

The In-Use Truck and Bus Rule requires that older polluting buses, trucks and other large vehicles be retrofitted to reduce exhaust emissions or replaced.

The regulation applies to diesel-fueled vehicles with a manufacturer's gross-vehicle weight rating greater than 14,000 pounds that operate in California, regardless of where the vehicle is regis-

tered or based.

For fleets with four or more vehicles, the regulation will require the installation of exhaust retrofits in 2010 and 2011 and accelerated engine or vehicle replacement from 2012 to 2022. Implementation is delayed for fleets with one to three vehicles.

A wide variety of commercial vehicle operators tried to convince the board that now was the worst time to force them to make expensive changes.

"The cost doesn't change just because the economy is bad. So the only option people have to comply in a bad economy is to basically sell their equipment. They don't have the money to fix it. They don't have the money to replace it," said contractor Mike Lewis.

## Onboard diagnostic rules issued for buses, trucks

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued final rules requiring onboard diagnostic systems for over-the-road trucks and buses to monitor emission control systems.

Onboard diagnostic systems have been required on passenger cars since the mid-1990s to monitor emissions control systems and detect malfunctions.

The system alerts the driver to a problem, enabling a service technician to diagnose and repair the system.

Now, they will be required on 2010 and later heavy-duty engines used in on-highway applications of vehicles weighing more than 14,000 pounds.

In addition to these requirements, EPA is requiring manufacturers to make available to the service and repair industry information necessary to perform repair and maintenance service on onboard diagnostic systems and other emissions-related engine components.

Under the new rule, manufacturers must install onboard diag-

nostic systems that monitor the functioning of emission control components and alert the vehicle operator to any detected need for emissions-related repair.

In addition, when a malfunction occurs, diagnostic information must be stored in the engine's computer to assist in diagnosis and repair of the malfunction.

There is a phase-in aspect to the regulation.

EPA is requiring that one engine family per manufacturer be certified to the onboard diagnostic system requirements in the 2010 through 2012 model years.

Beginning in 2013, all highway engines for all manufacturers will have to be certified to the new requirements.

The final rule is a major step in EPA's efforts to work with the California Air Resources Board to develop a consistent national heavy-duty onboard diagnostic systems program. EPA's new program is consistent with the California program in almost all important aspects, according to the agency.

## Older drivers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Despite the challenges, he suggested that operators can manage their senior drivers better by looking for obvious signs of problems.

Among the clues he cited are drivers who suddenly begin self-limiting the hours and types of runs they will accept, have an increased number of traffic tickets or near accidents, or begin to get more than the usual number of complaints from passengers.

"They may not want to drive at night any more because of vision problems or they may not want to take drives with a lot of turns because they have joint or bone problems and it hurts them to turn," he noted.

Daecher said there is little chance that federal regulators will set maximum age limits for motorcoach drivers any time soon because of the strong senior citizen lobby in Washington D.C. "I don't think it will be remedied for many, many years," he said.

While truckers and others showed up in force to speak against the rule, testimony from proponents, including moms with children and other family members

suffering from asthma, carried the day.

Anna Sanchez held up a picture of her asthmatic daughter who she says is sick because of Califor-

nia's bad air.

To help with the costs, the state will make loans and grants available to companies to help them comply with the regulation.



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