



AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

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President Bush Sept. 15 signed into law a bill (H.R. 6532) transferring \$8.017 billion into the Highway Trust Fund from the general treasury.

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Fall Board Meeting Includes Ten Members Of Congress, FMCSA's Hill

Ten members of the U.S. Congress and FMCSA Administrator John Hill took part in different events at ABA's Fall Board Meeting last week at the Gaylord National just outside of Washington and on Capitol Hill.

Reps. Bill Shuster (R-PA) and John Olver (D-MA) received ABA awards as Legislators of the Year for 2008. An event for Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA) was part of an evening at the Newseum, and FMCSA chief John Hill spoke to the Board meeting on the agency's stepped up enforcement efforts.

"It was an extremely productive meeting, we had phenomenal attendance, and we met with our elected officials to discuss the motorcoach solution," said ABA Chairman Doug Anderson.

The board focused intently on preparing for the reauthorization of the 2009 Highway Bill, including the critical need to maintain the partial federal fuel tax exemption, and science-driven safety legislation.



ABA Chairman Doug Anderson presents the 2008 ABA Legislator of the Year award to Rep. John Olver (D-MA).



Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) accepts Legislator of the Year award honors from ABA Chairman Anderson for his leadership on bus safety legislation.

ABA Testifies Before Senate On Need To Stop Rogue Operators

Stopping illegal bus operators from imperiling public safety is the critical first step in enhancing bus safety nationwide, ABA President & CEO Peter J. Pantuso testified during a Senate subcommittee hearing Sept. 18.

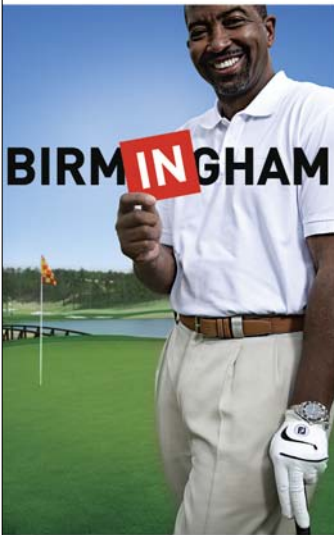
Pantuso also told the subcommittee members and the packed hearing room that ABA recommends the government adopt its [10-Point Proposal To Stop Illegal Operators](#), which was announced nationwide prior to the hearing. He also cautioned the

committee not to "rush to judgment" on equipment mandates for motorcoaches, and instead let rigorous, science-driven data drive any proposed regulatory changes.

"One cannot rush safety research, and one must look at all the evidence," Pantuso testified. "We are an industry composed of small businesses, and the imposition of a seat belt mandate for every bus will be a heavy one."

[ABA's testimony](#) was quoted in the *Houston Chronicle*, *Dallas Morning News*, the *Columbus Dispatch*, and other media.

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The Insider Q&A:
Lynn Minges, Executive Director,
North Carolina Division of Tourism,
Film & Sports Development



ABA: What North Carolina attractions within a short motorcoach ride of Charlotte do you think Marketplace delegates will enjoy visiting on FAM tours?

LM: We in North Carolina are so excited and pleased to host the American Bus Association's 2009 Annual Marketplace and Convention in Charlotte in January. Our Local Organizing Committee has worked hard to coordinate and offer exciting pre-familiarization tours that are going to be just the thing to kick off Marketplace and to showcase North Carolina. From the mountains to the coast, tour operators can choose from seven different familiarization tours, each one highlighting some of the best North Carolina has to offer. Tours include: Moon Pies and Magnolia's; Clubs, Cubs, and Grub; Sassy, Savory & Just Plain Fun; Corners of the High Country; It's Better in the Middle of North Carolina; Hollywood & Vine; and Hot Air, Hickory Wood and Hospitality. To learn more about these tours and sign up to participate, [click here](#).

ABA: North Carolina is a regional destination, from the Biltmore Estate to the Crystal Coast. Even the pro football team playing in Charlotte is called the Carolina Panthers, and the hockey team farther east in the "research triangle" is similarly called the Carolina Hurricanes. How do you plan to use the perception of Carolina as a regional destination to boost tourism during and following Marketplace?

LM: One of the real strengths of North Carolina as a travel destination is the vast diversity of our travel product. We boast the highest mountains on the East Coast, over 300 miles of pristine coastline, vibrant cities and nightlife, quaint small towns and villages, rich culture, heritage and art, and exciting sporting events. We offer something for literally everyone. We also enjoy strong alliances and partnerships with neighboring states because we realize that visitors don't know or care about state lines. To find out more about all there is to see and do in North Carolina, visit www.visitnc.com.

ABA: How has North Carolina been planning to showcase the state to all of the bus tour operators attending Marketplace to lure them back with coaches full of leisure travelers?

LM: Aside from having world-class tourism product in the state, we are blessed to have some of the best and brightest marketing professionals in the country. Our Local Organizing Committee has been working for well over two years to make sure we are geared up to host one of the most successful ABA Marketplaces ever. We see this as a real opportunity to showcase our state and have lots of exciting plans in place. Marketplace will open with an evening event themed "Here's Looking at You...North Carolina", which will showcase destinations and attractions, many of which have been the backdrop for

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over 500 feature films that have been produced all across the state. And, over 100 volunteers have signed up to help shower delegates with a dose of southern hospitality that we're well-known for.

ABA: The Outer Banks of North Carolina is a popular destination with places such as Nags Head, Kitty Hawk, Duck and Corolla. To what do you attribute that success?

LM: Like North Carolina as a whole, the Outer Banks balances their rich natural setting with a vibrant vacation destination – adventurers and thrill seekers still venture in search of their dreams. And, like the Wright Brothers, visitors are captivated by the breathtaking beauty, rich history and abundant cultural resources. Since the late 1500's the Outer Banks has welcomed groups with open arms. From the first English explorers to the Wright Brothers, a commitment to hospitality has helped drive success for the Outer Banks and is a perfect setting for group tours and the like.

ABA: What makes Carolina barbecue unique compared to its other varieties from Kansas City, Memphis and Texas?

LM: Some might say that barbecue in North Carolina is as passionately discussed (or shouted about) as religion. The state's barbecue tradition cooks down to two distinct styles, Eastern and Western North Carolina barbecue. The Eastern-style barbecue centers around whole hogs being smoked on pits at the end of the tobacco harvest. The sauce is vinegar-based....and boasts a reddish color from the addition of red pepper, black pepper and pepper flakes. Western-style barbecue (found in the Piedmont and Mountain regions) relies on pork butts and shoulders versus the whole hog. The vinegar-based sauce of the Eastern part of the state is enhanced with tomato products, yet it keeps its thin consistency. The best part about

barbecue is traveling the state and exploring the many different varieties. Many of these local barbecue restaurants are eager to host groups. For more on North Carolina barbecue and to explore some of the state's longstanding, most traditional barbecue restaurants, [click here](#).

ABA: From NASCAR to financial institutions second only to Wall Street, Charlotte is mirroring population growth in Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro and the research triangle. Why is the Tar Heel state so enticing?

LM: Those of us who call North Carolina home are truly blessed in many ways. We have a wonderful quality of life and a strong and diverse economic base. Another key factor in our overall growth and success is that we are extremely accessible. There are five major interstate highways that intersect North Carolina: I-26, I-40, I-77, I-85 and I-95. What's more, North Carolina has one of the largest state-maintained highway systems in the nation, incorporating over 78,600 miles of highways. This combination provides not only unfettered access to our visitor destinations, but also same-day access to all major eastern U.S. markets. This ease of access, along with such a wonderful quality of life, is a major factor in the boom we are seeing throughout the state.

ABA: What are some of the undiscovered gems of North Carolina you hope delegates attending Marketplace will come home to tell their friends about?

LM: Some of the newer attractions in the Charlotte area that groups are really enjoying include the Billy Graham Library, the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden Orchid Conservatory, the U.S. National Whitewater Center, and, of course, in 2010 the NASCAR Hall of Fame will be opening downtown. Tour operators should also

Did You Know?

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Sept. 17 approved a bill (H.R. 3999) to increase bridge inspection frequency, create uniform inspection standards, institute a risk-based system for prioritizing bridge work and authorize an additional \$1 billion for bridge projects.

be aware that the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center is now open for business and a wonderful stop along the parkway just outside of Asheville. On the other side of the state, operators traveling down I-95 may want to stop at Sylvan Heights in Scotland Neck. It is home of the world's largest collection of waterfowl including many rare and endangered species. Readers can always go on our web site to discover even more gems at www.visitnc.com.

ABA: What would your ideal North Carolina day-trip via sightseeing coach include in its itinerary?

LM: The Piedmont region of our state offers much for sightseeing. An ideal day trip would begin with a morning of shopping and a tour at Replacements, Ltd., the world's largest selection of old and new dinnerware, including china, stoneware, crystal, glassware, silver, stainless, and collectibles. Next, lunch at Old Salem, where visitors can glimpse life in the 18th and 19th centuries for Moravians who settled in the new town of Salem, and then finish the afternoon at one of premiere wineries in the Yadkin Valley.

ABA: Is there anything else our readers should know in preparation for Marketplace or their tours to your state?

LM: We are committed to ensuring that delegates to ABA Marketplace get a real sense of our state and the diverse array of things to see and do. I encourage delegates to take advantage of the pre-familiarization tours or plan their own excursion in our state either before or after Marketplace.

CVSA-Sponsored EOBR Symposium Slated For December

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) has announced a seminar to address the regulatory potential for implementation and operation of Electronic On-Board

Recorders (EOBRs). The seminar will be held in Minneapolis in early December. Operators can review the agenda and obtain registration information on the [CVSA web site](#). Scroll down to the EOBR Symposium section and click to download the brochure.

Motorcoach Passenger Safety Videos, Seatback Cards Selling Fast



ABA's "Motorcoach Passenger Safety Message" videos, seatback cards and audio CDs are selling briskly, and operators are

urged to order theirs today to ensure they comply with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) pre-trip passenger safety messaging guidelines. All members are encouraged to watch the [video](#), as well as read the [front](#) and [back](#) of the seatback cards, prior to placing their [order](#). ABA offers the highest-quality and best variety of safety communications at the best prices. So don't delay. Order today!

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 restructuring, via a pre-negotiated chapter 11 filing, will reduce the company's total indebtedness by



MCI's J4500 is the top-selling motorcoach model.

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“Our core business
is sound.”

—MCI President & CEO Tom Sorrells, an ABA Board Member

Did You Know?

Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announced Sept. 17 that the Department of Transportation is making \$5 million available to help repair damage to roads, bridges and airports caused by Hurricane Ike.

Greyhound has ordered 140 additional Prevost motorcoaches, more than twice the number the Dallas-based company bought when making its first Prevost purchase earlier this year.



approximately \$420 million and could improve its cash flow by significantly reducing ongoing interest expense by about \$54 million annually.

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.”

The MCI J4500 has been the number-one selling motorcoach model since 2004, and again leads as the bestseller in the first and second quarters of 2008, according to National Bus Trader, which tracks sales data for the industry.

Greyhound Orders 140 New Prevost Coaches

Greyhound has ordered 140 new Prevost X3-45 motorcoaches for use on various intercity lines. Delivery is slated for early 2009.

Greyhound ordered its first Prevost coaches in early 2008, taking delivery of 33 X3-45 vehicles for BoltBus service between New York and Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. It also ordered another 17 X3-45s for its line-haul fleet.

“We are pleased that Greyhound has come to trust both our product and our customer service, and we look forward to continuing to develop solutions that support the needs of the company,” said Gaétan Bolduc, President and CEO for Prevost, and an ABA Board member.

Greyhound Lines, Inc. President & CEO David Leach said the choice of Prevost is based on Greyhound's mission to offer “A new and improved image of safe, reliable and enjoyable travel to nearly 25 million passengers each year.” Leach, who also serves on the ABA Board, added, “Prevost and the X3-45 are a company and a vehicle that we can count on to help us achieve that goal.”

ABC Companies Opens New Pre-Delivery Inspection Facility In Indiana

ABC Companies opened a new four-bay, 6,250-square-foot Pre-Delivery Inspection Facility opened in Muncie, Indiana this month, promising quick delivery and tailored customization for all operators whose fleets include Van Hool M1235 and 3035RE motorcoaches.

The central location, conducive to motorcoach quality inspection checks, training and documentation, is across from ABC's Indiana regional parts distribution center and only 300 miles from the coaches' manufacturing plant, allowing for convenient pre-delivery test drives. ABC Companies also hopes the new facility will strengthen its long-term customer relationships, standardize option installation, and simplify future maintenance of the coaches.

ABA Expertise Tapped To Evaluate Bus Research Papers

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) has selected ABA Senior Director for Policy Robin Phillips to be a

A new CTIS course offers the opportunity to learn how to better use financial data for business growth.

Did You Know?

Highway and bridge project designs with environmentally sustainable features will be eligible for green certification, under a new program announced Sept. 16 by the New York State Department of Transportation.



member of its elite committee to evaluate research papers on issues affecting bus transportation. Specifically, Phillips is providing expert analysis to the group on two papers submitted for presentation at the TRB Annual Meeting and/or publication in the Transportation Research Record, "Benefit and Cost Analysis of Intercity Bus Service," and "The Emergent Curbside Intercity Bus Industry: Chinatown and Beyond."

MEMBER SERVICES

ABA Announces New Premium Partnership With DHL

ABA continues to increase member benefits through adding additional [Premium Partnerships](#) to help you save money.

Through the most recent Premium Partnership agreement ABA just signed with DHL, ABA members save up to 25 percent on DHL's full suite of domestic and international shipping services.

Call 1-800-MEMBERS (1-800-636-2377, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. EST) today to speak with a dedicated Member Service Representative or visit the [special online portal](#) for ABA members to set up your free account.

New CTIS Courses Focus On Organization, Information Use

[Certified Travel Industry Specialist](#) (CTIS) enrollees are reminded to [register](#) now for the two new classes running Nov. 1 through Dec. 15: "Personal Organization and Effectiveness" and "Using Business Information for Decision Making."

In "Personal Organization and Effectiveness," enrollees learn how to examine and improve their effectiveness at work tasks and as a spouse, a friend, a parent, and in other life roles. "Using Business Information for Decision Making" is designed to make business

professionals comfortable with using business data to make informed decisions. Learn how financial statements are prepared, how the budgeting process works, how to turn operating plans into dollars and how to use financial data to make decisions. Prepare to take advantage of the various tools available in any organization to help you plan future activities.

Travel & Associate Segment Members Reminded To Renew

ABA reminds all Travel and Associate members that 2009 renewal dues are currently being processed and hard copies are in the mail.

"Your 2009 membership investment is important for company growth and success," said Vicki Osman, ABA Senior Director for Member Services. "By promptly remitting dues, you enable ABA to reserve more funds for important programs that benefit members."

Travel and Associate members may now view and pay electronic invoices through accessing My Investments within [My ABA](#). Questions? Call 800-283-2877 or e-mail rlewis@buses.org.

TRAVEL TRACKS

Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Opens At Mohegan Sun

Mohegan Sun's new 64,000-square-foot "Casino of the Wind," part of the Connecticut leisure gaming resort's expansion and enhancement, welcomes Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville, which opens its doors today.

The new two-level restaurant, designed like a marina, will feature two floors of dining space, a retail boutique, concert stage and multiple bars. The restaurant will be the only venue at Mohegan Sun with a waterfront view of the Thames River.

Travel Tracks

Continued

Marketplace delegates may now begin making their appointment requests.

Orlando Designates Employee “Hospitality Appreciation Days”

Orlando has designated now through Nov. 15, 2008 as “Hospitality Appreciation Days” to recognize the hard work of employees in the group tour and travel community. As a result, more than 120 members of the Orlando CVB have extended some incredible offers specifically to all those that work so hard in the travel and tourism industry. These offers

include accommodations, restaurants, attractions, shopping, transportation and more, and are easily accessed simply by visiting

www.orlandoinfo.com/hospitality.

“The backbone of the hospitality industry are the employees that engage with guests and deliver high quality service on a daily basis,” Gary C. Sain, President & CEO of the Orlando CVB, said in a letter to industry employees.

MARKETPLACE PACE

Marketplace Appointment Requests Now Open

Registrants may now begin appointment requests for Marketplace 2009, Jan. 7-12 in Charlotte, N.C.

Up until Nov. 14, companies may create appointment requests by accessing their Marketplace Passport from the blue box at the top of the [Marketplace website](#).

Appointment schedules are based on your company’s registration date as well as a mutual selection process, not the date of appointment submission.

“With more than 2000 delegates, including nearly 300 appointment-taking buyers confirmed, Marketplace’s pre-scheduled appointments will start the New Year with a great return for companies and *money in the bank* with booked business,” said Lynn Brewer, ABA SVP for Meetings, Education & Member Services. For more information on maximizing Marketplace appointment success, view the [ABA Quality Appointment Guide](#).



Reserve Your “Strike Out Breast Cancer” T-Shirts Now

The 2009 “Marketplace Gives Back” charity focus for Charlotte will be the “Strike Out Breast Cancer” bowling event slated for Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009, from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m., and delegates can now reserve special pink or black T-Shirts to show their support for the cause. Prices are \$15, sizes available are S, M, L, XL and XXL. [Place your order](#) now for pick-up at Marketplace. We need all the support you can spare!

Product Pavilion Offering NASCAR Networking

Product Pavilion not only offers opportunities for Associate members to promote their products and services in a high-energy professional environment—it also offers a boost of networking at the party with the “Beast of the Southeast” Lowe’s Motor Speedway evening event Saturday, Jan. 10. The night before the Product Pavilion, all delegates will have the opportunity to network while experiencing the thrill of racing at Lowe’s Motor Speedway. The evening will include action in “the Dirt Track,” the “Bellagio of Drag Strips,” hands-on racing at the “Infield Extravaganza,” and a grand finale of fireworks.



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Eron Shosteck, Editor In Chief

Kate Martin, Associate Editor

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AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

700 13th Street NW, Suite 575
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 842-1645
FAX (202) 842-0850
E-MAIL: abainfo@buses.org
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PENDING OPERATOR MEMBERS

The following Motorcoach & Tour Operators submitted application for membership between September 9-19, 2008.

AAA Limo Inc.

(DOT 1691447 MC)
Mohammed Rahman
Orlando, Fla.
www.aaalimo.us

D & J Tour Service LLC

(DOT 1182337 MC 472613-C)
Ada Perry, Office Manager
Rock Hill, S.C.

Lassen Tours LLC

(DOT 506132 MC 241576)
Heather Southers, Safety Manager
San Francisco, Calif.
www.lassentours.com

Should members have comments regarding these applications, please contact abamembership@buses.org.

Nevada Town's New Branding Slogan No Laughlin Matter

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, in conjunction with the Laughlin Visitors Bureau, recently rolled out its destination-wide campaign for Laughlin, Nev.: "Laughlin. It's Like You Own the Place." The new slogan is designed to evoke VIP treatment, as well as the convenience and accessibility of Laughlin.

Laughlin sits on the banks of the Colorado River and is just 90 miles south of Las Vegas. The research behind the campaign found that the river and accompanying water activities are the distinguishing factors for Laughlin among other southern Nevada destinations. A getaway to Laughlin combines the excitement of a casino destination with the beauty, ambiance and recreation of the Colorado River.