



AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

The Most Accurate News Source for the Motorcoach, Tour, and Travel Industry

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Did You Know?

A new slideshow shows "*The Nine Ways It Pays*" to go to Marketplace 2011 in Philadelphia January 8-12.

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FMCSA Doubles UCR Fees For Motor Carriers

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) April 27 published a final rule in the *Federal Register* announcing it will nearly double the fees that motor carriers have to pay to states under the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) program, which prompted ABA to file comments with the FMCSA strongly opposing the fee increase.

When Congress abolished the old single-state registration system in favor of the UCR program, it required the states to include both commercial and private motor carriers as a way to generate revenue. But the elimination of the old system created a revenue shortfall. Eliminating the old single-state registration system and replacing it with the Unified Carrier Registration system has created the revenue shortfall problem," said ABA President & CEO Peter J. Pantuso.

"But the solution to that revenue shortfall problem shouldn't be put on the backs of motorcoach operators. Any increase is an unfair burden on independently owned and operated bus companies, but nearly doubling the fee could put many mom-and-pop family businesses on the brink of financial ruin."

Much of the shortfall leading to the proposed near-doubling of the UCR fees is one that also stems from poor enforcement by participating states—an admission the states went so far as to acknowledge on the record.

As part of their comments submitted in response to the initial Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), the states admitted they had been unable to enforce the registration of a significant a number of motor carriers. Despite their concession on the point, however, the states nonetheless claimed the need—and the right—to raise revenues to close the shortfall by charging compliant motor carriers more to cover the states' failures in enforcing compliance.

The final rule establishes annual UCR registration fees and a fee bracket structure for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2010. A comparison of the old fee structure and the new fees is provided below.

The new fees structure began on April 27. Invoices for the 2010 fees will be sent out by the states throughout the next several weeks. The final rule can be viewed [online](#).

Number of Vehicles	Old Fee	New Fee	Broker or Leasing Company Fee
0-2	\$39	\$76	\$39-\$76
3-5	\$116	\$227	
6-20	\$231	\$452	
21-100	\$806	\$1,576	
101-1,000	\$3,840	\$7,511	
1,001 and above	\$37,500	\$73,346	



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▶ THE INSIDER Q&A: Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.)



ABA President & CEO Peter Pantuso and ABA Chairman Jim Jalbert with Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-Missouri) during the ABA Spring Board Meeting in Branson.

ABA | You were recognized in 2005 as one of ABA's Legislators of the Year. What continues to motivate you as an advocate for rural bus travel?

JE | I was raised to put people before politics, and as the first Republican woman to represent Missouri in Congress, I believe my extensive involvement in economic development and rural policy issues best enable me to serve my constituents effectively. My district, the 8th, is the largest

geographically in Missouri, comprising 28 counties, and it is largely rural. For us in this part of Missouri, buses are critical.

ABA | What do you see as the role of motorcoaches in providing group travel to Branson and the surrounding region?

JE | Tourism is a \$1.8 billion industry in this area, including Branson, which I look forward to representing if I pick it up in the upcoming redistricting. Motorcoaches provide transportation to new markets developing in Missouri, including new attractions critical for tourism. You make it possible for them to get here.

ABA | Looking nationally, what is important to you in the upcoming Highway Bill?

JE | I want to make sure the bus businesses have what they need to provide bus transportation to rural America. It's critical because we have no other mode—we rely on buses for so much of our travel.

ABA | What other issues affecting bus transportation are you focusing on?

JE | I am a staunch supporter of bus security grants. And it's critical that we focus on infrastructure issues, such as making two-lane roads into four-lane roads as much as possible to keep people coming to Branson. 60 percent of Branson visitors come from more than 300 miles away, so we need to get funding for highways not just here but across rural America. We need a level field for all forms of transportation, and that means there needs to be more support for bus transportation systems in rural America.

ABA | What challenges do you foresee?

JE | On the House Appropriations Committee, we always seem to pick-up Amtrak funding at the last minute because of the popularity of the train in the Northeast corridor, particularly among my colleagues who prefer taking it to flying.

ABA | What do you see as the key to ensuring buses are seen as part of a multi-modal, inter-connected transportation system?

JE | Buses are good, efficient, affordable, green and accessible transportation. You all make it possible, and we thank you for the work you do.

ABA | What do you like most about the Branson region?

JE | I love it here! I want to retire here—but not while I still have so much I want to do in Congress for Missouri and America.

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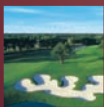
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ABA Board Meets In Branson



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BRANSON, Missouri—The six-year Highway Reauthorization Bill, the long-anticipated federal rulemaking on occupant protection and the ways in which to deliver the message that bus tourism and travel are critical components across North America dominated discussions during the ABA Spring Board of Directors Meeting held here May 3-4.

"We covered critical issues facing everyone in the bus tourism and travel community," said ABA Chairman Jim Jalbert. "Thanks to our gracious hosts, the ABA Board was able to experience the flavor of what Branson and the surrounding region have to offer motorcoach tour groups. And we had the wonderful opportunity to spend

time speaking with Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson."

"We are grateful for the hospitality of Branson Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB President Ross Summers," added ABA Vice Chairman Tom JeBran. "And we appreciate the warm welcome with which the entire Branson entertainment, tourism, and sightseeing community embraced the ABA Board meeting attendees."

NHTSA Chief To Address BISC Summer Meeting

The Bus Industry Safety Council (BISC) will hold its annual Summer Meeting at the Sheraton Reston Hotel in Reston, Va. on June 7-8. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Administrator David Strickland will speak, and the agenda also includes a safety exercise performed by the Transportation Security Administration, as well as presentations from the top safety experts. Registration for the event will close on May 23. Please visit www.buses.org/bisc to register.

CVSA Schedules Roadcheck 2010 For June

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) has announced that its 23rd annual international truck and bus safety event, Roadcheck 2010, will be held June 8-10 throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. Over those 72 hours, 10,000 inspectors will monitor safety compliance of commercial vehicles at more than 1,000 checkpoints across North America.

In 2009, CVSA focused on the North American Standard (NAS) Level I inspection. With 9,700 CVSA and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration certified inspectors at 2,148 locations, 57,013 of the 72,782 inspections were NAS Level I. This was a total inspection increase of 7.1 percent from 2008, and an 8.9 percent boost in NAS Level I inspections from 2008. If you would like to volunteer as a

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participant, please log on to the CVSA [website](#), or e-mail CVSA's Steve Keppler (stevek@cvsa.org) or call him at (202) 775-1623 x106.

Student Posters Urge Commercial Drivers to "Be Ready, Be Buckled"

Winners of the North American Occupational Safety & Health Week "Be Ready, Be Buckled" poster competition were students Adam Carr of Tampa and Vijeyta Revankar of Seabrook, Texas. Their message: "Driving a 40-ton truck or a bus full of people is a big responsibility; drivers owe it to themselves, their families, and others to wear a safety belt every time they get behind the wheel." The winning posters were announced at the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday. Read more about the contest at fastlane.dot.gov.

▶ IN THE STATES: New York Silences Tour Buses; Mulls Midtown Street Closures

The New York City Council April 29 passed a measure requiring all open-top sightseeing/tour buses operating in the city to replace the speakers tour operators use to describe to passengers the attractions along their routes and replace them with personal headphones for each rider. The measure comes in response to complaints from some New Yorkers who find the noise from tour buses a nuisance.



The law, which is expected to be signed soon by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, will begin to take effect in April 2012, when all new buses licensed by the city will be required to have a headphone system. Every bus in the city will have to replace speaker systems with headphone systems by 2022.

In other Big Apple developments affecting motorcoaches, Bloomberg is considering banning automobile traffic on 34th Street in Midtown Manhattan near Macy's, long considered one of the city's most congested chokepoints, claiming bus travel times should improve by up to 35 percent. Under the plan, automobiles would be banned on the block between Fifth Avenue and Avenue of the Americas, creating a pedestrian plaza between Herald Square and the Empire State Building, splitting the street in two. Bus lanes would bisect the pedestrian plaza and carry tourist buses and some private lines as well as transit buses. Buses would run in both directions along the entire length of 34th Street. The final design for the plaza and traffic changes is expected in fall 2011, with the street ready by the end of 2012. The redesign is expected to cost at least \$30 million.

▶ MEMBER SERVICES: Where Are You Taking Flat Pete to Visit?


ABA President & CEO Peter Pantuso, CTIS, would love to have the opportunity to visit all of our members, but unfortunately, there just isn't enough time. Until now. We have created "Flat Pete," a flat caricature modeled on the Flat Stanley project but named after Peter—that will be part of the May/June edition of [Destinations](#).

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▶ MEMBER SERVICES: **New Alliance with HP Business Products Saves Members Money**

ABA has a new money-saving member benefit through a [Premium Partnership](#) with HP to offer all members special pricing and discounts on a wide range of HP business products they use every day, including printers, notebooks, PCs, domestic shipping services, internet servers and more.

HP's commitment to recycling computers under three years old at no charge resonated with ABA because it shows the company is dedicated to green business practices that are consistent with motorcoaches as the greenest way to travel.

ABA member savings are available on such top-tier products as the HP Mini 5102 netbook laptop computer, which can be bought for only \$399—including a case for bus travel—a savings of \$258 on the bundle. The 10.1-inch diagonal mini PC can be bundled with Windows, HP QuickWeb access, and for \$99 an HP External USB CD/DVD Drive. *Laptop Magazine* called the HP Mini 5102 "the best business netbook money can buy."

ABA members can call (888) 202-4465 to order, using the special code HPMS2, or go [online](#). Other ABA member specials are available, plus HP offers free domestic ground shipping. For more information, call ABA's Roderick Lewis at (800) 283-2877 or e-mail abamembership@buses.org.

▶ MEMBER SERVICES: **New World Tours Invites New Ranch Hands**

Roni and Rick Stevens of New World Tours have formed the "R&R Ranch Hands" team to compete in the Relay for Life in Culpeper, Va. on May 15 to help raise money to aide the fight against renal cancer, which Rick is battling valiantly. You can join their fight against the deadly disease by donating money or becoming a sponsor. Go online to find out more.

▶ MEMBER SERVICES: **GroupConnect Webinars Offer Segment-Specific Tips**

[GroupConnect.com](#) is continuing tailored webinars for each segment of the motorcoach and group tour and travel industry.

Travel industry suppliers can register for a webinar session by clicking on a date below:

[Wed, May 12, 2010 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT](#)

[Wed, May 19, 2010 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT](#)

[Wed, May 26, 2010 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT](#)

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Destination marketers can register for a webinar session by clicking on a date below:

[Wed, May 12, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

[Wed, May 19, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

[Wed, May 26, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

Travel industry chain/management companies can register by clicking on a date below:

[Tue, May 11, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, May 18, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, May 25, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

Tour planning & quoting is the focus of webinars slated for the following dates:

[Tue, May 11, 2010 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT](#)

[Thu, May 13, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, May 18, 2010 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT](#)

[Thu, May 20, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

[Tue, May 25, 2010 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT](#)

[Thu, May 27, 2010 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT](#)

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▶ TRAVEL TRACKS: Florida Tour Groups, CVBs Reporting Status of Beaches

The Florida Keys and Key West tourism council has added a feature providing real-time information on the Gulf of Mexico oil spill to its [website](#). It includes official National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration oil slick trajectory maps, 72-hour forecast maps updated daily and answers to frequently asked questions. The Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB reports that all beaches in Naples, Marco Island, and the Gulf Coast Everglades are clean, clear, and unaffected by the spill. The CVB has a new "Traveler Update" on its [website](#), links to the Mote Marine Laboratory's Beach Conditions Report, and offers information daily on conditions at area beach parks.

▶ CANADIAN CURRENTS: Study to Gauge Security Effect on Border Crossings

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, many in the industry have cited anecdotal evidence suggesting that increased U.S.-Canadian border security measures have made the border so difficult to cross that tourists and businesses have decreased the number of crossings they make each year, or have stopped making the crossing altogether. Now, a study will finally seek to quantify the effect.

The Binational Economic and Tourism Alliance (BETA) will soon conduct a study to discover if increased security measures have caused the drop in activity in the Niagara Region and, if so, what measures can be taken to make the crossing easier while keeping the border secure. Since the attacks, many have pointed to a precipitous drop in the number of motor vehicles crossing the U.S./Canadian border at what is known as the Niagara region, a series of four bridges that link New York State and Ontario. The study will commence in June, is targeted to be completed by October, and the final report and remedial implementation plan is slated for delivery by December 2010.

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▶ **FOUNDATION FOCUS: Golf Outing Raises \$20K for Scholarships, Research**



An enthusiastic group of 36 golfers participated in the ABA Foundation's Spring Golf Charity Tournament at the Branson Creek Golf Club May 5, with many Branson-area community members joining ABA Board members at the annual event, raising more than \$20,000 for the ABAF's scholarship and research programs.

The winning team, which scored 63, was 75 percent Branson titleists. The victorious foursome included ABA 2010 Marketplace Chairman Frank Montgomery III, CTIS, Jeri Adams of Baldknobbers Jamboree Complex, and Tabuchi Shoji and Gene Lintner of Shoji Entertainment Inc.

The second place finishers also had a 75 percent Branson-based make-up. ABA Policy Committee Chairman Charlie Zelle was accompanied by players who were the cat's pajamas—literally. Joining him were Grant Hendrickson of The Cat's Pajamas Vocal Band, as well as Don Solice and Ron Carter of the Branson Star Theatre/J&J Properties. "The ABA Foundation would like to thank our sponsors for this year's golf event," said ABAF Board of Governors Chairman Doug Anderson. "We are grateful for the support of Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, Motor Coach Industries, ABC Companies, Pacific Western, Hollywood Entertainment Center, and the Branson Lakes Area CVB."

"The Branson community support was vital," said ABAF Vice Chair Sara Hamlin, CTIS.

▶ **FOUNDATION FOCUS: ABAF Tool Ideal for "National Tourism Week"**

With "*National Tourism Week*" taking place now through May 16, ABA members are urged 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. The ABAF study shows motorcoach tourism and travel economic impact figures for all 50 states and each of the U.S. House of Representatives' 435 Congressional Districts.

▶ **PASSINGS: Matt Harper, 47, Myrtle Beach Hospitality Leader**

Matthew Kent Harper, 47, passed away May 3, at Waccamaw Community Hospital, Murrells Inlet, S.C. Matt started coming to the Myrtle Beach area in 1981, working during the summers at Magic Harbor Theme Park. Following his graduation from the University of Southern Indiana in 1986, he moved to the Myrtle Beach area and worked with the Carolina Opry 1986-1991. He later worked with the Hard Rock Restaurant Group and was the Margaritaville Restaurant Group's Sales Manager at the time of his death. He was active in the local Chamber of Commerce and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors for the Myrtle Beach Hospitality Association. An Indiana memorial service will be scheduled at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests support for the Horry County Humane Society, P.O. Box 8483, Myrtle Beach, S.C. 29578, or the Greenwood Baptist Church, 5560 Pauley Swamp Rd., Conway, S.C. 29527. There is also an [online](#) registry.

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The following Motorcoach & Tour Operators have submitted application(s) for membership between April 20, 2010 through May 3, 2010 and have met all membership requirements. They are currently in the mandatory 30-day period for member comments.

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Annette Bates, Vice President
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www.batestoursandchartersvc.com

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Ronnie McCafferty, Manager
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