



**Tour Operator Council - Conference Call Minutes
Thursday, November 20, 2008**

Jim Diebel, Tour Operator Council Chair, was joined by approximately 20 tour operator members for a discussion of topics of importance to this member segment. A letter from Jim Diebel follows.

Dear ABA Tour Operator Members,

Last week we had our first Conference Call of the Tour Operator Membership. I would like to thank all of you that took the time to call in and join the conversation.

This call was hosted by your representatives on the ABA Board, Mr. Greg Shipley of Academic Travel and myself. Our intention was to deliver to as many of the members as possible an update on issues that the Board has, or is currently working on, that might affect your business.

I believe that one of the largest changes coming to our Industry is the project currently called "Project 2010", but as Peter pointed out yesterday, the search is on for a new name. The IT industry calls this an Internet Portal and I believe can add a tremendous amount of value to the way that all of us plan and operate our tours. It will provide greater access to our suppliers and the information we need in our planning process such as availability and rates. A demonstration of this Project is Planned for Sunday, January 11, 2009 at Marketplace in Charlotte, and really encourage all of you to attend. I think that this will become a strong resource for all of us in the near future.

For more on this project and other future developments, I would strongly encourage all of you to continue to join us for more upcoming Conference Calls of the Tour Operator Membership. In the meantime, Vicki Osman, the very hard working ABA Staff Member assigned to work with the Tour Operator Council, will be sending out to all ABA registered Tour Operators, minutes from our meeting so that all of you can see the items that were discussed. As always, if at anytime any of you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to forward those to either myself, Mr. Greg Shipley or the ABA offices directly. We are always eager to work for you!

Until next time, I remain,

Yours truly,



Jim Diebel
President
Hanover Holiday Tours Limited

About ABA

Staff

Board

More than just Marketplace

- Board Level Tour Operators
 - Jim Diebel, Hanover Holiday Tours
 - Jennifer Hopkins George, CTIS, Palladin Tours
 - Greg Shipley, CTIS, CSTP, Academic Travel Services Inc.
- Encourage other Tour Operators to get involved in committees (i.e. Marketplace, Top 100, Board)
- Board commitment: 3 board meetings per year, a minimum of 1 board committee (conference calls)

Occupant Protection

Compartmentalization vs. restraints system

What will be the standard? Two point vs. Three point belts, G Force

Responsibility when caring students

- ABA is driving the conversation, not opposed to seatbelts, but want to have legislation based on research and studies
- US and Canada are performing tests and completing studies to be available in summer of 2009
- There is customer pressure to put seat belts in place
- One insurance company has stated that they will not issue a company with seat belts before a legislative standard has been determined due to increased exposure based on their industry experts.

Project 2010

- Partnership of ABA and OMCA
- New way to conduct business over the internet
- Momentum IT is the vendor developing the tool
- Focus groups are being formed, interested, contact ABA.
- Webinar – week of Dec 1 or Dec 8
- Seminar onsite at Marketplace 2009: Sunday, Jan. 11, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

WHTI

- Passports or equivalent document comes into full force June 2009
- State of WA and VT meet qualification for driver's license use
- Passport card not yet available in large numbers due to lack of microchip production
- Increase across border travel booked for pre-June 2009
- Major issue for student groups

Other Border Crossing Issues

- Advanced Manifests – experiments have not be successful but trials are still on going

ABA Passenger Information Cards & Video

- Part of best practices, having customers prepared for emergencies (i.e. fires)
- View card at: <http://www.buses.org/files/SafetyCardFront.pdf>
- View video at: <http://www.buses.org/safetyvideo>
- Order form at: <http://www.buses.org/files/101008SafetyOrderForm.pdf>

New Road/City Tolls

- Major issue as government looks for quick revenue streams
- New Jersey Road Tolls
- New York City
 - Revisiting congestion mitigation tool for all vehicles coming into NY City
- City of DC Bus Trip Permit Fee
 - ABA with NTA has appealed the verdict and continues to fight the fee
 - ABA legal counsel states to follow the law until ABA is successful in lawsuit to put an end to the fee
 - ABA will put out a Member Alert with Inauguration Information as soon as the secret service finalizing the plans but parking fees for downtown and staging areas are probable. Advance parking reservation may be possible.

Drivers Hours of Service

- US rules stayed the same but Canadian rules changed ALOT
- To order cards with US and Canadian rules:
<http://www.abaonlinestore.com/hours-of-service-cards.html>

Operator Tip Sheets

- View current tip sheets: <http://www.buses.org/operatortipsheets>
- Add tip sheet on My ABA – how to use it for research
- Have topic for future tip sheet, contact Eron Shosteck at eshosteck@buses.org.

Logos and Green Messaging

- Download logos at: <http://www.buses.org/logosandemblems>
- Green messaging – popular with student groups
 - Information at <http://www.buses.org/environmentallyfriendly>