



Palmetto Progress

Motorcoach Association of South Carolina

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Fall 2008

President's Letter

Walter Bryant, Jr.

Bryant Tours, LLC
North Charleston, SC

Merry Christmas! It is the holiday season. In fact, by the time you read this message, the holidays will be upon us. I wish you all a joyous Christmas holiday and a happy, prosperous new year.

MCASC has some great plans for the New Year including the annual coach rodeo, which will be held in Myrtle Beach February 24. I encourage all operator members to participate, either by sending drivers to compete in the written tests and driving skills and/or to join fellow members to observe and assist with the many tasks to assure a successful event. At this writing, we're still working with **Sandy Haines** with the Myrtle Beach CVB to confirm details, but already MCASC members in Myrtle Beach are volunteering to help make the 7th Rodeo a great event.

The Planning Committee for the Annual Meeting is at work also. **Cricket Elliott** with the Atlanta's Gwinnett CVB has had great success with MCASC's Atlanta area members and the CVB partners to create a memorable annual meeting and market place hosted by the Marriott Gwinnett Place August 23-27.

MCASC IS GOING GREEN!

MCASC will publish the newsletter online beginning with this Issue. You will receive an email with a link to the website page containing the newsletter.

Members

MCASC Renewal Invoices will be mailed in January with a deadline of April 1, 2009.

More details of the Annual Rodeo and the Annual Meeting and Market Place will be posted on the MCASC website. Visit online at www.scmotorcoach.org occasionally to keep up to date on these events.

I am pleased to announce that MCASC is going green, or at least greener! With this issue of the newsletter, members will now receive this publication online. Printing and postage make up a large portion of the budget and in addition to saving paper, which impacts our environment in several ways, MCASC will save dollars. All members will receive the newsletter electronically. If the MCASC data base does not have an email address for you, then you will receive a printed copy.

Committee chairmen are at work to accomplish tasks and goals for the Association in 2009. If you would like to serve on a committee, please let Linda or me know. The standing committees are listed on the website.

It is hard to believe that another year is coming to an end. The uncertain economy is a concern for all of us. What will 2009 bring? I know that some operators are contemplating new areas for their business, but I fear that many are not. It is time to assess where you are and where

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ATTRACTION

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Changes

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5-STAR TRANSPORTATION

6 Coaches Operated

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President's Letter

Continued from Cover

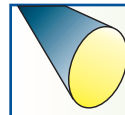
you want to be. This industry is a wonderful industry, one of few that give you the reward of seeing the face of a child who is experiencing something or someplace for the first time or see the face of a senior who has limited income but can enjoy a motorcoach vacation. It is also an industry that with creativity can provide income when the number of tours and charters are down. Be aware of your community transportation needs. Don't allow the local transit to take business that is rightfully, legally yours as a private carrier. Do you have a garage? Are you opening it up to other operators who do not have maintenance facilities? Time nor space allows me to get more detailed here, but this will be a topic at the annual coach roadeo. If you have ventured *outside the box*, please come and share your ideas. The way I see it, we're all in this business together. With the current economic uncertainty, maybe there has not been a better time when we have needed to support one another.

Other opportunities are coming up! Try to attend the American Bus Association Marketplace January 7-12 and the Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators meeting in Orlando January 19-21 followed by the UMA Expo. Information about the Southeastern meeting is posted on the MCASC website.

This season is an exciting time of the year. The lighted trees, decorations, gifts, and holiday music all lift our spirits. I hope that you take time to consider our military serving abroad, many in life threatening circumstances, who are making it possible for us to enjoy the freedom to celebrate Christmas. I hope you will consider those who are less fortunate and share your blessings.

Again, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Walter Bryant, Jr.



Member in the Spotlight: Columbia Museum of Art

It is with great pleasure that the Columbia Museum of Art welcomes **Turner**



to Cézanne: Masterpieces from the Davies Collection, National Museum Wales on Friday, March 6 through June 7, 2009. National Museum Wales counts among its treasures the Davies Collection, an extraordinary group of 19th - and 20th - century paintings, remarkable for its beauty, breadth, and quality- that are particularly rich in Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works that helped shape the course of Western art. *Turner to Cézanne* features 53 remarkable works of art- on view for the first time in the United States. The National Museum Wales is known for having one of the finest Impressionist collections in Europe. *House and Garden*



Waterlilies

magazine said the collection is "possibly the most ravishing display in Britain." The exhibition will travel to only five venues and the Columbia Museum of Art is the first- a coveted spot of an international exhibition tour. Some highlights of the exhibition include: Turner's *The Storm*, Renoir's famous *La Parisienne* that was included in the show of Impression in 1874, a Monet *Waterlilies*, van Gogh's *Rain-Auvers*, painted during the last of the artist's life and Cézanne's landscape *The François Zola Dam*.

I want you to know about the exhibition to make the most of a Columbia visit. The Museum is a great place for group excursions and is fully accessible. Groups of 10 or more save \$3 off the \$15 ticket fee. To assure the best possible visit, we ask that all groups schedule their visit in advance. The group tours manager can advise you on the best days and times to avoid peak hours. Your reservation can be made now by calling 803-343-2209.



The François Zola Dam

Again, we are so honored to be the first venue in America to show this noteworthy exhibition, organized by the American Federation of Arts and National Museum Wales and sponsored in Columbia by the Blanchard Family. We are looking forward to welcoming many visitors to Columbia to see this extraordinary show.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Karen Brosius at 803-343-2216 or email kbrosius@columbiamuseum.org.

Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators Meeting January 19-21, 2009

Tentative Schedule of Events

Monday, January 19

3:00 - 6:00 Registration
 4:30 - 6:00 Welcome/Introduction/Networking
 FMCSA Update
 Topics: Regulations, Pre- and Post- Trip Inspections
 Speaker: **Cynthia Witty, FMCSA**
 6:00 - 6:30 State Association Current Activities and
 Issues/Greatest Challenges

Operators from each state should come prepared to share information.

6:45 Leave for Sleuths Mystery Dinner Show
Sponsored by Sleuths Mystery Dinner Show

Tuesday, January 20

8:00 - 3:00 Registration
Staff will collect questions for panel discussion, state issues or other topics.

8:30 - 9:30 Networking Breakfast
Sponsored by Allen Insurance Group

9:30 - 12:00 Review and Prioritization of topics for
 round table discussion
 Panel Discussion of Vehicle Specific Issues
 Moderator: **Scott Merriman, Scenic America (VMA)**

Panelists: **Engine and Coach Manufacturers**

12:00 - 1:00 Networking Lunch
 Industry Comment: **Peter Pantuso, American Bus Association**
Partially sponsored by American Bus Association

1:00 - 2:00 Workshop: Grants/How to Apply
 and What is Available?

Invited Speaker: **Brandon Buchanan, ABA**

3:00 - 3:30 Break
Break sponsored by Florida Motorcoach Association

3:30 - 4:30 Workshop: In-House Safety Program
 Speaker: **Tim O'Bryan, Service Insurance Agency**

4:30 - 5:30 Workshop: Cost of Tour/Charter Service
 Speaker: **Ken Presley, United Motorcoach Association**
 6:30 Dinner

(Plans are not yet complete. All who register to attend the meeting will be notified of dinner plans.)

Wednesday, January 21

8:30 - 9:30 Networking Breakfast
 Industry Comment: **Vic Parra, United Motorcoach Association**

Topic: Hurricane Evacuation Issues

Invited **Representatives of Transportation
 Management Services, Federal
 Emergency Management Agency; Texas, Louisiana,
 Alabama, and Mississippi Emergency Management.**

*Partially sponsored by United Motorcoach Association
 Refreshments sponsored by Florida Motorcoach Association*

11:30 - 12:00 Wrap Up/Evaluation

Which is Correct- Bus or Motorcoach?

Written by Eron Shosteck, Senior Vice President, Communications, Marketing and Media Relations for the American Bus Association. Reprinted from Destinations magazine. Issue June 2008, Volume 30, Number 3.

Do you refer to your fleet as buses or motorcoaches? It's not a trick question, or one with only one correct answer. But it can be a tricky question. And both answers may be correct, depending on the situation and the audience.

The bus boosters point out that there's no better way to convince policy-makers at all levels of government of the need to us as part of the transportation solution than by showing how we provide the same benefits to society as transit buses. From taking cars off the road, to saving energy, to cutting carbon dioxide emissions, we benefit the country as much- if not more- than other modes, with little or no subsidies. So, the thinking goes, we should make people treat us fairly by embracing what we are: the bus industry. The American Bus Association is our name, after all.

Start calling ourselves motorcoaches and we immediately risk distancing ourselves from the rest of the pack with which we are working so diligently to achieve fair treatment. "Motorcoach" immediately implies "private industry," and why choose a long work when we have a perfectly good short one? Bus is three letters; it's simple, it fits into headlines and got us where we are. Change it and you face the hurdle of overcoming a new set of challenges, starting with explaining why we chose a name that isn't universally recognized as "bus." And some might think it's similar to when used cars repackaged themselves as "certified pre-owned vehicles."

But the motorcoach advocates counter: that is exactly the point we're arguing. Used luxury cars saw unprecedented success once they rebranded themselves as CPO vehicles. Without a distinct identity, over-the-road buses are too easily confused with transit and school buses, according to the motorcoach moguls. We need to use "motorcoach" to successfully appeal to modern, upscale-minded customers. It's the ticket to repositioning ourselves in the marketplace of consumer opinion. Today's amenity-laden motorcoaches, with DVD players and leather seats, must be given a new identity to attract new customers and properly reflect the luxurious experience they offer the modern traveler.

The industry has changed. Consumer tastes have changed. We won't get new travelers in large numbers unless we show them that today's motorcoaches are luxurious, offer many creature comforts and pamper the rider. With no middle seat syndrome.

So who's right? Bus backers or motorcoach maestros? Both are. How is that possible? Because for certain audiences, we're buses. Government officials, legislators and regulators need to see us as an antidote to gridlock,

foreign oil dependency and just as critical to removing cars from clogged roads as buses to operated by transit agencies. Rural Americans who rely on bus service, because they live far from rail hubs and airports, need to know we're still the most hassle-free, affordable and cost-effective way to move groups of travelers from Point A to Point B.

But to the upwardly mobile consumer, whom we all know will become loyal customers once they experience their first motorcoach trip, we've got to change our image- or they won't ever take that first trip. So in marketing, advertising, partnerships with attractions and with the media, we're motorcoaches. With the media in particular, nothing convinces a reporter more of a shift in consumer trends than the recasting of an old product or service in a new way. Consider the following hypothetical headlines: "New Travel Trends Finds More Choosing Motorcoaches" and "New Travel Trends Find More Choosing Buses." The first sounds like a revolution in the making; the second sounds like phony and hard to believe.

Ultimately individual tour and bus- uh, motorcoach- operators will decide for themselves. But there's no law against using bus for one audience and motorcoach for another. Politicians tailor speeches based on their audiences all the time. Retailers too. And if anyone ever wonders why you're using different terms at different times, the answer is simple: Since bus boosters and motorcoach mavens feel so strongly about one term over the other, we're just trying to keep everyone happy. Isn't that part of customer service?

A Less Traveled Road Americans drive less, highway funds decline

Reprinted from Bus and Motorcoach News, a publication of the United Motorcoach Association, December 15, 2008, Issue No. 137.

The federal Highway Trust Fund, the U.S. government's primary source for financing highway, bridge and transit projects, took in \$3 billion less in fiscal 2008, as Americans drove 90 billion fewer miles, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters reported.

The trend underscores the need to find a new way to finance transportation projects in America, she added.

"Our current approach has us encouraging Americans to change their driving habits and burn less fuel while secretly hoping they drive more so we can finance new bridges, repair interstates and expand transit systems," said Peters.

"We need a new approach that complements, instead of contradicts, our energy policies and infrastructure needs."

Peters pointed out that Americans drove 4.4 percent less, or 10.7 billion fewer vehicle miles traveled, in September 2008 than September 2007, the 11th straight month of declining driving.

The trend is most evident in rural interstate travel, which fell by 8 percent that month, while urban interstate travel declined by 3.9 percent.

As a result of the continued decline in roadway travel, the Highway Trust Fund, which is primarily funded through federal fuel tax receipts, collected \$31 billion in revenue between October 2007 and September 2008 - \$3 billion less than it collected the previous year, while federal transportation spending increased by \$2 billion.

Peters noted that, if the trend continues, the Highway Trust Fund may experience another shortfall sooner than expected. For this reason, she again urged Congress to fundamentally change the nation's approach to financing and managing transportation systems.

Why Sales Don't Close... 9 Common Mistakes

Excerpt from "Bright Ideas! - Read time - 2 minutes or less," E-newsletter by Arnow Sanow, MBA, CSP, speaker, seminar leader and author. Visit www.arnoldsanow.com -- speaker@arnoldsanow.com or 703-255-3133.

Closing sales is an art not a science. Everything we do from our communication style, our dress, to our understanding of the customer's wants and needs can affect our success or failure in closing sales. The way you close a sale depends as much on the product/service you're selling as it does the customer you're dealing with. There are many reasons why sales don't close ... here are 9 of the most common mistakes.

1. Not asking questions: By understanding the customer we can focus on the right products and services to offer.
2. Not communicating in the communication ingredients important to the customer.
3. Interrupting the prospect: By interrupting we may miss what benefits the customer is really seeking.
4. Not paying attention to the prospect.
5. Showing no empathy or sympathy:
Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
6. Not selling benefits - only features.
7. Pressuring prospects.
8. Misleading body language: 93% of the message that others perceive from you is based on your body language and tone of voice.
9. Failure to listen.
To become an active listener follow these rules:
Limit your own talking
Concentrate on the person who is talking
Don't interrupt
Paraphrase what has been said
Talk in a conducive setting
See things from the other person's viewpoint
Notice nonverbal communication
Don't just think of what you are going to say next
Don't prejudge.

7th Annual Coach Rodeo hosted by Myrtle Beach

The Special Projects Committee is busy getting details finalized for the 7th Annual Coach Rodeo which will be held in Myrtle Beach February 24. **Johnny Cauley** (Jean's Bus Service) is chairman of the committee and members include **Bob Garrett, Sandy Haines, Brian Pinckney, Rob Lambert, Chapel Davis, Charles Palmer, and Nick Nicholson**. Below is a tentative schedule. All details are not finalized at this date, but the schedule will give you some idea to plan your participation.

Tentative plans also include a safety education session for drivers. This session will likely be held during the driving skills portion allowing the drivers to participate while they not driving.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this special MCASC event. It is fun and greatly enjoyed by all who attend. It is a time when operators and drivers can bring their family if they wish.

Tentative Schedule

Host Hotel to be determined.

February 23, 2009

2:00 – 4:00 Education Session for Operators

Featured Speaker: Jack Burkert, Safety Consultant

4:15- 6:15 Board of Directors Meeting

This serves as notice to all operator members. All operator members are invited to attend and observe.

6:30 Board coach for social event.

6:45 Social

Sponsored by Ripley's Aquarium

7:30 Board coach for dinner event

8:00 Dinner –

Sponsored by Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville

February 24, 2009

9:00 – 12:00 Registration

A commemorative T-shirt will be given to all who attend. The T-shirt, cash awards and plaques are sponsored by MCASC's coach members.

9:00 – 9:30 Continental breakfast for rodeo participants

10:00 – 11:00 Written test for drivers and mechanics

11:00 Hotel Check out. Drive to Hard Rock.

11:30 – 12:30 Orientation for driving course for drivers and judges at Hard Rock

12:30 Lunch

Partially Sponsored by Hard Rock Café

1:30 – 5:00 Driving Skills Test in the Hard Rock Café Parking Lot

Refreshments provided.

5:30-6:30 Awards presentation at Hard Rock Café

Refreshments sponsored by Hard Rock Café

DeKalb Tourism Academy Celebrates 1,000th Graduate

DeKalb Convention & Visitor Bureau (DCVB) is celebrating its 1,000th graduate from the DeKalb Tourism Academy. Vincent Howard, Assistant General Manager of the Hampton Inn at Northlake, received his certificate from Gary Greenhut, DCVB Chief Operating Officer. Other Tourism Academy graduates from the Hampton Inn at Northlake include Linda Taylor, Director of Sales; Falishia Ali, Front Desk Clerk and John Hardman, Night Auditor. Peggy Berg, Owner of the Hampton Inn at Northlake, was on hand to personally present each graduate with a DeKalb Tourism Academy pin.

"The DeKalb Tourism Academy is a free program designed to provide training to hospitality employees" stated Greenhut. "The international award-winning program has reached a milestone and we want to recognize Vincent Howard as the 1,000th graduate and encourage more hospitality employers to look into the free workshops and classes being offered at DCVB," said Greenhut.

Howard said he enrolled in the program to gain better knowledge of the DeKalb County. He moved to DeKalb County three years ago from Augusta. He said the knowledge he gained from the seminars and workshops have helped him to be more confident when welcoming hotel guests.

The Academy was initiated in 1999 as a tourism certification program to educate hospitality employees about DeKalb County's assets. All the classes are presented by engaging guest speakers who are veterans of the hospitality industry. Classes include: Customer Service Training, Motivation Workshop, Sales Techniques Seminar, DeKalb Assets class and culminate with a FAM tour of DeKalb County.

For more information about the DeKalb Tourism Academy classes and workshops, including pre-registration call (770) 492-5020 or visit www.dcvb.org.

DCVB is a marketing organization that promotes DeKalb County as a tourism destination. The Bureau provides travelers with free information and assistance.

Mark your calendar!

2009 MCASC Annual Meeting & Market Place

August 23 - 27

at the Marriott Gwinnett Place in Atlanta, Georgia!

FMCSA “Safety Information For Bus and Motorcoach Passengers”

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, has developed outreach materials to assist bus and motorcoach companies in providing pre-trip safety information to their passengers.

Bus and motorcoach companies are strongly encouraged to provide these or similar materials about emergency and safety features of their vehicles to passengers before every trip.

The pre-trip safety materials include:

- * An audio file containing passenger safety instructions;
- * A brochure on how to use the emergency window equipped with a pull handle;
- * A brochure on how to use the emergency window equipped with a lift handle;
- * A full color displayable poster with passenger safety information.

These materials can be downloaded at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about.outreach/bus/bus.htm>.

Bus and passenger companies should provide the following information:

Inform passengers to:

- * Stay seated while the vehicle is in motion;
- * Not to block the center aisle;
- * Follow all safety instructions made by the driver;
- * Notify authorities of an emergency by using a cellular phone to call 911;
- * Be aware that there is a fire extinguisher on board the vehicle. It will be located behind the driver’s seat or beneath the front row passenger’s seat, or in the front-most overhead compartment;
- * Remember that the primary exit from vehicle is the same door at the front through which they entered.
- * Be aware that in an extreme emergency situation, the windows can also serve as exits. Follow the instructions/markings on the windows or the window frames.
- * Be aware that there is an emergency exit hatch in the roof above the center aisle.
- * Ask the driver if there are any questions about the safety procedures on the vehicle.

Possible methods of presenting bus and motorcoach pre-trip safety information:

- * Distribute informational brochures at time of ticket purchase or during boarding.
- * Following passenger boarding and immediately prior to movement of the vehicle, advise passengers of safety precautions.
- * A pre-recorded safety message is broadcast over the bus or motorcoach audio system.

For more information visit <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>.

FMCSA Improves Medical Requirements for Commercial Truck and Bus Drivers

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) recently took new steps toward improving standards and setting uniform requirements for medical examiners, while also finalizing a streamlined process for combining the commercial drivers license (CDL) and medical certificate records for commercial truck and bus drivers operating on the nation’s roads.

“While we have made significant improvements in motor carrier safety, these actions will support and strengthen our continuing commitment to ensure that only medically qualified individuals are allowed to operate an interstate truck or bus. Safety is our paramount responsibility,” FMCSA Administrator John H. Hill said.

FMCSA issued a final rule that will require states to merge the commercial driver’s license (CDL) and the driver’s medical examination certificate into a single electronic record. When fully implemented, the new combined CDL will streamline record keeping obligations for the states and CDL holders, while providing instant electronic access to the CDL holder’s medical certificate by state and federal enforcement officials.

In addition, the rule requires states to take enforcement actions against CDL holders if they do not provide medical certification status information within the deadline.

FMCSA also issued a related rulemaking that would establish a National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners to ensure that physical qualification examinations of CDL holders are performed by qualified medical practitioners and are administered in a uniform and consistent manner. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners would create certification standards, including a training and testing program, and a National Registry of medical examiners who are qualified to conduct examinations of interstate truck and bus drivers.

The proposal would require the medical examiner to electronically transmit to FMCSA the name and a numerical identifier for each driver who is examined. The proposal also would create a process by which medical examiners who fail to meet or maintain the minimum standards would be removed from the National Registry.

The NPRM for the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners can be found at www.regulations.gov, docket number FMCSA-2008-0363. Public comments on the proposal should be submitted by January 30, 2009.

The final rule on Medical Certification Requirements as Part of the CDL is available for review at www.fmcsa.dot.gov. *While the rule will be effective January 30, 2009, there will be a phase in period with complete implementation scheduled for 2012.*

ABA Urges Government Crackdown, Enforcement Effort Targeting Rogue Operators

The American Bus Association (ABA) today urged an unprecedented government crackdown on rogue bus operators who are imperiling public safety because of their criminal activities and lax law enforcement.

“Safety begins long before any rider steps aboard a motorcoach,” ABA President & CEO Peter J. Pantuso said. “It starts with enforcing the law against criminal rogue bus companies. But it’s not enough to just revoke their operating authority.

10-point Plan To Stop Illegal Operators

The lives lost attributable to unsafe and illegal bus operations over the past decade is appalling. These operators destroy families, and destroy the reputation of safe companies. The government cannot continue to put the public at risk from rogue bus companies.

- The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) must **strengthen the current new entrant inspection program** by verifying that the business address provided on any licensing forms matches the physical location of the bus facility.
- FMCSA must determine each new bus company's fitness to operate **before the first passenger ever boards, including rigorous review of the operator’s safety program, on-site inspection of the operator’s vehicles, and other preventive measures.**
- FMCSA must **use procedures identical to the one that the Department of Defense applies to passenger carriers before any carrier can move military personnel.**
- **Immediately implement and enforce provisions of the last highway reauthorization legislation (SAFETEA-LU), requiring the identification of company officers,** from the owner to the maintenance supervisor, to determine if the individual(s) have a past history of unsafe operations, and halt licensing if there is evidence of unsafe practices.
- **The FMCSA must withhold a portion of state Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) grant funds from states that do not have adequate safety inspection programs for buses.** States currently receive MCSAP grants totaling \$300 million annually for their motor carrier safety enforcement programs, and yet bus operational safety is virtually ignored in most jurisdictions.
- **Enforce the Unified Carrier Registration provisions requiring all private motor carriers of passengers (PMCP) to register.** The FMCSA, through the state licensing agencies, must inform all PCMPs that they are absolutely prohibited from operating charters or tours outside of the area(s) authorized through their PCMP authority.

- The FMCSA should immediately implement and enforce the authority Congress provided under SAFETEA-LU to have **states revoke a carrier’s intrastate operating authority if the FMCSA revokes its interstate rights as an imminent public safety hazard.**
- If a carrier's operating authority is revoked, the state should immediately be informed, and **state commercial carrier enforcement officers should then visit the carrier’s property to determine that the order is being complied with and impound the vehicle(s) and secure the premises if necessary.**
- Passenger carriers engaging in unsafe interstate commerce operations, as determined by post-crash investigations where fatalities or serious injuries have occurred, should be **charged with federal crimes and prosecuted to the maximum extent of the law.**
- The Department of Transportation should launch a **public awareness campaign** to inform the public about how to choose a safe bus company for their transportation needs.

MCI To Restructure With Pre-Negotiated Chapter 11 Filing

Motor Coach Industries (MCI) announced Sept. 15 that the company has reached agreement with its secured lenders regarding a restructuring that will substantially reduce the company’s debt.

The pre-negotiated chapter 11 filing is expected to have no impact on the company’s production facilities, delivery schedules, after-sale parts availability or service centers. During the chapter 11 process, vendors should expect to be paid for post-petition purchases of goods and services in the ordinary course of business. The filing pertains only to MCI’s operations in the United States. The Company’s Canadian operations are not included in the filing.

“Our core business is sound,” said MCI President & CEO Tom Sorrells, an ABA Board Member. “We are receiving and processing orders as usual and existing orders will be delivered as scheduled. Our production operations, delivery schedules and customer service functions will continue without interruption. With a solid financial foundation, our intention is to move quickly through the chapter 11 process and emerge by February 2009.”

ABA Forms New Environmental Committee

ABA has officially added a new Environmental Committee to elevate awareness among policymakers that motorcoaches are the greenest way to travel, to provide tools for members to use when engaging their local officials or marketing to potential new customers, to increase visibility among the media, and to educate eco-conscious consumers seeking earth-friendly travel options.

Which will be chaired by ABA Board Member Darren Berg, CEO of MTR Western in Seattle.

Texas Congresswoman Introduces Two Bus Safety Bills

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) has introduced two bills on bus safety. The first would require states to mandate annual inspections of vehicles or face the loss of federal funds; the second would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to establish sanctions against any employer whose employee is convicted of drug and alcohol violations.

The first bill requires that seat belts be one of the inspection criteria; the second appears to put an employer in jeopardy even if the employer is complying with the DOT drug and alcohol testing requirements. Both bills have been referred to the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. ABA will monitor these bills.

Littler is Chairman Of Highway & Motor Carrier Security Group

ABA's VP for Regulatory & Industry Affairs Norm Littler is the new incoming Chairman of the Highway Motor Carrier Sector Coordinating Council, the private sector advisory group to the DHS on all matters relating to commercial transportation, highways, roads, and bridges.

The Coordinating Council is charged with the responsibility of advising DHS and other government agencies by drawing on the intellectual capital of industry experts.

It also provides points of contact within the industry for quick responses. Littler will work with 17 sector liaisons to advise top DHS officials.

New ABA-Landmark Partnership Cuts Credit Card Costs

ABA has partnered with Landmark Merchant Solutions to bring members a provider for your credit card, debit card, gift card, and check guarantee processing. This is a program designed to save members money and positively affect their bottom lines.

Call Landmark at 800-314-5390 for more information.

Motorcoach Council Reaches \$100K Fundraising Milestone

The Motorcoach Council Inc. has just surpassed a key fundraising milestone for its consumer awareness campaign—the \$100,000 mark. That will help launch the ambitious agenda of the Council, which aims to target consumers directly with its advertising efforts to fill more seats on every motorcoach.

“The council intends to work harmoniously with the national and state associations. The council plans a robust advocacy campaign including bus wraps acting as “rolling billboards” that will focus on everything from the

environmental message to the luxury amenities offered on today's coaches.

The group has been actively fundraising and signing up Founding Partners for the cause. Their achievement of \$100,000 worth of donations either received or pledged includes commitments or cash from manufacturers, operators, state associations and others.

Motor Coach Industries has donated a whopping \$40,000 to the group, Horton said. ABC Companies, Prevost and Setra have committed \$10,000 apiece.

And 22 operators have donated \$2,000 each, as have the South Central Motorcoach Association and the Florida Motorcoach Association. Even Wells Fargo and Transportation Insurance Brokers have joined.

“ABA supports the goals of the Motorcoach Council in reaching new groups of riders that will fill more seats on buses,” said ABA President & CEO Peter Pantuso. “We support any effort designed to help elevate the industry's image and the motorcoach travel choice among consumers.”

Updated MJ Bradley Study Shows Motorcoaches Offer Best Fuel Efficiency

The new 2008 MJ Bradley & Associates study on “Updated Comparison of Energy Use & Emissions From Different Transportation Modes” shows that motorcoaches are even more fuel-efficient than previously thought, offering a whopping 206.6 passenger miles per gallon, compared to 184 passenger MPG in the previous study from 2007.

“On average, motor coaches use the least amount of energy and produce the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per passenger mile of any of the transportation modes analyzed,” the study confirms. Private autos averaged 22.4 MPG, SUVs 15 MPG, and hybrid cars 46 MPG.

NTSB Safety “Most Wanted List” Targets Coach Driver Cell Phone Use, EOBRs

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) just issued its 2009 Federal Most Wanted List of safety improvements, adding restricting the use of cell phones by motorcoach drivers and requiring Electronic On-Board Recorders (EOBRs) for all motor carriers to its 15 areas of concern.

The Board cited research showing that using a cellular telephone while driving a motorcoach degrades driving performance, resulting in slower reaction times, slower driving speeds, and increased instances of attention lapses.

The NTSB called for requiring EOBRs to “maintain accurate carrier records on driver hours of service and accident conditions,” a policy it has advocated for three decades.

Additionally, items of interest on the list affecting motorcoach operators are “Prevent Medically Unqualified Drivers from Operating Commercial Vehicles,” “Enhance Protection for Motorcoach Passengers,” and “Prevent Collisions by Using Enhanced Vehicle Safety Technology.”

Industry Seeks To Block Far-reaching Seatbelt Bill

Lobbyists for the motorcoach industry are trying to head off legislation in the U.S. Senate that would require all motorcoach companies to install seatbelts in all of their buses.

The draconian Senate bill was introduced 11 months ago but had been marking time until two deadly motorcoach crashes in August moved it onto the front burner. (See Sept. 1 Bus & Motorcoach News.)

A subcommittee of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee conducted a hearing on the measure in mid-September and a representative of the coach industry told senators that operators could not afford the bill's mandates, and that it made no sense to impose such a tough requirement on the industry without rigorous testing.

While the seatbelt requirement in the Senate bill is bad enough, the measure also would mandate additional safety technology, such as interior impact protection, rollover and stability control systems, flammability reduction, improved window glazing, collision avoidance equipment, and electronic onboard recorders. (See Dec. 1 Bus & Motorcoach News.)

Additionally, the bill would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to:

Inspect all bus operators and assign each a safety rating at least every three years.

Establish a training curriculum for drivers to be adopted by state and local governments. Any driver seeking a commercial driver's license would need to attend a training program with one of the approved curricula.

Both the United Motorcoach and American Bus associations are working to head off the bill.

UCRA Registration For 2009 Begins

Most states that are members of the United Carrier Registration Agreement have agreed to begin enforcing payment of 2009 UCRA fees on Jan. 1.

That deadline is earlier than has typically been the case since the UCRA system went into effect two years ago.

The Unified Carrier Registration Agreement is the federally-adopted process that replaced the old Single State Registration System. UCRA has a per carrier-based fee structure that is the same for all member states. Coach operators no longer have to pick and choose states, as they did with the SSRS. One fee covers all states.

Indiana, which administers the national on-line system through which most interstate motor carriers pay their UCRA fees, has readied its system to begin accepting 2009 registrations. Fees for next year are the same as those for both 2007 and 2008.

Fake USDOT Letters Are Showing Up Once Again

Official looking but phony letters seeking financial information from motor carriers have surfaced again.

The Indiana State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division has issued a new warning to commercial carriers based in that state about attempts to gain access to company information under false pretenses.

An auditor assigned to the division found a fraudulent document while auditing a business in Auburn, Ind., the warning said.

The sender of the letter portrays itself, falsely, as a branch of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. A U.S. Department of Transportation website notes more than 20 similar cases have occurred elsewhere.

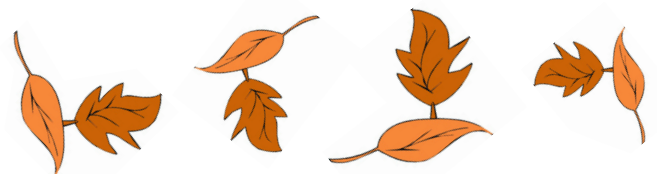
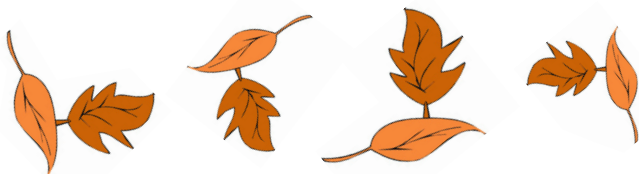
A motorcoach operator in Minnesota received one of the phony letters earlier this year. (See Feb. 15 Bus & Motorcoach News.)

In the Indiana case, the "authorization to release financial information" document appeared to be written on official USDOT letterhead and asked for company financial records, documents and security numbers.

The letter said the DOT did not have the proper paperwork and the oversight needed to be rectified by November 2008 for calendar 2009.

Two websites have been set up by the FMCSA to warn businesses about such scams, www.dot.gov/ost/m60/fraudulent_letters.htm and <http://www.oig.dot.gov/item.jsp?id=2353>.

Operators should go to one of the FMCSA websites and/or contact the United Motorcoach Association.



MCASC Newsletter Advertising Form

Putting your advertisement in the MCASC Newsletter gets you right in touch with motorcoach companies in South Carolina. We invite you to use this form to contract for your ad space. The costs are as follows:

One Issue:

	Black & White	Color
1/4 page:	\$150	\$275
1/2 page:	\$225	\$425
Full page:	\$350	\$650

Advertising is also offered at a yearly rate (4 issues):

	Black & White	Color
1/4 Page:	\$350	\$800
1/2 Page:	\$550	\$1250
Full Page:	\$1050	\$2150

The ad should be received as a .JPEG or .TIFF file with a resolution of 350 or higher, or a PDF file with embedded font files and Macintosh compatible. A disk is preferred and should be accompanied by a "hard copy." The disk will be returned only at your request. Ads may also be emailed to angie_g@embarqmail.com, with a hard copy mailed to the MCASC office. If there is a question about format please contact Angie at the MCASC office at 888.376.1150 or email angie_g@embarqmail.com.

Space Dimensions:

1/4 page: 3.5" wide x 4" tall
1/2 page: 7.5" wide x 4" tall
Full page: 7.5" wide x 10" tall

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Company: _____

Mailing Address: _____
City State Zip Code

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Make check payable to the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina and mail with hard copy to:
Angie Reynolds Glass, MCASC Office, 106 Main Street, Brookneal, VA 24528
Questions: 888.376.1150 or FAX: 866.376.1156 or Email: angie_g@embarqmail.com

Calendar



ABA Marketplace
January 7 - 12, 2009
Charlotte, North Carolina



Southeastern Regional Operators Meeting
January 19 - 21, 2009
Orlando, Florida



UMA Motorcoach Expo
January 21 - 25, 2009
Orlando, Florida

MCASC Annual Coach Rodeo
February 23-24, 2009
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

MCASC Annual Meeting & Market Place
August 23-27, 2009
Marriott Gwinnett Place, Atlanta, Georgia

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