



AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

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Did You Know?

Philadelphia Marketplace 2011 registration and housing is now open.

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Policy Committee Covers Key Transportation Issues

ABA's annual Spring Policy Committee Meeting April 7 outside of Washington, DC, addressed issues as diverse as the motorcoach, tourism, and travel industry itself—but one theme resonated regardless of the issue under discussion: motorcoaches have an increasingly critical role to play in providing affordable, safe, and green mobility in every debate about transportation planning.



ABA's spring 2010 Policy Committee covered everything from the Highway Bill to environmental stewardship.

"We had an incredibly productive meeting, covering issues ranging from highway reauthorization to the value of tourism dollars pumped into destinations in every region in North America," said Government Affairs & Policy Committee Chairman Charlie Zelle. "We have a lengthy agenda to tackle, which is a clear indication that buses are part of a travel mode shift as more tourists and travelers discover the attributes of going by modern motorcoach."

Committee members focused on the strategic imperative to enforce the charter rule to preserve the opportunity for private sector bus companies to provide charter services. In particular, they stressed the importance of industry unity on the issue, as exemplified by the joint ABA-UMA letter to King County (Washington) Metro officials expressing both associations' opposition to the amendment authored by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) that undermines the rule in favor of unfair and individual exemptions for Seattle-area services.

"We need to pass a six-year highway bill, preserve the partial federal fuel tax exemption for motorcoach operators, protect the charter rule from unfair transit competition, provide essential bus service for rural Americans and many other issues," said ABA Chairman Jim Jalbert. "Part of showing officials how motorcoaches are the answer to many transportation questions is predicated on ABA's ability to craft messages showing how the motorcoach fills in gaps in the network of intermodal transportation services, the role we play in congestion mitigation, our role in reducing foreign oil dependence, and more."

The committee also discussed using the new ABA Foundation impact study online tool to show lawmakers the economic vitality, job creation, and tax revenue base group travel on buses has in their specific Congressional District or State.

Guest speakers included Derron Lovaas and Ann Korin of the Mobility Choice Coalition, whose members include the National Resource Defense Council, the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security. The group aims to get people to use their cars less, and use motorcoaches and public transportation more. Their agenda includes congestion pricing for car drivers and providing low-income households travel vouchers that would allow them to use privately owned motorcoaches as their daily means of transportation.



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▶ THE INSIDER Q&A: **Justin Reed, Manager of Industry Relations, HireRight**



HireRight®

ABA | Why should ABA operators consider using HireRight when many other companies offer the same types of employee screening services?

JR | HireRight offers ABA members a variety of employment background screening and drug testing services and solutions to help ensure that the best, safest and most qualified candidates are hired quickly, and that operators maintain compliance with all federal and state regulations without additional staff or management systems. The *Premium Partnership* provides members with special pricing and package solutions tailored to meet the specific needs of motorcoach operators.

ABA | What kind of discount pricing for drug and alcohol testing services do ABA members receive through HireRight?

JR | Special discount pricing has been developed for *your members* as part of the Premium Partnership with ABA. Discounts are offered on a wide variety of the employment and drug screening packages that are most applicable for ABA members and can be up to 30 percent less than standard rates.

ABA | How can ABA members benefit from HireRight's line of employment screening products?

JR | HireRight offers ABA members solutions to stay compliant and avoid fines and penalties without having to add staff, while at the same time ensuring that the operator is hiring the safest drivers as quickly as possible. HireRight helps motorcoach and tour operators navigate the complexities of the broad range of federal and state regulations, including CFR 49 Part 382 for drug testing, Part 391 for background screening, and initiatives such as CSA 2010 for driver reports. HireRight's Driver Violation Alert program also helps carriers maintain ongoing visibility into their drivers' records, including any new violations that occur.

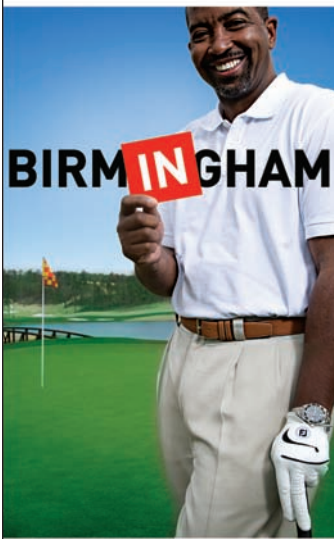
ABA | There are so many companies that conduct background searches which include driving records, employment history and verifications. What makes HireRight stand out?

JR | HireRight has been endorsed by the American Trucking Associations and nearly 30 state trucking associations. Through its line of DAC Trucking Solutions, HireRight has been helping employers in the transportation industry improve driver safety and maintain compliance for more than 25 years. Unlike many other providers, HireRight provides its customers with live, expert customer service and account management support to help guide users through the entire process—from selecting the appropriate screening services; to correctly understanding screening reports; to integrating and storing the screening data into compliant management records. HireRight also maintains direct access to all states for motor vehicle reports (MVRs), so motorcoach operators receive the most complete and up-to-date information available.

ABA | Driver retention is a huge issue in the industry. What programs does HireRight have in place or under development to ensure the right people are hired as coach drivers to foster increased retention?

JR | Making the best hiring selection at the outset helps foster greater driver

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retention. HireRight helps by providing the screening services that enable carriers to identify the safest and most qualified drivers within the industry's fastest turnaround times.

ABA | Your web site says, "You've got too much on your plate to worry about the laborious task of pushing paper through the screening process. Let HireRight make your employment screening efforts more streamlined so that you can focus your valuable time and energy elsewhere." Could you elaborate for ABA's busy operators why HireRight has an approach best for them?

JR | HireRight's easy-to-use processes and knowledgeable staff help guide motorcoach operators through screenings and compliance records management, and automates much of the process for efficiency and records management.

ABA | Your web site also talks about "unparalleled customer service," and "being available when you need us most." Could you amplify for the busy mom-and-pop operator out there why this is such a benefit?

JR | HireRight assists operators of all sizes in navigating the ever-changing regulatory requirements to ensure they conduct accurate, stringent screening, maintain compliance and improve the hiring process so the best drivers are hired. In fact, for the third year in a row, HireRight was recently honored with an Achievement in Customer Excellence Award for its high levels of customer satisfaction.

FMCSA Issues Final Rule On Electronic On-Board Recorders

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) last week published a final rule addressing "Electronic On-Board Recorders for Hours of Service." The rule, effective on June 1, 2012, will require "Interstate commercial truck and bus companies with serious patterns (greater than 10 percent) of hours-of-service (HOS) violations to install electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs) in all their vehicles," FMCSA said. "Nearly 5,700 interstate carriers will use EOBRs after the final rule's first year of implementation," the agency estimated. Under the provision, operators found with 10 percent or more HOS violations during a compliance review will be required to install EOBRs in all of their vehicles for a minimum of two years. The rule also provides new technical performance standards for EOBRs installed in commercial motor vehicles, including requirements for recording the date, time and location of a driver's duty status.




ABA research revealed that during the past five years, only 159 enforcement cases related to hours of service infractions have led to fines in passenger carrier segments under FMCSA jurisdiction. Over the same period, the FMCSA has penalized a total of 24,138 companies across all commercial motor vehicle classifications.

ABA has developed a laminated card to help motorcoach owners, drivers, and tour operators comply with the hours of service regulations for passenger carriers. To receive a copy of this compliance tool, log on to the [ABA Online Store](#). For further information, call FMCSA's Deborah M. Freund, Vehicle and Roadside Operations Division, Office of Bus and Truck Standards and Operations, at (202) 366-5370.

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ABA Working to Save Bus Security Grants

The Obama administration has again proposed eliminating the popular Intercity Bus Security Grant Program (IBSGP) from its fiscal year 2011 budget. ABA's department of government affairs is already hard at work to make sure that this will not happen. ABA Senior Vice President for Government Affairs Clyde Hart and industry representatives have already met with key lawmakers in both the U. S. House and Senate to educate them on the accomplishments, benefits and remaining needs for this effective grant program. ABA will continue to meet with lawmakers, including members of the powerful appropriations committees within both houses of Congress, in the future.

ABA and its allies on Capitol Hill can do a lot from Washington to preserve the IBSG program, but legislators need to hear from operators. It is imperative that operators tell their elected officials how important the IBSG is to security, and how it keeps their constituents safe. Any ABA member can customize in mere minutes their own letter using ABA's Congressional [Letter-Assistance Tool](#).

Oberstar Backs Bonds Over Immediate Fuel Tax Hike

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.) is pushing Treasury Department bonds as a better way to raise the \$130 billion needed to fund nearly one-third of the proposed \$450 billion transportation bill. Oberstar's plan would direct the bond revenues to be deposited into the Highway Trust Fund, and the money would be repaid in part with possible fuel tax increases four years from now. Oberstar calls his plan "Just conceptual at this point." But the Congressional Budget Office has provided a "preliminary, unofficial, not-in-writing advisory" saying that his bond idea is both feasible and legal. Contact Pat Jones at pjones@buses.org for more information.

FMCSA Issues NPRM Banning Texting While Driving

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration last week issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that will effectively ban drivers of commercial vehicles from texting while behind the wheel. This rulemaking comes as part of a push by U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood to stop the practice nationwide.

The new rule will ban drivers from using either a cell phone or a Personal Digital Assistant to text while operating a commercial vehicle, imposes penalties including disqualification on drivers who fail to comply with the new rule and prohibits motor carriers from allowing or requiring drivers to text while on the job. FMCSA's new rule will not ban drivers from using electronic dispatch and fleet management tools, nor will it prohibit them from using cell phones for purposes other than texting. Comments are due on or before May 3, 2010 and may be submitted to the FMCSA through the Federal Rulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. The docket number is FMCSA-2009-0370.

ABA strongly supports a ban on texting. Recent research commissioned by the FMCSA shows that the odds of being involved in a crash, a near-crash or a lane departure is more than 23 times greater for drivers who engage in texting while driving than for those who do not.



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▶ MEMBER SERVICES: **ABA Member Input Sought to Craft Webinar Series Topics**

ABA is proud to offer webinars as a free source of continuing education for our members. As a result of member feedback, ABA is expanding its webinar program to offer instruction on a wide variety of topics affecting the bus and tourism industry, and we need your help. The ABA Membership Department is soliciting topics of future webinars that would be helpful to you and your colleagues. Please submit any ideas to abamembershipinfo@buses.org.

▶ MEMBER SERVICES: **Operators Invited to Join ABA at PowWow**

ABA will exhibit at the U.S. Travel Association's International PowWow, in Orlando, Fla. May 15-19, 2010. PowWow is the world's premier market for Visit USA travel business. ABA invites U.S. motorcoach operator members, who work with inbound international groups, to share ABA's booth and take appointments to meet with international tour wholesalers and sell members' North American motorcoach and tour services. ABA is offering this opportunity to gain valuable exposure in overseas markets at \$3,500 per attendee, a fee well below the cost of having an individual booth. Please contact Roderick Lewis in the Member Services Department immediately at (202) 218-7216 or rlewis@buses.org to express interest. Participants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit USTA's [site](http://www.usta.com).



▶ MEMBER SERVICES: **GroupConnect Maps Members Along Routes**

GroupConnect's new Mapping & Routing system, a member benefit for ABA & OMCA tour and motorcoach operators, provides clients the opportunity to view all association members along a specific route or destination. Categories include accommodations, attractions, festivals and events, receptive operators, restaurants, retail outlets, and scheduled transportation. Join us for a live demonstration and training on how to use GroupConnect to increase your tour business and to generate leads for charter services.

Tour operators sessions are slated for:

[Tue, Apr 13, 2010 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM EDT](#)

[Wed, Apr 14, 2010 3 PM - 4 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, Apr 20, 2010 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM EDT](#)

[Tue, Apr 20, 2010 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM EDT](#)

[Wed, Apr 21, 2010 3 PM - 4 PM EDT](#)

Travel members sessions are slated for:

[Tue, Apr 13, 2010 11 AM - Noon EDT](#)

[Wed, Apr 14, 2010 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, Apr 20, 2010 11 AM - Noon EDT](#)

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[Wed, Apr 21, 2010 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM EDT](#)

Chains and management companies sessions are slated for:

[Wed, Apr 14, 2010 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, Apr 20, 2010 3:00 PM - 4 PM EDT](#)

Receptive operators sessions are slated for:

[Wed, Apr 14, 2010 11 AM - Noon EDT](#)

[Wed, Apr 21, 2010 11 AM - Noon EDT](#)

Destination marketing companies sessions are slated for:

[Wed, Apr 14, 2010 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM EDT](#)

[Wed, Apr 21, 2010 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM EDT](#)

▶ IN THE STATES: **U.S. DOT Rejects Pennsylvania's Plans To Toll I-80**

The U.S. Department of Transportation rejected Pennsylvania's plan to toll Interstate 80 following months of Federal Highway Administration scrutiny of Gov. Ed Rendell's proposal to remake I-80's 311-mile, east-west track into a northern sister to the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The application was rejected because it would violate language in a federal transportation law that would require money from I-80 tolls to be used only for that roadway. The Rendell administration's plan would have used the toll money to fund transportation initiatives statewide. Rendell, in his 2010-2011 state budget, was relying on the placement of new tolls on I-80 to generate hundreds of millions of dollars for transportation projects.

▶ IN THE STATES: **Pennsylvania OKs Table Games For Mount Airy Casino**



Revenue from the state table games license fee will partly be used to fund casino resort improvements such as surface parking for buses bringing gaming charter and tour groups.

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board approved a motion by Mount Airy Casino Resort to finance its expansion to table games with a \$35 million loan from financial guarantor Louis A. DeNaples at a special meeting March 23. Pennsylvania state gaming regulators approved Mount Airy's petitions to use the loan to underwrite improvements to the casino's gaming floor to

accommodate table games and to pay a portion of the \$16.5 million table games state license fee. The funds will also be used for capital improvement projects including golf course renovations, surface parking and a host of other capital investments. DeNaples' loan will go to the trusteeship headed by his daughter, Lisa DeNaples, D.M.D, the casino's chief operating officer. DeNaples is a guarantor of Mount Airy's loans. For more information, visit www.mountairycasino.com.

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▶ IN THE STATES: Alexandria, Va. Eyes Permits for Tour Buses

Local officials in Alexandria, Virginia's Old Town neighborhood last week began asking motorcoach operators to apply for operating permits—and without one, buses won't have access to the city's new free parking spots. "The increasing number of buses and large motorcoaches entering into Old Town, which is a narrow geographic area, has been a problem that has been ongoing for years," said Poul Hertel, president of Alexandria's Old Town Civic Association and a member of the city's Motorcoach Task Force.



Though each tour bus removes up to 55 cars from its streets, Alexandria officials may require tour buses to get permits.

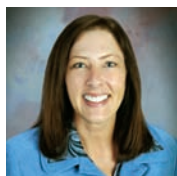
The city formed the task force to address mounting resident complaints about tourism buses, which can number 30 or more per day during the peak summer months. The permits are a first step toward regulation of the city's tourism buses, which, while occasionally unpopular among residents, are essential to the city's economic well-being. "The motorcoach industry brings patrons to local businesses and dollars to the city," said task force member Richard Baier. "But we don't want to destroy the historic fabric of Old Town. If you have vehicles blocking pedestrians and idling next to historic buildings, it takes away from the ambiance."

In addition to the new parking permit program, city police officers will ensure buses load and unload passengers only in designated locations and do not sit idling for periods longer than 15 minutes.

▶ TRAVEL TRACKS: Jobs Message Focus of National Travel & Tourism Week

This year's *National Travel and Tourism Week* is May 8-16, and ABA is urging members to use the opportunity to highlight the economic value and jobs created from motorcoach travel to officials by using the *ABA Foundation's online tool* showing the numbers for every state and Congressional District. Motorcoach-based tourism generates as many as 1,056,750 jobs in communities across the United States, paying almost \$40.6 billion in wages and benefits.

EXECUTIVE EXCURSIONS: Trop Picks Peru, Gray Line Choice of Watson Elementary; Howes He Do It?



Rachel Watson

The Tropicana Las Vegas has named **Joni Peru** VP of sales. She comes to the Trop from the Mirage, and also had a stint at New York-New York... **Rachel Watson** has joined Gray Line of Tennessee as sales manager for Gray Line of the Smokies. Gray Line of Tennessee, headquartered in Nashville, established its Pigeon Forge office earlier this year to meet increased demand for its tour & charter packages in the region... **Josh Howes** has been promoted to president of Premier Alaska Tours. He's been with the company since 2000 leading the motorcoach division, implementing and overseeing safety operations, and has been instrumental in providing ADA accessible motorcoaches to the Premier fleet.

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The following Motorcoach & Tour Operators have submitted application(s) for membership between March 23, 2010 through April 6, 2010 and have met all membership requirements. They are currently in the mandatory 30-day period for member comments.

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Kewl Komfort Inc.

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Mary Jennings, General Manager
Scottsdale, AZ
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