

# Bus & Motorcoach NEWS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BUS INDUSTRY

## The many sides and challenges of fatigue management

ANYTOWN, USA – Voluntary motorcoach company fatigue management programs will not solve the risks associated with overnight bus travel, but more likely will shift those trips to carriers with less devotion to safety.

That's the opinion of coach company executives who have spoken out since a presentation on driver fatigue highlighted the United Motorcoach Association Safety Management Seminar in

Ashburn, Va., late last year.

Robert Crescenzo, vice president of safety and loss control at Lancer Insurance, discussed the dangers of driver fatigue, and especially overnight travel, at the safety seminar.

During his presentation, Crescenzo suggested carriers educate customers about the risks of such trips and decline to accept them.

"That's probably one of the most significant fatigue manage-

### Special Report

ment elements you can add into your business," he said.

Overnight travel often is requested by charter bus customers as a means of logging miles while avoiding the expense of a night's lodging, earning such bookings industry nicknames like "silent-hotel" or "traveling-motel" trips.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of

United Motorcoach Association members prefer to avoid travel between midnight and 6 a.m., according to the 2013 *UMA Membership Survey and Industry Assessment*.

An additional 6.4 percent of operators say they would prefer not to operate during any time of darkness.

Due to customer demand, however, 26.1 percent of operators say they "routinely" operate overnight charter service, and 59.8 percent

say they do so "occasionally."

Just under 10 percent of the carriers responding to the survey indicated they do not operate overnight.

Michael Neustadt, president of Coach Tours in Brookfield, Conn., told *Bus & Motorcoach News* that an educational approach to addressing customer demands for overnight trips probably would not improve overall motorcoach indus-

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## Study reveals slim, efficient industry in '12

WASHINGTON — During 2012, the North American motorcoach industry was leaner and operated more efficiently than it had in recent years, according to the latest industry census conducted for the American Bus Association Foundation.

Total passenger trips by motorcoach in the U.S. and Canada grew by 1.7 percent, to 637.44 million, in 2012, even as the number of motorcoach companies and the number of buses in operation was declining.

Other highlights from the *Motorcoach Census* include:

- About 35 percent of the passenger trips in 2012 were provided by large companies operating 100 or more motorcoaches; 25 percent were by midsize companies operating 25 to 99 motorcoaches, and 41 percent were by small companies operating fewer than 25 coaches.

- The industry continues to be a bastion of small business, with 94 percent of the companies operating fewer than 25 motorcoaches, and 82.4 percent operating fewer than 10 coaches.

- Motorcoach companies offer

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**Royal Shuttle Service.** A Washington, D.C. entrepreneur has launched a boutique bus service between D.C. and N.Y.C. Royal Sprinter uses

conversion vans that seat eight. The fare is \$90 each way. Expansion to Philadelphia is planned. See story on Page 13.

## Stanford U.: Tour buses unwelcome

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Stanford University, the academic heart of Silicon Valley, has instituted what may be the nation's strictest policies for tour buses, including a \$200-per-bus, per-hour visiting fee.

The university, renowned as the cradle of Google, Yahoo! and other tech companies, attributed the need for its tough, formal guidelines to "a dramatic increase" in tour bus visits to the campus.

"The program is designed to

accommodate our many visitors while ensuring the university community is able to conduct daily activities without disruption, as well as to ensure traffic safety and the safety of visitors on private property," states the university website.

Under the rules that went into effect last month, tour bus operators are required to register — in advance of visits — for specific times and to purchase the \$200 "reservations." The guidelines also

state:

- Reserving a time slot allows tour groups access to a specific tour parking spot in a staging area.

- Groups arriving outside the reserved time slots will be denied access, may be fined and could jeopardize future access.

- Cancellations must be made two weeks in advance to receive refunds.

Registration and reservations

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ►

## New coach sales climb during 2013

Combined private- and public-sector sales of new MCI, Prevost, Setra, Van Hool and Volvo motorcoaches rose last year, paced by a double-digit increase in purchases by private bus operators.

Deliveries of new 45- and 40-foot monocoque models by the five brands totaled 1,639 motorcoaches during the year.

That's a 7 percent increase from the 1,525 new 45- and 40-foot coaches delivered by the same brands in 2012.

Sales of the five brands in 2011 totaled 1,366 units, meaning 2013 sales were 20 percent higher than in 2011.

Still, sales of new 45- and 40-foot new coaches remain well below 2,000 units, a benchmark figure for the industry.

Sales for 2013 marked the fifth consecutive year new coach deliveries in the U.S. and Canada have failed to approach 2,000 units. During the past 10 years, sales exceeded 2,000 new coaches during the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The 2013 figures exclude sales

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46775	2008	VH C2045	Detroit/Allison	\$299,900

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## Texas judge blocks sections of onerous Austin ordinance

AUSTIN, Texas — A federal judge has ordered the city of Austin not to enforce parts of an ordinance designed to regulate charter buses and impose fees for operating motorcoaches within the city limits — at least until the court makes a final ruling.

U.S. District Court Judge Sam Sparks granted a preliminary injunction, requested by the United Motorcoach Association, enjoining the city from enforcing those aspects of its ordinance that apply to vehicles with a capacity of at least 16 people, including the driver.

UMA filed suit in federal court here late last year, challenging the ordinance that amends parts of the city's Ground Transportation Code, arguing it would hinder motorcoach operators from doing business in Austin.

Among the ordinance's many operating restrictions and requirements is a mandate that motorcoach companies pay an annual \$400 fee per vehicle to operate in the city or face impoundment of their coaches.

The city emphasizes the ordinance's safety-related aspects,

such as inspections and requirements for minimum insurance and commercial driver's licenses. The Austin City Council had approved the ordinance in June 2013.

But after hearing both sides in his courtroom in late January (see March 1 *Bus & Motorcoach News*), Judge Sparks filed an order in late March barring the city from enforcing two provisions of the ordinance until further notice, while keeping others in place.

The two key provisions aim to distinguish charter services from taxicab services, and Sparks found them most likely to be preempted by the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 1994 — the legal precedent on which UMA based its arguments.

More specifically, the section of the ordinance that prohibits buses from using taximeters and having checkered logos that could identify them as taxis. Another subsection prohibits buses from accepting passengers less than 30 minutes before departure.

"The court stresses this order is not a final adjudication on pre-

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## CARB proposals would impact fleets

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The California Air Resources Board has announced proposed amendments to its California Statewide Truck and Bus Rule that it says will provide new flexibility for small fleets, low-mileage fleets, and fleets that operate in certain rural areas.

At the same time, the proposed changes would "better protect the emission and health benefits of the regulations," says the environmental regulatory agency.

Meanwhile, the California Bus Association is asking CARB to stop bailing out companies that fail to tackle the upgrades necessary to comply with the truck and bus rule, while responsible companies make the investment.

The 12 latest CARB proposals include:

- An expansion of the so-called NOx Exempt Areas, that is, rural areas with cleaner air. The proposed change provides for a longer phase-in period for diesel particulate matter requirements for vehicles operating exclusively in those areas.

- More time and a lower-cost route for small fleet owners to meet particulate matter compli-

ance requirements, which would mean additional opportunities for them to apply for and receive public incentive funding.

- A compliance route for owners currently unable to qualify for loans to finance required upgrades.

- An expansion of the low-use vehicle exemption from less than 1,000 miles per year to fewer than 5,000 miles per year.

- Allow a vehicle with a particulate matter filter retrofit that has been recalled to operate up to five years from the date of the recall.

CARB members were set to consider the changes at an April 24 meeting.

Motorcoach company owners and managers, who are members of the California Bus Association, were scheduled to meet with CARB staff members prior to the hearing to voice their opinions about the proposed rule changes.

Jim Seal, a CBA consultant, said CBA board members who met in March expressed concern the changes would, in effect, reward companies that had failed to meet their obligations under the existing regulations by providing them with publicly funded

incentives.

"We're going to communicate that we are not supportive of any further financial consideration to companies beyond what CARB is already giving," Seal said.

"The board was concerned that those companies that went into debt are not anxious to bail out those that ignored the rule and did nothing up until now," he said.

Further, he said, the CBA will press for a resolution of continuing problems with diesel particulate filter retrofits.

"We believe that (when) you purchased an approved filter, you maintained your vehicle, you should not be forced to purchase any additional DPF filter," he said.

CARB developed its latest proposed amendments following a hearing in October when stakeholders expressed concern about the inability of some fleet owners to make the upgrades needed to comply.

"These concerns specifically focused on small fleets, lower-mileage fleets, and fleets in rural areas, all of which arguably continue to be impacted by the recession," according to a CARB staff report.

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# THE DOCKET

## Coach companies declared 'imminent hazards'

WASHINGTON — An announcement last month that two southern bus operators had been shutdown brought to five the number of motorcoach companies declared "imminent hazards" and ordered out of service by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration during the first three months of this year.

The FMCSA said both carriers were targeted for investigation due to "elevated alert" scores in its Safety Management System BASIC (Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories) rankings.

Also during the first quarter of this year, the FMCSA revoked the operating authority of more than 75 unsafe bus and truck companies. A total of eight motor carriers, including the five coach com-

panies, were declared imminent hazards to public safety.

Motts Transportation Inc. of Cordesville, S.C., which is north of Charleston, was placed out of service for a number of violations of driver and vehicle safety, including a trip during which an unqualified driver was allowed to operate a motorcoach.

### Reckless practices

Woodburn's Tour and Travel of East Point, Ga., which is southwest of Atlanta, and owner Howard Woodburn were issued an out-of-service order for failing to systematically maintain vehicles and ensure drivers complied with testing procedures for controlled substances and alcohol.

Violations included "the reck-

less business practice of structuring trips that require(d) drivers to speed, exceed hours-of-service regulations and/or falsify records of duty status."

The Motts order, which also applied to owner James Carter Sr., cited "widespread and serious non-compliance with federal safety regulations. Motts Transportation fails to oversee and monitor its drivers and ensure that its motorcoaches are systematically and properly inspected, repaired and maintained and meet minimum safety standards."

The order said the Motts investigation was initiated because the carrier "had three elevated alert BASICs: Unsafe Driving (94 percent), Hours of Service Compliance (75.9 percent) and Vehicle

Maintenance (65.9 percent)."

A score of zero ranks a carrier as the best for the peer group and 100 rates it as the worst.

### Lousy records

Inspectors said Motts does not ensure drivers submit accurate records-of-duty status and hours-of-service reports. The carrier employs part-time drivers but does not require them to report hours spent on duty for other motor carriers or jobs. By reconstructing records, investigators said they found that between Nov. 23 and Dec. 14, one driver violated hours-of-service regulations five times.

The order stated, "Motts Transportation also has no effective oversight of its drivers, which has led to

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## Feds slam Boston operator; university scrambles

BOSTON — Crystal Transport Inc. has lost its federal and state operating authorities, forcing the University of Massachusetts Boston to have to quickly arrange replacement shuttle service for its students and employees.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration revoked Crystal's interstate operating authority after finding the company

failed to comply with safety regulations regarding driver medical examinations and certification; random drug and alcohol testing; driver speeding, records-of-duty status, and hours of service.

Following what was deemed an "informal hearing," the Transportation Oversight Division of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities revoked Crystal's per-

mit for intrastate operations.

Crystal operated a fleet of 44 buses and had been in business since 1983.

The carrier had operated UMass shuttles for 25 years, and provided charters to such destinations as New York City; Washington, D.C., and Foxwood Resort Casino in Ledyard, Conn.

Crystal General Manager

Kevin Sheehan told the Boston Globe the company had hired safety consultants to assist it in addressing safety issues and sent documentation to the FMCSA.

The FMCSA order, however, stated: "Through the Show Cause Order, Crystal was provided an opportunity to produce evidence, within 30 calendar days, demon-

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## Registry rule to focus attention on apnea testing

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The looming deadline for bus and truck drivers to be medically certified by examiners approved by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has ratcheted up the pressure for those who may be at risk for sleep apnea to be tested and treated, says a sleep expert.

The FMCSA National Registry for Certified Medical Examiners rule goes into effect May 21. After that date all drivers must use an examiner from the agency's registry when renewing or first obtaining medical clearance to drive.

Currently, noted Greg McDermand, CEO of Phoenix Sleep Solutions in Wellington, Fla., the FMCSA doesn't have formal rules regarding sleep apnea testing or criteria for testing.

However, medical examiners are paying increasing attention to factors that point to increased risk of apnea occurrence, like weight and underlying medical conditions, as a means of relieving themselves of liability in case of a crash, according to McDermand.

"Examiners are getting very aggressive because of liability," McDermand told a trucking conference here.

"They're not comfortable letting people walk out" if they may be at risk for apnea, he said.

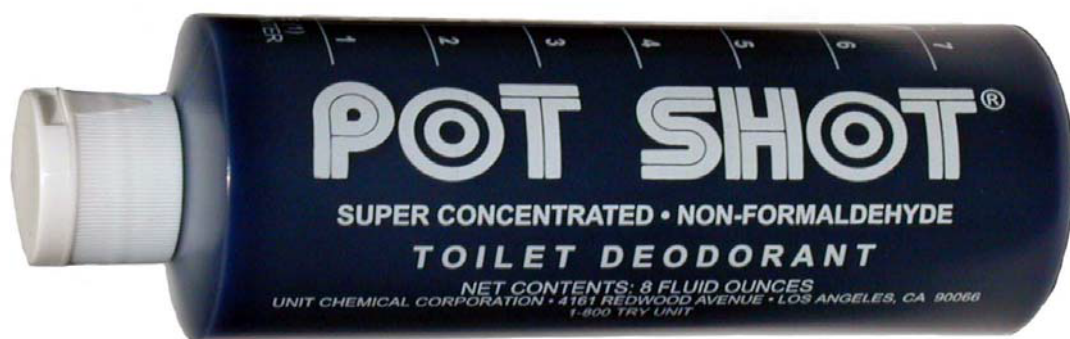
Two key red flags for examiners are neck size of 17.5 inches or larger, or body mass index of 35 or greater.

Drivers with conditions like diabetes, hyperthyroidism or high blood pressure also will flag examiners, said McDermand.

Drivers who walk into a medical examiners office with any of these conditions will be told they need to be tested for sleep apnea, McDermand said, and he's hearing frequently from drivers who say examiners aren't renewing medical cards if they haven't been tested.

Because of this, McDermand said, drivers need to be proactive about getting tested so they can bring test results or proof of treatment to the medical examiner when they go in for medical

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# Oregon expands safety efforts through partnerships

SALEM, Ore. — The Oregon Department of Transportation is touting a series of partnerships it has developed aimed at bolstering passenger safety on buses and motorcoaches.

One of the partnerships involves the Northwest Motorcoach Association, providing recognition for entities, typically destinations, which cooperate with ODOT by allowing bus inspections on their property.

Additionally, the department has created programs that encourage greater focus on safety compliance by all bus operators, whether they are motorcoach companies or institutions that operate buses as a sideline.

The Partnership for Passenger Safety, for example, is the state's newest program, recognizing businesses that support ODOT bus inspection efforts.

The program is a way for ODOT and the Northwest Motorcoach Association to publicly thank major bus passenger destinations for their cooperation in allowing inspections on their property, reports David McKane, safety programs manager for the ODOT Motor Carrier Transportation Division.

"We're doing more inspections on all types of buses large and small," said McKane. "We realized we were getting a lot of work done but it wouldn't have been possible without cooperation from the folks outside of the transportation industry."

Joint ODOT and Northwest Motorcoach Association certificates of appreciation have gone out recognizing a casino and three ski resorts — four of the larger attractions in Oregon, said McKane.

The certificates thank the destinations for providing safe locations to conduct bus and motorcoach inspections and acknowledging the commitment each have to the safety of the traveling public.

In addition to the certificate, the Partners for Passenger Safety program will list the participants on the Motor Carrier Transportation Division web page ([www.oregon.gov/odot/mct](http://www.oregon.gov/odot/mct)).

Another effort the state is making centers on "an often overlooked" industry segment: Private businesses for which bus operations might be incidental to a primary business. These include retirement homes and assisted-living and medical facilities.

"As we decided to spend more time inspecting bus companies, we realized we had a lot of seniors from the area taking buses," said McKane. "For a lot of businesses, operating a bus is secondary to what they do. This program helped us get into that niche where we

struck up a conversation with the Oregon Health Care Association."

McKane said the Motor Carrier Transportation Division reached out to the healthcare association and provided information and expertise to help its members operate their small buses more safely.

"We want to send the message

that we have the resources to help them do it safely," McKane said. "We were able to work with them, to tell them the requirements to be aware of to comply."

Lastly, the department expanded a program that recognizes motor carriers with exemplary records of compliance not only with

safety requirements but also with state registration and tax laws.

The Trusted Carrier Partner program was established 15 years ago but until last October included only the trucking industry. Now bus companies also are recognized for a history of responsibly following safety standards and getting

regular inspections.

The recognition includes special red license plates that exempt the recognized companies from some random safety inspections. Currently, only a handful of the 641 recognized motor carriers are bus operators because the bus industry's

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# Speeding drivers, ignored safety technology = shutdown

LAWRENCE, Mass. — Failure to rein in its drivers who thought they were driving race cars brought a revocation of federal operating authority to Pandora Travel Inc. of Lawrence, Mass.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration yanked the coach company's operating authority after Pandora failed to "present evidence demonstrating compliance" with a federal "show cause" order issued earlier this year.

The FMCSA said its Safety Measurement System records gave Pandora an "Unsafe Driving

Compliance" score of 97.9 percentile in its BASIC (Behavioral Analysis and Safety Improvement Category) ranking. The ranking approaches the worst possible score of 100.

The agency order cited eight instances in which "a Pandora driver was cited for speeding while transporting passengers in interstate commerce" between June 6, 2012, and Dec. 1, 2013.

On another occasion, "a Pandora driver was cited for failure to obey a traffic control device and improper lane change."

The cited incidents also include a Jan. 21 crash in which a Pandora bus overturned with seven passengers on board while traveling on a snowy road during a major snowstorm in the northeastern U.S.

When auditors compared drivers' records-of-duty status and company GPS records, "they identified a high percentage of trips on which the driver was speeding.

"Four of seven drivers were found to be exceeding the posted speed limits by 10 mph or greater for 50 days out of 135 days reviewed.

"Pandora placed letters of discipline in drivers' files, but only for those violations noted during roadside inspections."

The FMCSA shutdown order noted that Pandora President Jin Chun Pan demonstrated a cell phone application that could alert him when a driver exceeded the speed limit by five miles per hour, "but Pandora was unable to show that it took disciplinary or other action" based on a speeding alert.

Two drivers found to be speeding on a routine basis were still employed by Pandora, "demon-

strating inconsistencies and ineffectiveness of Pandora's safety management controls."

In summary, said the FMCSA, "Pandora's motor carrier operations demonstrate a willful failure to comply with applicable federal regulations and willful failure to exercise safety management controls over its drivers."

The FMCSA website says Pandora's 10 vehicles and 29 drivers drove one million miles in 2012. A call to the company telephone number was forwarded to an answering machine.

## Imminent hazards

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unknown drivers and an unqualified driver operating its motorcoaches.

"During the investigation, Jerome Carter Sr. could not identify all drivers who had worked for the carrier during the previous 12 months... (he) told FMCSA investigators he did not know four drivers listed on Motts Transportation's roadside inspection reports and could not explain how or why these drivers were operating Motts Transportation motorcoaches."

Motts did not have driver qualification files for eight of its drivers and allowed a coach to be driven by an individual who did not hold a valid commercial driver's license.

### What records?

Motts was cited for deficient

practices in driver substance and alcohol testing and vehicle inspections and maintenance. The carrier "was unable to produce all — or even many — of the required vehicle records," the order stated.

One Motts coach was placed out of service for defective brakes twice, last June in Georgia and then in January in South Carolina. On the latter trip the coach was being driven by Carter. Roadside inspections of Motts coaches have produced a 60 percent out-of-service rate.

A message left on the carrier's telephone answering machine was not returned.

Woodburn's Tour and Travel, doing business as Woodburn Motor Coach, scheduled trips between Atlanta and New York City so drivers were required to speed or falsify records, investigators

found. Drivers also did not receive sufficient rest time before reporting for the return trip.

The FMCSA also found 22 out-of-service defects affecting all Woodburn coaches they inspected.

"All six motor coaches had a loose sway bar, which is a leading contributing factor resulting in motorcoach rollovers.

"The brakes on two motorcoaches were in such poor condition that metal was striking metal, which, in addition to affecting ability to brake safely, is a leading cause of motorcoach fires," the order said.

### Maintenance issues

The order listed six roadside inspections from Dec. 6 to Feb. 7 in which coaches were placed out of service for defects such as oil and

fuel leaks, insufficient tire tread depth, muffler leaks, worn steering/suspension system components, including tie rods, and non-functioning stop lamps.

The company did not possess valid annual inspections for its coaches and did not require drivers to prepare driver vehicle inspection reports. It also dispatched drivers before receiving pre-employment controlled substance testing and did not subject any drivers to random testing in 2013.

Investigators stated that nearly 20 percent of Woodburn's records-of-duty status were false and said owner Howard Woodburn "admitted that (a) driver was being instructed to falsify his records-of-duty status in order to conceal hours-of-service violations."

The investigation was initiated

because Woodburn had three "elevated" scores in the BASIC rankings. Those scores were 84.8 percentile for unsafe driving, 80.3 percentile for hours-of-service compliance, and 67.4 percentile for vehicle maintenance.

Said the FMCSA order: "This finding means that based upon Woodburn Motor Coach's present state of unacceptable safety compliance, its operation of any commercial motor vehicle poses an imminent hazard to public safety."

In addition to curbside service between Atlanta and New York, Woodburn offered charter services to school, church and civic groups.

When *Bus & Motor Coach News* attempted to call Woodburn's, two of the carrier's listed phone numbers had been disconnected and a third line was not answered.

## Crystal Transport

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

strating its compliance with the Order to Show Cause and showing that its operating authority should not be revoked.

"Crystal failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause. Moreover, even if Crystal's request for change in its safety rating was to be viewed as its response to the Order to Show Cause, the request for change in safety rating failed to present evidence demonstrating compliance with the Order to Show Cause."

### History of problems

The FMCSA order charged that Crystal's operations "reveal a willful failure to comply" with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations and cited previous enforcement actions taken against the company in 2009 and 2011.

A Compliance Review earlier this year faulted Crystal's driver substance abuse testing. The carrier failed to conduct pre-employment testing for two drivers hired in the previous year and continued to dispatch three drivers after they tested positively for controlled substances.

Also, the order stated, "Crystal's random testing program in-

cluded in its pool employees who were not subject to DOT testing, including office clerks and dispatchers. Including such employees in the pool of employees subject to testing diluted the pool, and evidenced a failure by Crystal to ensure that each driver had an equal chance of being selected for a random test."

FMCSA declared Crystal's driver qualification files "inadequate." Auditors found no medical examiner certificate for two drivers and found records of 49 speeding violations. "Of the 332 records-of-duty status checked during the Compliance Review, 42 were false. Crystal also required or permitted its drivers to drive after having been on duty 70 hours in eight consecutive days on 22 occasions out of 124 records checked."

"Despite these violations," the *Boston Globe* reported, "the February audit was Crystal's first full safety review in five years, and its safety rating has remained satisfactory since 2009."

### State steps in

According to the *Globe*, Crystal continued to operate locally following the March 13 FMCSA order, but faced a shut down on

March 29 unless the company could prove to state authorities that it had taken steps to improve its safety compliance.

On March 31, executives of Crystal Transport were summoned to a hearing with the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities "to provide evidence that the carriers should remain on the road."

The company's state operating certificate was then revoked in a letter sent to Linda Carroll, president of Crystal Transport, by Brian F. Cristy, director of the state's Transportation Oversight Division.

The letter cited state law, which calls for revocation of a carrier's operating permit when it does not conform to federal rules and regulations.

"Please be advised that pending the resolution of the above mentioned (interstate) prohibitions, any operations as an intrastate common/charter carrier, are ordered by this department to cease and desist, effective this date," the letter stated.

"In the event that Crystal Transport Inc., enters into a consent agreement with the FMCSA and has their carrier rating upgraded to "conditional" or "satisfactory", the department shall reinstate each intra-state operating certificate."

### Company responds

Sheehan emailed a statement to the *Boston Globe* that said: "Today there are no know (sic) deficiencies that would make Crystal non-compliant with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations that we will abide by. Being committed on perfecting our safety rating, we have hired two consultants from MC Compliance Services who are certified in Compliance Reviews to review all our documents and procedures."

Crystal transported "several thousand" passengers to the UMass campus, the John F. Kennedy Library and a Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority station, the *Globe* reported.

Following the FMCSA revocation, the university signed up Paul Revere Transportation and Academy Bus to serve the campus. Paul Revere, of Chelsea, Mass., operates the Logan Airport terminal shuttles, and Academy, of Braintree, Mass., serves Boston University, Tufts University and Emerson College.

"This was a necessary step to ensure that our campus community continues to feel safe and secure when traveling to and from campus," said Vice Chancellor Ellen O'Connor in a media statement.

"Both companies have extensive experience in the operation of safe bus transportation for a variety of clients, and are licensed and in compliance with federal regulations," she added.

Paul Revere Transportation operates 135 vehicles. Academy Bus is the nation's largest family-owned motorcoach company with a fleet of upwards of 1,000 buses. The university warned riders they could face delays during the transition.

### Early challenges

The new providers were experiencing delays and "are over-taxed as of right now," reported *The Mass Media*, the university student newspaper, after the switchover.

On the other hand, "the drivers were not taking long bathroom breaks in between every ride and leaving the buses running and unattended as had become the case with Crystal," the newspaper added.

A posting to the Crystal Transport Facebook page said: "I have hired Crystal Buses for eleven years and never had any problems. Drivers are always pleasant and helpful. Hopefully they can continue doing business."

The company response: "Thank you, we are working on fixing it."

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## FMCSA: Enough medical examiners

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration remains confident there will be an adequate number of certified medical examiners as of May 21, when U.S. government certification supplants individual state approaches to bus and truck drivers' physical exams, an agency official said.

Pamela Perry, nurse consultant in the Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety at the FMCSA, told a trucking conference here that 11,000 medical examiners have been certified, with 26,000 in the process of obtaining certification after training and testing.

While confident there will be

enough examiners certified to do the physicals for the nation's three million commercial vehicle license holders, she also said the agency was concerned about the number of certified examiners in rural areas, where many drivers live.

The FMCSA is implementing the standardized certification approach after abuses of the process on the state level, including an examiner who certified a driver whose health problems led to the infamous "Mother's Day bus crash" in 1999 that killed 22 people near New Orleans. That examiner, Perry said, reported the same blood pressure for everyone.

"We need that national regula-

tion to be able to control that kind of thing," she said.

Drivers whose medical cards expire after May 21 must have exams done by someone in the registry, she said, stressing that drivers who have a valid medical card do not have to get an examination until their card expires.

Perry added that there are no changes in health qualifications.

She also said the FMCSA has no idea how many people do the exams on a state level. Asked about a possible extension of the date while more examiners are certified, she said that decision would have to be made by Administrator Anne Ferro.

## Certificates issued by Ga. doctor invalid

GARDEN CITY, Ga. — Bus and truck drivers who received medical certification from a doctor here are being ordered to be re-examined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The FMCSA announced it had determined that the late Dr. Paul Besdanský, who ran an accident and injury clinic in Garden City, failed to conduct proper USDOT medical examinations before his death.

As a result, commercial driv-

er's license holders who currently possess a medical certificate signed by Dr. Besdanský are directed to be immediately re-examined by a medical examiner and to submit a new medical certificate to both the state agency that issued their CDL and to their employer.

All current medical certificates signed by Dr. Besdanský will be invalid as of May 2.

Dr. Besdanský died Oct. 26. Garden City is outside of Savan-

nah, Ga.

The FMCSA said it believes that a majority of CDL holders with medical certificates signed by Dr. Besdanský reside in Florida, Georgia, and North and South Carolina. Law enforcement agencies have been alerted to watch for the certificates.

Drivers having questions should contact the FMCSA Southern Service Center by email at [fmcsadrivers@dot.gov](mailto:fmcsadrivers@dot.gov).

## Sleep apnea

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

certification.

"I recommend you find a place to get tested so you can walk in with a clean piece of paper that

says you're treated with a CPAP or that says you're negative and they'll leave you alone," he said.

Drivers can get tested at any clinic or testing service they'd like — those examiners don't have to be certified by FMCSA, accord-

ing to McDermand.

Drivers only need to be able to show their FMCSA-approved examiner documents showing they've been tested and are being treated, if they test positive for sleep apnea.

## Austin

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

emption," Sparks wrote in his order. "After the record in the case is fully developed, and the issues finally presented, the answers to the various preemption questions posed may change."

Sparks upheld subsections he deemed safety-related, such as requirements for charter services to provide copies of drivers' commercial driver's licenses, to prove

their vehicles have passed annual vehicle inspections, and to keep a written or electronic trip ticket in each vehicle with details on the trip, passengers, rates charged, vehicle owner and operating authority holder.

"The UMA applauds that the Austin court has enjoined certain components of the ordinance," said UMA attorney Dan Mastromarco. "This is a good first step. We invite the city to speak with industry officials as to how they can constitu-

tionally enforce the law while also upholding their safety objectives."

The city of Austin Law Department also reacted positively to the ruling.

"We are pleased with the court's ruling upholding nearly all of the city's regulations on charter services," the department said in a written statement. "The city will continue to defend and enforce these important regulations, which help ensure the safety of Austin residents."

## Stanford

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

are available online at <https://pmp-lus.stanford.edu/pats/transportation/tour/>.

In addition, tour buses and groups of nine visitors or more are only allowed to visit between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily, and are barred from visiting during major university events.

This year, tour buses are prohibited June 12-15; September 16-21, and October 23-26.

"Stanford University is private property, and Stanford can establish and enforce rules regarding access to campus and use of campus space by visitors and third-party businesses," says the university website.

It also states the institution "reserves the right to take appropriate legal action against those failing to comply with the policy, including actions under civil or criminal trespass laws," and that campus safety officials can ban tour-group and tour-bus operators from the

campus for repeated failure to follow such rules as:

- Do not disrupt campus and classroom activities.
- Do not talk loudly or smoke near buildings.
- Do not use amplified sound.
- Do not enter campus buildings.

"These are private workplaces and classrooms. Visitors should stay 20 feet away from campus buildings and refrain from opening doors or peering into windows. The only buildings open to large

## Idaho to get 80 mph limit

BOISE, Idaho — Speed limits in Idaho could soon move to as high as 80 miles per hour.

Legislation signed into law by Gov. Butch Otter allows an increase of up to 80 mph along interstates and 70 mph along state highways.

Trucks with five or more axles would be limited up to 10 mph slower than everyone else.

The law leaves the final decision for any increase up to the Idaho Transportation Department,

once it has completed studies to see which routes could handle higher speeds.

Higher limits could begin appearing as soon as this summer, according to published reports.

Once IDOT acts, Idaho would join Texas and Utah, which currently allow a top speed limit of 80 mph along select routes, while legislation in Wyoming was recently signed into law allowing the same increase, provided they are approved by the Wyoming DOT.

## Overhaul for FMCSA website

WASHINGTON — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has revamped its website, giving it much less government-like feel. The site can be founded at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov).

FMCSA Administrator Anne Ferro, writing in the USDOT Fast Lane blog, labels the redesign as putting "our best foot forward by featuring the pages visitors access most often.

"We've also restructured our content based on who you are — driver, carrier or consumer — and what you're interested in — news, safety, registration, or regulations.

Critics have already weighed, with one user noting that "some previously easy-to-find content is not so easy" to find.

For example, FMCSA news releases are no longer posted on the website's opening page.

## Oregon programs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

involvement is recent, but McKane expects the program to grow.

The program is open to Oregon-based companies operating in the state for at least a year with an exemplary record of compliance with safety, registration and tax requirements.

The specific safety criteria include a valid USDOT number; no unsatisfactory safety rating with the state or federal regulatory agencies; no identification by the Federal

Motor Carrier Safety Administration Safety Measurement System as a carrier needing corrective interventions; no record of safety violations, including violating an out-of-service order or having a driver found driving under the influence, and no driver and/or vehicle out-of-service percentage greater than the national compliance average.

"Efforts like these demonstrate that ODOT is working with industry members to further the goal of a safe, efficient and responsible transportation system for all Oregonians," says McKane.

Sparks wrote that evidence of safety concerns was his measuring stick as he considered the ordinance.

"The city has produced no evidence of any actual safety concerns or problems it has sought to address through the ordinance," he wrote. "This dearth of evidence significantly hurts the city's defense of the ordinance, but does not necessarily doom it."

The judge also reacted to UMA's tactics in a section of the

order entitled "UMA's Various Alternative Arguments" and declined to consider complaints on matters such as operating authority decals.

Sparks ordered UMA and the city to provide a report on alternative dispute resolution by May 19, and a written offer of settlement by "parties asserting claims for relief" by June 18.

"We will file an amended complaint to drill deeper into the Austin laws on the books before the ordinance," Mastromarco said.

tours without prior arrangements are the Stanford Bookstore and Tresider Union."

- Groups may not walk on landscaped areas or pick flowers or other vegetation. Visitors may not climb on structures or outdoor artwork.
- There are two public restrooms located on each side of Memorial Church.
- Commercial photography and filming anywhere on campus is prohibited.
- Tour groups must be accom-

panied at all times by a tour guide or staff member, and members of group tours may not wander the campus unaccompanied.

• Tour groups and buses must have at least one person who speaks English to ensure effective communication with Stanford University personnel in case of emergency or issues related to the tour group or tour bus.

For additional information, go to <http://tourbuses.stanford.edu>; email [tourbuses@stanford.edu](mailto:tourbuses@stanford.edu), or call (650) 498-7882.



# Coast Guard initiates surprise cruise ship inspections

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Coast Guard has begun unannounced inspections of cruise ships at U.S. ports, targeting those with patterns of safety problems, officials told the National Transportation Safety Board at its first-ever forum on safety on board the vessels.

Capt. Eric Christensen, who oversees ship inspection policy for the Coast Guard, said regular twice-a-year inspections of 140 cruise ships based at U.S. ports in 2013 found 351 deficiencies, most frequently problems with fire doors and lifeboats.

The stepped-up inspection program began last month.

“There was a population of cruise ships that had the lion’s share of deficiency. You want to focus your efforts on those vessels,” Christensen told the board, without identifying which ships or cruise lines were involved.

“They don’t know you are coming, but this is how you can summarize they would normally operate,” he added. “The bottom line is we hold substandard vessels accountable.”

Cruise ships must address any safety problems identified by the

Coast Guard before they can allow passengers to board at U.S. ports.

It was not expressly stated the Coast Guard would block a ship from sailing but it appears that would be the case.

### String of incidents

The NTSB hearing, held in Washington and webcast, follows last year’s fire aboard the Carnival Triumph that left the ship adrift for days in the Gulf of Mexico, subjecting 3,000 passengers to squalid conditions.

A fire also knocked out power in 2010 to the Carnival Splendor at sea in the Pacific Ocean, also stranding passengers and requiring it be towed to port.

In 2012, the Costa Concordia capsized off Italy, killing 32 people.

NTSB chairwoman Debbie Hersman cited those incidents and others aboard increasingly gigantic ships — some of which can carry 6,000 passengers and 2,000 crew members — to underscore the need to assure the safety of every voyage.

She said more than 22 million people will take a cruise worldwide this year.

“When a passenger steps onto a cruise ship, they have the right to expect the safest vessel possible,” said Hersman, whose agency has limited authority to investigate cruise ship accidents occurring within 12 miles of U.S. coasts.

### Weak oversight

Much of the hearing involved the interplay between the Coast Guard safety inspections, rules adopted by the Bahamas Maritime Authority for ships flying under its flag, which include many based at U.S. ports, and a maze of international conventions and rules.

Officials from these organizations, including the United Nations’ International Maritime Organization, described robust safety standards and compliance programs, but they also acknowledged they have few enforcement powers and must rely heavily on the cruise industry itself.

“IMO is not a policeman, as it only develops and agrees to standards and does not implement them,” said Capt. Andy Winbow of the International Maritime Organization.

One of those standards could explain why passengers remained

aboard the Carnival Triumph as it was slowly towed last year through the Gulf of Mexico to port in Mobile, Ala.

Winbow said that beginning in 2000, the cruise industry adopted a policy of using lifeboats for so many thousands of people only as a last resort, essentially deciding a crippled ship is usually safer unless it is sinking.

In 1912 when the Titanic sank in the North Atlantic, Winbow said, “the philosophy (was) you jump off and get into a lifeboat and go to your rescue.”

“Ships (now) are much bigger and operate in areas like the Titanic did, and areas where there are less available search and rescue resources. It makes the logic of staying on board a much stronger one,” he said. “To make the passenger ship itself — I won’t use the word unsinkable because that was used for the Titanic — but to make the ship a fit place to stay.”

### Scathing overview

In something of a White Paper issued by the Coast Guard’s Capt. Christensen in March, titled “Sounding the Alarm on U.S.-Flag Compliance,” Christensen wrote

that “Coast Guard analysis of recent actions taken on U.S.-flag vessels by port state control authorities overseas indicates an alarming trend in the number of significant deficiencies noted.”

The deficiencies mainly related to improper manning, primary life-saving equipment, engine room fire hazards, structural hull safety, and the inability to verify compliance with international conventions due to missing or non-endorsed documentation such as International Safety Management certificates.

“This pattern is illustrative of a decline of registry performance, which has firmly landed the U.S. on the ‘grey list’ in at least one of the regional (port state control) regimes since 2008,” wrote Christensen.

“This status is indicative of an average performance over the preceding three years and signifies the necessity to implement immediate corrective action.

“Compounded with the results from Coast Guard and class oversight efforts, multiple substandard conditions have been identified and attributed to habitual offenders indicative of a flawed safety management culture,” Christensen added.

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# The appalling campaign against small bus companies

By Jay Epstein

Jeff and Judy Rodgers, who met in high school and have three grown children together, started a charter bus company called Southeastern Tours 20 years ago in their hometown of Greenville, N.C.

Jeff had been working as a bus driver for Greyhound and dreamed of running his own company.

In 1994, in partnership with Judy's mother, the couple took out a loan, built a garage, and launched their business. They struggled for a few years, but gradually built a loyal clientele.

As recently as eight months ago, the company was thriving with seven buses and gross annual revenue of about \$1 million, including a contract with Amtrak worth \$48,000 a month to transport passengers between train stations in North Carolina.

Today, Southeastern Tours is on the verge of bankruptcy.

## Rapid descent

In December, Amtrak canceled its contract with the company, transferring its business to a different carrier.

Unable to make their monthly payments, the Rodgers returned six of their seven buses. They may lose their home of 22 years, which served as collateral on a business loan.

"I don't have anything to fall back on," says Jeff. "This company was my livelihood. It's how I pay for my food and everything."

What led to the rapid downfall of Southeastern Tours?

On Oct. 14, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration ordered the company to cease operations on the grounds it was a hazard to public safety.

Southeastern Tours had never been involved in a serious accident, but during a three-day audit in August, FMCSA inspectors found, among other things, that its drivers filled out

their logs incorrectly, that the Rodgers failed to provide their employees with educational materials, and that they allowed a former driver to get back behind the wheel before waiting for the results of his alcohol and drug tests. (The tests came back negative.)

## Whatever it took

When their troubles with the FMCSA began in early August, the Rodgers committed to doing whatever it took to get back in the government's good graces.

They hired a consulting firm that was personally recommended by an FMCSA investigator; they installed new devices on their buses for wirelessly submitting drivers' logs as a way to eliminate bookkeeping errors, and they retained a respected maintenance company to conduct regular vehicle inspections.

But, after a tumultuous six months of dealing with the FMCSA, the Rodgers are still forbidden to run their buses and they're beginning to make plans to dissolve the company.

The case of Southeastern Tours is typical of the FMCSA tough-on-crime approach to regulating the bus industry.

The 2012 federal highway bill gave the agency new powers to force bus companies to halt their operations without a standard review.

## 'Quick Strike' strikes

In 2013, the FMCSA launched a new safety initiative, called "Operation Quick Strike," that forced 52 companies off the road, including Southeastern Tours. The agency routinely touts its heightened vigilance in the press, depicting itself as the valiant protector of the riding public.

As is often the case when the government cracks down on an industry, small carriers lacking political connections and the right attorneys have received the brunt of the punishment, while the large corporate bus compa-

nies benefit from seeing their more nimble rivals driven out.

By emphasizing that its efforts are a matter of saving lives, the government has gotten away with denying owners like Jeff and Judy Rodgers their constitutional right to due process.

The government's power is almost unchecked in this arena.

The rules that govern how bus companies run their operations are complex enough that FMCSA inspectors looking to take out even well-managed outfits like Southeastern Tours can almost always dig up enough violations to accomplish their goals.

## Double trouble

Once companies are forced out of service and starved of their operating revenue, they have to apply to regain their operating authority twice: once with their local FMCSA field office and then again with the agency's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Both process can take several months because FMCSA field offices and headquarters often don't communicate with each other, and companies aren't allowed to begin one application process before the other is complete. To successfully navigate this process, companies need help from experienced lawyers and consultants.

"The FMCSA has become much more interested in the publicity that goes with enforcement than with trying to improve the situation," says Paul Sullivan, a retired Massachusetts State Police lieutenant and former president of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, the organization that determines official safety standards for commercial vehicles.

"The agency is stretching the intent of the regulation to make critical examples," says Sullivan, who now works as an independent consultant for bus companies that have gotten into trouble with the FMCSA.

In an emailed statement, FMCSA

Director of Communications Marissa Padilla wrote: "We make no apologies for highlighting the results of our investigations to send a strong message to the motor carrier industry that unsafe operations will not be tolerated."

## Misrepresenting facts

In some instances, FMCSA agents have been guilty of misrepresenting facts to build a case against a company.

In November in *The Daily Beast*, I wrote about the government's shutdown of Lucky Star, a Boston-based carrier with an impeccable safety record. The forced closure of that company was based almost entirely on violations that turned out to be unfounded.

Fearful of reprisal and wary of getting mired in an interminable appeals process, the owners didn't publicly dispute the FMCSA flawed assessment of their company.

Ultimately, Lucky Star hired a team of ex-government officials to plead their case behind closed doors, spending upwards of a million dollars to get back on the road after being grounded for seven months.

The consulting fees aside, most bus companies can't afford to stay afloat for an extended period of time without earning any revenue.

## Due process-less

"It's OK to scrutinize compliance," says Dru Carey, a New York City-based criminal defense attorney, who represents numerous small and medium-sized bus companies.

"But, if you're going to take away someone's right to run a business in this country," she says, "you better have some due process."

Carey, who represents several companies that have had their operating authority taken away by the FMCSA, says it can take several months for the agency to consider objections to its actions and that it's a

struggle to get FMCSA administrators to answer their phones or return emails.

"It's sad they (small bus operators) need to hire a litigator to conduct business," says Carey, who began representing bus companies about two years ago. "My clients aren't criminals."

Jeff and Judy Rodgers' nightmare began in early August, when FMCSA Inspector Mark Halter conducted a three-day investigation of the company's records and maintenance program.

When he first showed up on Aug. 6 — and before he had a chance to examine the company's books or buses — Halter told Rodgers that he would likely end up forcing his company to halt its service.

"I'm going to warn you right now that we have done five audits like this and we've put four out of business," Halter announced, according to Rodgers. (The FMCSA declined my request to speak with Halter.)

At the end of his three-day audit, Halter gave the company a conditional rating of "unsatisfactory."

## Paperwork blunders

One of Southeastern's more serious violations was that its drivers' logbooks didn't accurately reflect their hours of service, which Jeff Rodgers attributes to clerical errors. Halter also found that the company failed to conduct drug and alcohol tests on a driver named Albert Dixon after his bus was hit by another car on the road. (Dixon was not at fault in the accident.)

Rodgers asked Halter if he could recommend a consultant who could help him write a corrective action plan to reverse his negative rating. Halter directed him to a local outfit called Mayberry Safety Solutions, and Rodgers called the company that very day.

"We wanted desperately to answer their questions and get every-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ►

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# Should bus safety gear include a rope or rope ladder?

By Dave Millhouser

“Millie ... MILLIE ...  
MILLIE !!!”

You could hear my pal Oakie's voice rising in desperation as the lights went out in Chicago's sprawling McCormick Convention Center.

We had been prepping a demo Eagle for an exposition, and he was on the bus roof cleaning.

The PA system was announcing they were locking the auditorium and turning out the lights till the next morning.

I had swiped the ladder he'd used to get on the roof, leaving him with no easy...or safe way down.

As the banks of lights were being doused, the room grew increasingly silent and dark. Oakie quickly envisioned a night spent sleeping on a bus roof.

Fearing he'd eventually get even, at the last possible moment I raised the ladder, letting him climb down. I, meanwhile, dashed for the exit before he could catch me.

Oakie has been a source of bussly inspiration for years, so

blame this column on him.

What do we do when passengers are trapped on top of a bus?

I hear you snickering. But... there truly is potential for real trouble.

The Methodist minister who taught me to drive a bus (believe me, I don't make this stuff up) always told me a key to safety is to keep the bus on the road. Obviously, right?

What he meant was that when a situation turns poopie, it's often safer to plow through a pile of cars than to flop the coach over into a ditch.

On a REAL bad day, it doesn't work out that way and the bus ends up on its side.

When that happens, how does everyone get out? The passenger door is useless, and the emergency windows are difficult to open because they're heavy, and difficult to open when you're standing on a sideways seat.

Roof hatches are helpful but represent a choke point. They sometimes jam (which may be why we have emergency windows as an alternative). There's another

problem: When you pop out from one, you're still four feet from the ground, and you are only one Sumo wrestler (or injured passenger) from a disastrous bottleneck.

Since a sizable portion of our customer base is senior citizens and school children, climbing on to the side of the bus...which has become the top...is a major undertaking (BAD pun).

Adrenaline works wonders, so let's assume everyone can get out. However, they suddenly may find themselves atop the overturned coach. How do they safely reach the ground?

In news coverage we see firefighters climbing ladders and helping folks down. That's because, if a photographer could get there, so could a fire truck.

What happens if you're in the boonies? Or, it's urgent to help injured people? What alternatives do you have?

On existing coaches — not many.

With luck, the windshields may have popped out, providing ground level egress. If they haven't, often they can be kicked

out. You and your safety team might want to give some advanced thought to dealing with this sort of thing, and drivers should be aware that some windshields are harnessed in, while others are glued. They're all laminated, making them difficult to smash.

One possible solution could be some sort of rope ladder, hidden in the package rack. (Hidden because how do you explain it?)

Once a few folks are down, they can help out from below. So, evacuate able individuals first.

A long-term solution might be rungs on coach roofs. It sounds silly till you think about it. One or two metal handholds built into the roof, parallel to the side of the coach, would offer a bit of overhead protection to roof hatches and antennas. In a catastrophe, with a coach lying on its side, they'd act like a built in ladder.

They wouldn't be obvious from the ground, and, properly done, wouldn't look out of place.

Maybe it's a bad idea, or you have a better one. But it would be nice if we had a safe way of deal-



Dave Millhouser

ing with this situation.

Just sayin'.

Before retiring from bus sales, I drove a demo under low hanging wire in a customer's parking lot.

The wire laid atop the coach roof and caught on the escape hatch. My boss was with me, and he offered to climb through the hatch to pop it loose.

While he was atop the bus, I yanked the hatch closed, leaving him with no way off the roof.

Over the years, bus roofs have been good to me.

And now you know at least part of the reason I'm "retired" from bus sales.

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

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*Roman Cornell, ABC Bus, Winter Garden, FL*

"We have been very impressed with the ride quality and performance of the Toyo tires"

*Mike Dickson, President, Southeastern Stages, Atlanta, GA*

"We have been testing the Toyo tires and they have been performing extremely well"

*Brian Scott, President, Escot Bus Lines, Largo, FL*

"The tires are doing great. Thanks for the good service and product"

*Andy Barder, President, Corporate Coach, Ft Lauderdale, FL*

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

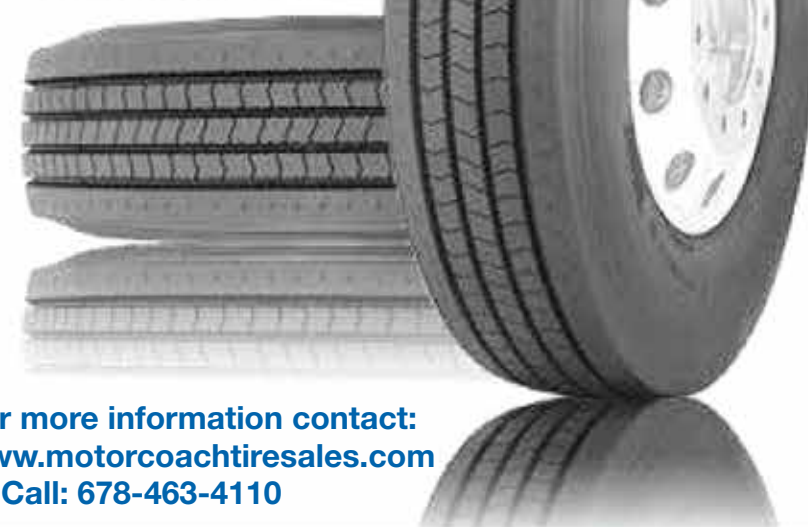
*John Adams, President, Southern Coach, Dothan, AL*

"DATTCO has 20 sets running on our Van Hools and while we do not have mileage collected as of yet, the response from the drivers has been very positive concerning handling and ride quality"

*Mike Verna, Fleet Manager, DATTCO Bus Lines, New Britain, CT*



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## Luxury D.C.-N.Y.C. shuttle service is launched

WASHINGTON — A well-known Washington restaurateur and entrepreneur has launched an upscale bus service from the District of Columbia to New York City.

Andy Seligman, leasing manager at Federal Realty Investment Trust and owner of the restaurants Grand Central DC in Adams Morgan, a culturally diverse neighborhood in northwest Washington, and Brickside Food & Drink in suburban Bethesda, Md., thinks people will pay a premium for luxury shuttle service.

The “boutique bus service” uses opulent conversion Mercedes Sprinter vans for its twice-daily runs between Washington and mid-town Manhattan.

Seligman launched his Royal Sprinter service using two of the Sprinter conversions, which cost



about \$120,000 each and feature eight reclining leather seats.

Amenities include DirecTV, WiFi and refreshments.

The conversions were done by American Custom Vehicles of Elkhart, Ind., which specializes in Sprinter van conversions.

The DC-to-NYC service began last month for \$90 each way.

Seligman plans to add service to New York from Tysons Corner, from D.C. to Philadelphia, and Philadelphia to New York in the future.

“I believe there is a market for people who will pay a little more

for a little more,” Seligman says. “There is really nothing else like Royal Sprinter out there.”

Vamoose, one of a half-dozen motorcoach companies running between Washington and New York City, has a limited Gold Bus service that includes reclining leather seats and more room for passengers that starts at \$60 each way.

Trips on other operators, like BoltBus, Greyhound and megabus, cost about \$30-\$50 round trip.

Royal Sprinter has partnered with the Park Hyatt Washington, Embassy Suites at the Chevy Chase Pavilion and the Loews Regency Hotel in Manhattan as pick-up and drop-off spots. Riders will be able to use the hotels’ lobbies while waiting for the bus.

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

## Weather hampers FirstGroup in U.S.

ABERDEEN, Scotland — The parent company of Greyhound Lines announced it will report that revenue at the nation’s largest intercity bus company was down 2.9 percent during the fiscal year ended March 31.

In a “trading update,” FirstGroup PLC said its company-wide operating profit for fiscal 2014 will be in line with expectations, excluding a \$23 million hit from Greyhound and its First Student school bus operation as a result of bad winter weather across the U.S.

It also said that year-over-year revenue at Greyhound would have been up about 2.1 percent in the fiscal fourth quarter if the impact of the weather were excluded, reflecting an improved U.S. economy.

## Online resource for tour buses visiting Washington, D.C. is updated

WASHINGTON — The District of Columbia Department of Transportation has updated its website for providers of motorcoach transportation in the U.S. capital.

The comprehensive goDCgo website now contains “all of the timely, relevant information tour operators need to know when using

motorcoach transportation in the U.S. capital,” including:

- Additional parking spaces downtown
- An inventory of long-term and overnight parking
- Motorcoach operator guide
- Regulations, including scheduled stops, route filings and motor-

coach signing

- National Park Service bus parking meters
- Outreach programs such as Board A Bus, DC Loves Buses, District Idle Reduction Program and driver warnings
- Use of Union Station bus deck, fees and services for drivers

The D.C. DOT says it works to ensure efficient and safe mobility of motorcoaches while mitigating community impacts and preserving transportation infrastructure.

The department “is working hard to serve tour operators,” noted Steve Richer, public affairs advocate for NTA (formerly the Nation-

al Tour Association).

“The city is truly going all out to make it easy to grow this business in a friendly and considerate way. It’s always a thrill to see the daily volume of motorcoach tours in this top destination.”

To learn more, go to [www.goDCgo.com](http://www.goDCgo.com).

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## Motorcoach Census

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a wide variety of services. About 97 percent provide charters, 45 percent provide tour service, 21 percent offer sightseeing, 25 percent run airport shuttles, 23 percent provide scheduled service, 15 percent have special operations, and 10 percent do commuter runs.

• Charters accounted for about 47.7 percent of motorcoach service mileage in 2012, followed by scheduled service (30.9 percent), commuter runs (6.2 percent), packaged tours (6 percent), airport service (4.1 percent), sightseeing (2.7 percent), and special operations (2.5 percent).

While the number of motorcoach industry passenger trips grew in 2012, versus 2011, the pace of industry growth slowed. In 2011, the industry had 626.99 passenger trips, up 4.3 percent from 2010.

The census figures also suggest the gap in size between the motorcoach and airline industries widened in 2012, with the airlines further distancing themselves from bus operators.

The 637.4 million passenger trips by U.S. and Canadian bus operators compares to 736 million enplanements just for U.S. airlines in 2012.

An apples-to-apples comparison of passenger totals is not possible from data presented in the Motorcoach Census. The passenger trip total for the motorcoach industry includes both U.S. and Canada carriers, while the figure for the airline industry includes only domestic air carriers.

If you add the passenger enplanements for the 50 largest airports in Canada to the U.S. en-

planement total, there were more than 791 million U.S. and Canadian enplanements during 2012, or 154 million more than motorcoach passenger trips in the two countries.

A similar comparison problem occurs for Amtrak. Amtrak, the domestic rail line, carried 31 million passengers in 2012.

### Just how big?

One of the most significant aspects of the latest census is what appears to have been a more serious effort to get a firmer grasp on the actual size of the North American motorcoach industry.

Unlike the airline industry, no one has ever known the actual size of the U.S. and Canadian motorcoach industry. The problem is complex and complicated because it is (1) fundamentally difficult to define the industry (just exactly what constitutes a "motorcoach" company?); (2) no government unit has ever devoted the time or resources to define the industry and ferret out its size, and (3) the industry is composed of thousands of small private companies run by individuals who more often than not are loath to provide fleet and other information. After all, it's their business.

Two points illustrate the challenge.

In fall 2011, researchers at the National Transportation Safety Board estimated there were 4,172 motorcoach operators in the U.S. Their research was conducted in connection with the NTSB's flawed and misaligned study of the U.S. curbside industry, making the figure suspect.

No. 2. The latest ABA Motorcoach Census is largely based on a survey sent to upwards of 4,000

companies. Responses from 304 companies were collected over a seven-month period, meaning roughly 7 percent of the industry participated in the survey, not an encouraging number.

By comparison, 24 percent of the members of the United Motorcoach Association participated in that association's 2013 Membership Survey and Industry Assessment.

Additionally, the Motorcoach Census has a relative high margin of error for a survey of 5.4 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

'The actual number of carriers operating in 2010 was likely 10 percent lower than the figure reported in the originally published 2011 census.'

### More diligent effort

Despite the difficulties, the company preparing the Motorcoach Census conducted "a much more extensive review of the industry, including contacting nearly 5,000 companies to determine if they fit the industry definition and to verify ownership structure.

"Critical to our revision," say the census researchers, "was determining the number of active motorcoach carriers by adjusting for companies that were not operating in 2010, companies that were subsidiaries of other companies, and companies that merged with other companies prior to 2010.

"This means that the actual number of carriers operating in 2010 was likely 10 percent lower

than the figure reported in the originally published 2011 census."

The Motorcoach Census was conducted by John Dunham & Associates of Brooklyn, N.Y., an economic research firm that specializes in economic and fiscal impact studies that typically are used in government relations and for legislative advocacy.

Dunham estimates there were 3,623 motorcoach companies operating in the U.S. during 2012, down from 3,648 in 2011 and 3,672 in 2010, or a 1.3 percent decline during the period.

It also estimates U.S. operators maintained a fleet of 35,354 motorcoaches in 2012, down from 36,017 in 2011 and 36,888 in 2010, or a 4.3 percent drop between 2010 and 2012.

### Demographic shifts

The composition of the individuals who traveled by motorcoach in 2012, or industry demographics, also saw movement between 2010 and 2012.

In 2012, 24.1 percent of the passengers were students, compared to 25.6 percent in 2010, or a 5.8 percentage point decline.

At the same time, the number of senior riders went from 23.4 percent in 2010 to 26.1 percent in 2012, or an 11.5 percentage point increase.

Other age groups made up nearly 50 percent of passengers in 2012, versus 51 percent in 2010.

Other noteworthy findings from the census include:

**Industry Employment.** The motorcoach industry provided jobs for 132,900 people in 2012; 71,600 full-time and 61,200 part-time. The average motorcoach company provided 33.6 jobs, or 3.4 jobs per motorcoach.

**Employment by Company Size.** Fifty-two percent of motorcoach industry jobs were at small companies (those operating fewer than 25 coaches). Midsize companies (those operating between 25 and 99 motorcoaches) provided 20 percent of the industry jobs. Large companies (those operating more than 100 motorcoaches) provided 29 percent of industry jobs.

**Fuel Efficiency.** In 2012, the average fuel efficiency of a motorcoach was 6.1 miles per gallon of fuel. That means a motorcoach carrying the industry average of 39.3 passengers achieved 222.7 passenger miles per gallon of fuel in 2012. The average coach used 8,600 gallons of fuel.

**Motorcoach Use.** The average coach traveled 52,400 miles in 2012. The largest carriers, those with more than 100 coaches, averaged 78,600 miles per coach, while the smallest carriers, those with 10 or fewer coaches, averaged 37,400 miles per coach.

The American Bus Association Foundation says the overarching goal of the Motorcoach Census is to reveal the scope and impact of the motorcoach transportation industry in the U.S. and Canada. The picture it paints is of an industry that serves a broad range of customers, from students to seniors, and that moves people with notable fuel efficiency.

The industry provides a wide variety passenger transportation services that are vital to the economy's travel and leisure sectors, and intercity and commuter services.

The ABA Foundation is the scholarship and research arm of the ABA. The latest census, which is titled *Motorcoach Census 2013*, can be found at [www.buses.org/files/Foundation/Census2013.pdf](http://www.buses.org/files/Foundation/Census2013.pdf).

## New coach sales

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of coach shells, which are not included in the annual new delivery figures compiled by the American Bus Association Foundation, which took over reporting of industry sales figures last year. Previously, the numbers had been assembled by *National Bus Trader* magazine.

Shell sales are broken out separately and only reported by quarter in the ABA compilation. A total of 51 shells were sold during 2013. Nearly 40 percent of 2013 coach shell sales came during the fourth quarter when 20 were delivered.

Also missing from the ABA Foundation report are sales of Temsa and Caio coaches.

During the final three months of last year, 576 new 45- and 40-foot MCI, Prevost, Setra, Van Hool and Volvo coaches, including shells, were delivered, making the

fourth quarter of 2013 by far the strongest sales period of the year.

By comparison, 426 new 45- and 40-foot models were sold by the five brands during the second quarter of last year, with fewer than 350 coaches delivered in both the first and third quarters.

Year earlier quarterly sales figures are not included in the ABA Foundation report. Beginning with

the first quarter of this year, year-over-year quarterly comparisons should be possible, however.

Private-sector bus operators significantly stepped up their purchases of new coaches last year.

Sales of new 45- and 40-foot MCI, Prevost, Setra, Van Hool and Volvo coaches to private operators jumped from 1,177 units in 2012 to 1,412 last year, or a 20 percent

gain. The increase over 2011 sales was nearly 39 percent.

At the same time, sales to public transit agencies plummeted last year.

Public transit systems purchased a total of 227 new 45- and 40-foot monocoque coaches during 2013, down 35 percent from the 348 delivered to transit agencies in 2012. Transits purchased 347 coaches in 2011.

Cummins continued to be the dominant engine in new motorcoaches and buses delivered last year, going into 815 new models sold by MCI and ABC/Van Hool.

By comparison, 494 Prevost and Volvo coaches were delivered with Volvo engines, which are only available in those brands.

Detroit and Mercedes engines, which are essentially power-plant twins, went into 328 new MCI, Setra and Van Hool coaches.

Allison was again the dominant transmission. A total of 1,508 new coaches were delivered last year with Allison, compared with 108 ZF and 81 Volvo transmissions. Both the Volvo and ZF are semi-automatic transmissions, while Allison is fully automatic.

To view the dataset for the ABA Foundation 2013 coach sales report, go to [www.buses.org/files/Foundation/ABAF-Motorcoach-Sales-2013.pdf](http://www.buses.org/files/Foundation/ABAF-Motorcoach-Sales-2013.pdf).

## Calendar

### JUNE 2014

**7 Museum of Bus Transportation Spring Bus Fling**, Museum of Bus Transportation, Hershey, Pa. Info: (717) 566-2001 Ext. 119.

**12-14 The Bus History Association 2014 Annual Convention**, Country Inn & Suites at Mall of America, Minneapolis. Info: [www.bus-history.org](http://www.bus-history.org).

**16-19 Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association and Pennsylvania Bus Association Joint Annual Meeting, Industry Expo and Sales Retreat**, Sands Bethlehem (Pa.). Info: [www.pabus.org](http://www.pabus.org) or [www.gnjma.com](http://www.gnjma.com).

**18-21 New England Bus Association 2014 Annual Conference**, Hilton Mystic, Mystic, Conn. Info: [mitch.guralnick@mcicoach.com](mailto:mitch.guralnick@mcicoach.com).

**24-25 UMA Capital Hill Days**, Washington, D.C. Info: Ken Presley at UMA, email [kpresley@uma.org](mailto:kpresley@uma.org), or call (800) 424-8262.

### JULY 2014

**13-16 Joint Annual Meeting of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina Motorcoach Associations**, Richmond Marriott, Richmond, Va. Info: [www.scmotorcoach.org](http://www.scmotorcoach.org), [www.ncmotorcoach.org](http://www.ncmotorcoach.org), or [www.vamotorcoach.org](http://www.vamotorcoach.org).

## People

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — **Sunway Charters & Tours**, a division of **Trolley's Inc.**, announced that *Brenda Sherlin*, a motorcoach, tourism and travel industry veteran, is now heading Sunway's tour and travel division offices in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and Charlotte.

After 10 years in the hotel and attraction side of the business, Sherlin has returned to her roots in the bus industry by joining the team at Sunway and Trolley's Inc., owned and operated by Lee Helms.

Sherlin is widely known in the industry both in the Carolinas and nationally.

As owner of her own bus company until 2003, she was the first woman elected to the board of the **North Carolina Motorcoach Association** and was the first female elected president, serving two terms.

During the 20 years she had her own company, she was appointed to the **North Carolina Travel Council**, and a seat on the board of the **American Bus Association**.

DESTIN, Fla. — The 2013 **Trailways** "Outstanding Driver of the Year Award" winner in the charter and tour division is *Gottfried Fodor* of **Fullington Trailways** in Clearfield, Pa., while *William Laurent* of **Trailways of New York** won

the "Outstanding Driver of The Year Award" in the scheduled route division.

Laurent began his driving career with Trailways of New York in May 1979. Since then he has driven more than 1.5 million accident-free miles in nearly all corners of the state.

Fodor has been with Fullington Trailways since 1982. Last year, he drove 51,855 accident-free miles.

The awards for Laurent and Fodor were announced at the 78th annual Trailways Stockholder Meeting and Conference here.

LA FRANCE, S.C. — **La France Industries** announced that *Jeff Goldwasser* has joined the company as sales executive for La France's transportation fabrics.

Goldwasser grew up in the motorcoach industry and has more than 30 years of professional experience in the business.

His family operated **Peak Tours**, a coach and school bus company, in New York for 40 years. He also was general manager of **Classic Coach** on Long Island for a number of years.

He spent two years selling pre-owned coaches in the northeastern U.S. for **Daimler Buses of North America**, and later operated his own bus brokering service.

Most recently, Goldwasser was with **National Seating**.

Contact Goldwasser via email at [interiors@jeffgoldwasser.com](mailto:interiors@jeffgoldwasser.com), or by



Gottfried Fodor



William Laurent



Jeff Goldwasser



Allen Abbott



Trey Hertel



Eloy Torres

phone at (551)482-1608.

AUSTIN, Texas — *Trey Hertel* joins **Prevost** as the new coach regional sales manager for the south central U.S.

Hertel has 19 years of sales experience with manufacturing companies, plus a background in business financial planning.

He spent the past 14 years in the recreational vehicle industry, first as product sales specialist and trainer for **Fleetwood Motor Homes**, then as regional sales manager for **Thor Manufacturing**.

Hertel also acted as national sales manager and product manager for the RV division of **The Aluminum Trailer Co.**

At one point, he also operated a financial planning consulting company.

Hertel holds a degree from Western Illinois University.

He will support motorcoach operators in Texas, Oklahoma and Ar-

kansas. Contact him at (512) 284-4854, or [trey.hertel@volvo.com](mailto:trey.hertel@volvo.com).

Prevost also announced that *Eloy Torres* has been named pre-owned coach regional sales manager, covering Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Torres has been with Prevost for 14 years. Contact him at (817) 371-6173, or [eloy.torres@volvo.com](mailto:eloy.torres@volvo.com).

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — **Fleet Financing Resources** announced the promotion of *Jonathan Tillery* to finance officer.

In his new role, Tillery will lead Fleet Financing Resources' regional sales efforts.

He has worked at Fleet Financing Resources for six years.

LEXINGTON, Ky. — *Z. Allen Abbott, Ph.D.*, has been named executive director of the **Faith Travel Association**.

Abbott left his position as executive director of the **American Red Cross** in Columbus, Ga., to become the first executive director of the Faith Travel Association.

NTA formed the Faith Travel Association earlier this year and formally introduced it at the **UMA/NTA Travel Exchange** in February.

Abbott, an ordained minister, has worked in fundraising, financial planning, telecommunications, and nonprofit leadership. He is a child of missionaries.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to work with FTA — an incredible, new organization that pairs two of my great passions, faith and travel," Abbott said.

"There's a spiritual transformation that comes with pilgrimages, tours and mission trips. Through travel, people of faith can take their belief beyond borders."

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

# Mark Your Calendar!

## UMA Capitol Hill Days June 24-25, 2014 Washington, DC









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## Fatigue

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

try safety.

“Our declining such a trip — over safety concerns — will not stop the trip,” he said. “It will only put the trip in the hands of another, perhaps not-quite-as-safe, company.”

Brian Scott of Escot Bus Lines in Largo, Fla., was even more emphatic. “If the FMCSA, or the insurance industry for that matter, think these trips are being — or can be — converted to conventional (daytime) charters with simple ‘customer education,’ they are sorely mistaken,” said Scott.

“We find the customer takes our declination and ‘education’ as a sign we are simply not interested and the trip goes to the next carrier down the road,” he added.

### ‘Managing’ fatigue

For its part, the FMCSA hasn’t shown much inclination toward mandating a “fatigue management program” for bus and truck operators — despite urgings.

Last July, an online interactive program for fatigue management was announced by the FMCSA and Transport Canada.

The comprehensive North American Fatigue Management Program was developed by a number of Canadian and American agencies.

FMCSA Administrator Anne S. Ferro called it “another supportive resource truck and bus drivers can utilize in addition to complying with our hours-of-service rules.”

The North American Fatigue Management Program is an educational and training resource drivers and carriers may use on a voluntary basis.

### NTSB seeks mandate

The National Transportation Safety Board, on the other hand, has called for fatigue management programs to be mandatory for all motor carriers.

“The NTSB reiterates the recommendation to require fatigue management programs for all motor carriers,” wrote NTSB member Mark R. Rosekind in a concurring opinion to a 2011 highway accident report.

“It has become clear that the complex nature of fatigue requires a comprehensive and programmatic approach to manage effectively the safety, performance and alertness risks created by fatigue.

“While science-based, hours-of-service regulations are necessary, they are not sufficient to manage this complexity,” Rosekind asserted.



Michael Neustadt



Brian Scott

All five members of the NTSB concurred in the addendum to the report on the May 30, 2011, highly publicized crash of a Sky Express Inc. motorcoach on Interstate 95 near Doswell, Va.

The Sky Express coach drifted off the highway, struck a cable barrier and overturned onto its roof. The roof collapsed and four of the 58 passengers were killed. Another 14 received serious injuries and 36 received minor injuries.

### The 5 a.m. accident

The crash occurred at 4:55 a.m., during what sleep experts call a “circadian low” that can result in driver sleepiness and reduced focus.

“The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the failure of the motorcoach driver to maintain control of his vehicle due to his falling asleep while driving because of fatigue resulting from acute sleep loss, poor sleep quality, and circadian disruption and the failure of Sky Express Inc. management to follow adequate safety practices and to exercise safety oversight of the driver,” the report stated.

“Contributing to the accident was the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s lack of adequate oversight of Sky Express Inc., which allowed the company to continue operations despite known safety issues.”

In its report, the NTSB noted that a report it issued on a 2011 truck accident had recommended a mandatory fatigue management program.

However, “The FMCSA indicated that, before mandating the use of fatigue management programs, a non-regulatory approach should be tried...The NTSB believes that, although some carriers will adopt fatigue management programs to improve the safety of their operations, many will not.

“In fact, those carriers with the weakest safety management — that is, the operations that most need a fatigue management program — are the least likely to implement one.”

The NTSB classified the FMCSA position as an “Open — Unacceptable Response.”

During his presentation at the UMA Safety Management Semi-

nar, Crescenzo called fatigued driving the industry’s primary “uncontrolled risk” and the primary cause of severe motorcoach accidents.

The risk of a motorcoach crash reaches its highest point during the early morning hours, peaking at 4:30 a.m. Crashes are five times more likely to occur at that time than during daylight hours.

### The complexities

Fatigue also is a complex issue to manage.

Crescenzo described many factors that contribute to dangerous levels of fatigue — individual physical responses, total hours of service, irregular or “flip-flopping” shift schedules, and overnight travel in general.

Operator fatigue has been a focus of outgoing NTSB Chairman Deborah Hersman.

“There are too many accidents where the lack of sleep and fatigue have either caused the accident or been a contributory factor,” she said in a statement released in March 2013 to support National Sleep Awareness Week.

In a 2012 speech at UMA Motorcoach Expo in Long Beach, Calif., she said NTSB had investigated 36 bus accidents since 1998.

“Again and again, just like in the movie Groundhog Day, we see the same thing, the same issues — fatigued drivers, poor occupant protection and marginal operators that are only put out of service after a fatal accident.”

In a 2010 speech to the National Sleep Foundation, Hersman compared the effects of fatigue to those of alcohol consumption.

Numerous studies have shown that “sleep loss is at least as potent as ethanol in its performance-impairing effects and two hours of sleeplessness equates to a breath ethanol concentration of approximately .05 percent,” she said.

“Prolonged wakefulness significantly impairs speed and accuracy, hand-eye coordination, decision-making and memory. Prolonged wakefulness correlates with impairment — being awake for 16 hours is equivalent to a .05 blood alcohol concentration.”

### Many could do more

In his presentation, Crescenzo included the effects of the human body clock in the equation.

He noted that, due to our sunlight/darkness responses, we find it most difficult to function between midnight and 7 a.m. and again between 1 and 4 p.m. During those hours our body desires sleep or a nap.

Hersman acknowledged the



Bob Crescenzo



Deborah Hersman

difficulties of addressing operator fatigue, which she said is a concern in all transportation modes.

“We know that fatigue-impaired individuals are terrible at recognizing their own impairment. One of the major challenges we face now is in refining the ways that we identify fatigue and its impairing effects.

“There is a responsibility on the part of the transportation industry to have policies that allow their employees to call in fatigued. This should be a written policy that will address the implications of fatigue calls.”

During her speech at Motorcoach Expo, Hersman added: “We know FMCSA is working hard to detect unscrupulous operators and prevent reincarnated carriers from re-entering the marketplace. But, frankly, the barriers to entry are extremely low, the penalties aren’t a deterrent and the FMCSA is overburdened with about one investigator per 1,000 motor carriers.”

About three-quarters of respondents to last year’s *UMA Membership Survey* said their companies conduct fatigue management programs. On the other hand, 21.5 percent of the respondents — carriers sufficiently professional to join a trade association — said they do not have programs to manage driver fatigue.

### No getting away

While most carrier executives see fatigue as a significant concern, many also see overnight trips as a necessary evil.

Neustadt of Coach Tours called overnight charters “part of the business.”

“I think that there is a middle ground — have policies that will make the trip as safe as possible. Some things are simple, like scheduling the overnight drivers carefully in the days before and after the trip, and getting the relief drivers a quality, single hotel room with plenty of rest time,” Neustadt said.

“Another thing we started a few years ago is to require that two drivers be on every coach during the hours from about 1 to 6 a.m., even if the hours-of-service rules do not require it.

“It might turn a legal two-driver move into a three-driver move but I think that having another driver available will prevent a driv-

er from ‘soldiering on’ if he or she feels tired. It is much easier for the driver to ask the co-driver to take over for an hour or two than it is to tell the group ‘I’m tired and I’m going to pull over and rest.’”

Added Scott of Escot Bus Lines: “I can’t help but feel how disconnected FMCSA, and perhaps the insurance industry, is from business reality,” he said.

“We have not taken a trip that required driving through the night in probably five years, and we have lost a tremendous amount of business. So much that we have re-evaluated that policy and now are taking those trips, but only during slower times when our driver pool is not taxed.”

### ‘Sleepy time’

The infamous Sky Express crash was a textbook example of unmanaged fatigue behind the wheel.

The driver was Kin Yiu Cheung, 37, who had been hired by Sky Express in July 2010 with no previous commercial driving experience. He previously was a restaurant delivery driver.

During his trial on four counts of manslaughter, a Virginia State Trooper said Cheung admitted immediately after the crash that had fallen asleep while driving. She said he wrote a statement that said, “Maybe I feeling tired and sleepy time.”

According to the NTSB report, the Sky Express trip had departed Greensboro, N.C., at 10:30 p.m. en route to the Chinatown neighborhood of New York City.

Surviving passengers interviewed after the crash said Cheung had consumed several energy drinks and cups of coffee during the night. One passenger saw the driver leaning over the steering wheel with his head bobbing up and down.

A passenger who spoke Mandarin heard him talking into his cell phone and telling someone he was tired and had not had much turnaround time between trips.

The driver’s post-crash blood and alcohol tests were negative. His logbooks indicated a hectic schedule. The company was able to provide only a portion of Cheung’s logbook pages, but “the available records showed the driver had violated the hours-of-service rules at least 85 times.” The records covered three full months and portions of two others.

Cheung had been off duty 16.5 hours before his fatal trip. His cell phone records indicated that many of those hours were interrupted by calls that limited his “maximum

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 ►





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## megabus paces Coach USA growth

NEW YORK — megabus.com continues to be the fastest growing segment of Coach USA, with revenue climbing more than 20 percent during the nine months ended Jan. 31, despite the impact of harsh winter weather in December and January.

The nation's largest curbside operator also announced it has served more than 35 million passengers since its start-up in April 2006.

In celebration of the milestone, megabus.com awarded customer Lena Jackson of Akron, Ohio, with an Apple iPad Mini during a celebration at the megabus arrival/departure location at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Stephanie Tubbs Jones Transit Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

megabus' latest service expansions have been in North and South Carolina. The intercity car-

rier currently operates in 32 states, serving more than 120 cities.

Additional cities are expected to be added throughout the year.

Meanwhile, Coach USA and its Short Line unit were expected to move from Mahwah, N.J., to a new \$16 million garage and office complex in a Chester, N.Y., industrial park around May 1.

"Everything's basically done; it's just the finishing touches now," said George Grieve, general manager of Coach USA's northern district and president of Short Line.

The 200,000-square-foot facility has been under development for three years.

The complex, which utilizes 20 of the 52 acres Coach USA bought in Tetz Industrial Park off New York Route 94, includes a 16,000-square-foot, two-story office building, and an adjacent one-

story garage measuring 183,000 square feet.

Smaller auxiliary structures will house diesel fuel tanks, power generators, garbage bins and water tanks for the fire-suppression system.

The mammoth garage will enable Short Line to consolidate bus storage, service and maintenance tasks spread over several locations. The 105-plus fleet of buses will be stored indoors.

At the end of daily runs, buses will have dump tanks emptied, fuel tanks filled, exteriors washed, and interiors cleaned at a series of stations inside the garage. Then, they'll move to the maintenance area for any tire changes or mechanical repairs.

Security cameras will monitor the isolated complex, and access for Coach USA's 225 employees will be controlled with key cards.

## New certification program aimed at group tour leaders

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — The International Tour Management Institute, a leading training and certification program for tour directors and guides, has launched a "Group Tour Leader Certification Program."

"Group leaders are individuals who lead tour groups for religious or fraternal organizations, students groups, professional associations or private groups," noted International Tour Management Institute CEO Ted Bravos.

"Group leaders are responsible for the welfare of the participants and the positive outcome of the experience."

According to Bravos, the International Tour Management Institute group tour leader certification program will provide individuals who complete the program with the knowledge and understanding that allows them to feel confident and well-prepared for their role. The curriculum addresses the following:

- The psychology of group travel
- Working with a tour director or a tour guide, and the differences between the two
- How to work with the motor-

coach driver

- How to work with suppliers
- How to deal with disabled participants
- How to effectively navigate unexpected and challenging situations

During the course, much of which will take place on a motorcoach, the group leader will learn everything he or she needs to know to assure all tour participants enjoy a safe and positive experience, says Bravos.

The motorcoach classes, which will be limited to 10-12 students, will be in Northern California.

Besides the two days of on-bus field trip classes, which include an overnight stay, the program involves three, one-hour webinars, and a one-hour post field trip webinar.

Tuition for the certification program is \$595. The fee does not include travel to San Francisco or one- or two-night stays, in San Francisco.

The program will be conducted monthly.

For more information, go to [www.itmtourtraining.com](http://www.itmtourtraining.com), or call (415) 957-9489.

## MCI rallies showcase technologies

DES PLAINES, Ill. — Motor Coach Industries is hosting a series of customer events at auto race tracks and major sports stadiums around the country this spring and summer.

The MCI Reliability Rallies will serve as launch sites for new axle, suspension and brake technologies that will be offered on MCI J4500 and D-series coaches

later this year.

The rallies will feature test rides, supplier booths, training sessions and lunch.

The events also will showcase the latest Setra coaches; a selection used coaches, and parts and MCI Service Center promotions.

MCI will introduce a new ZF axle and independent suspension designed to reduce the turning ra-

dus of a J4500 MCI coach from 47 feet to just under 41 feet. Also new is a Bendix air disc brake and adaptive cruise control.

Adaptive cruise control monitors a coach's position behind other vehicles and automatically reduces the throttle or applies the brakes to maintain safe following distances.

MCI has nine coaches, featuring the ZF and Bendix systems, in field tests with larger operators across the U.S.

The rallies and test drives will be April 30 at Texas Motor Speedway in Ft. Worth; May 22 at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Ill.; June 4 at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass.; June 11 at the Sands Resort & Casino in Bethlehem, Pa.; June 26 at Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Ga., and July 8 at AT&T Park in San Francisco.

Each event will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Learn more at [www.mcicoach.com](http://www.mcicoach.com).

### Fatigue

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

sleep opportunity" to 6.5 hours. Investigators could not determine how much of that time may have been spent sleeping and it was "unlikely he could have obtained prolonged, restorative sleep."

### Upside down

Investigators wrote that his "inverted sleep schedule" of working night hours and sleeping during the day "was not optimal. Inverted sleep schedules have been shown to have a negative impact

## Miami stadium is target of restoration program

MIAMI — Tourism Cares annual spring clean-up/restoration event will be May 29-30 in Miami.

The travel industry philanthropic group continues its legacy of community service by helping a local group restore Miami Marine Stadium, a Florida landmark and considered by many to be a modern architectural masterpiece.

Built in 1963 on Biscayne Bay, the 6,566-seat stadium, noted for its cantilevered concrete roof, fell into disuse after Hurricane Andrew in August 1992, and had been slated for demolition.

In 2010, the World Monuments Fund placed the stadium on its list of significant and endangered sites and, two years later, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named it a "national treasure."

Anyone in the travel and tourism industry can join hundreds of volunteers who will work to rejuvenate key parts of the stadium, as well as sites within the Virginia Key area, during the two-day event.

To join Tourism Cares in Miami, go to [www.tourismcares.com](http://www.tourismcares.com), or call Jessica Ahern at (781) 821-5990, ext. 212.

on sleep quality and quantity."

In addition, the report stated, "The accident occurred at 4:55 a.m., nearly the midpoint of the lowest ebb of the circadian cycle."

Because Cheung already knew he was tired and continued to drive, "technologies designed to alert drivers to their diminished performance would have had only limited benefit...To keep its fatigued drivers off the road, a motor carrier must provide appropriate guidance and exercise reasonable safety oversight. Sky Express did not have a fatigue management program and did not educate its drivers about the

dangers of fatigue."

Sky Express had no written safety policies until the month preceding the accident. NTSB also said it had no office or terminal. The Charlotte address used in official paperwork was the home of a secretary.


Cheung was tried in Caroline County, Va., Circuit Court in November 2012. His attorney called the crash a "horrendous accident" rather than the result of criminal negligence. Cheung was found guilty of four counts of involuntary manslaughter and later sentenced to six years in prison.

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**PREVOST**



# Reliability Rally

## Rally around MCI's and Setra's latest equipment and technology



Looking to put a new MCI or Setra coach through the paces? Race on down to a speedway or stadium near you, and join the MCI Reliability Rally. Our big spring-summer test-ride event is your best chance to get a look at what's new:

- ▶ **The best-selling MCI J4500, introducing our upcoming, tight-turning ZF axle, independent front suspension, and Bendix braking with available adaptive cruise control.**
- ▶ **The luxurious, custom-tailored Setra S 417 with second door and club corner.**
- ▶ **The latest, greatest pre-owned coaches, priced to sell.**
- ▶ **Supplier showcase, featuring system updates and maintenance tips from key vendors.**
- ▶ **Lunch, giveaways and prizes.**

Plus, our top technical troubleshooters, parts reps and other MCI team members will be on hand to answer your questions, lead educational sessions and more. This event has something for everyone, from business owners to drivers and technicians. So bring your team, mark your calendars, and start your engines!



### **Join MCI at one of these Reliability Rally locations:**

**Texas Motor Speedway, Ft. Worth, TX**  
Wednesday, April 30

**Chicagoland Speedway, Joliet, IL**  
Thursday, May 22

**Gillette Stadium, Foxboro, MA**  
Wednesday, June 4

**Sands Resort & Casino, Bethlehem, PA**  
Wednesday, June 11

**Atlanta Motor Speedway, Hampton, GA**  
Thursday, June 26

**AT&T Park, San Francisco, CA**  
Tuesday, July 8



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