



AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

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Did You Know That...

Later this week, the Top 100 Events in North America for 2008 will be unveiled?

Watch buses.org for the hot list!



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The Most Accurate News Source For The Motorcoach, Tour And Travel Industry

Congressional Leaders Look At Fuel Tax Hike To Fix Bridges

In the wake of the tragic Minneapolis Interstate bridge collapse last month, leaders in Congress have floated the idea of raising the fuel tax to generate funds to repair America's aging infrastructure.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) has proposed creating a program to repair, rehabilitate and replace more than 6,100 potentially unsafe bridges nationwide funded by a 5 cents per gallon increase in fuel taxes. Though Oberstar is emphatic that the tax would only be temporary, anti-tax opponents warn any tax could soon become permanent.

Oberstar points out that spending cuts are among the numerous other options being discussed. But a key senator and the White House remain skeptical.

In the Senate, Finance Committee ranking member Charles Grassley (R-IA) expects that any effort to raise the federal excise tax on gasoline will wait until Congress reauthorizes the highway bill in 2009. Grassley has previously expressed reservations about the need for an increase in the gas tax and suggested that Congress revise its approach to funding bridge and highway projects. Grassley's office has said that a gas tax hike this year would be premature and that funding for bridge repairs should come from other projects that would have been funded through congressional earmarks.



Operators Mobilize To Stop New Jersey's Proposed Anti-Bus Regs

The Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association (GNJMA) testified during a public hearing last month about the South Jersey Transportation Authority's (SJTA) proposed schemes targeting buses for more fees in return for less highway access would adversely impact the bus operators serving Atlantic City and the jobs gaming destinations create. The broad coalition speaking at the hearing included legal expert Jerry Casser, bus operators, Atlantic City casino marketing partners, the Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority, Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce, Hotel and Lodging

Association, and allied members representing destinations and attractions. The hearing was covered by the Atlantic City Press and TV news.

ABA urges all affected industry interests to utilize the opportunity of a second public hearing to reinforce the danger to "America's Playground" and its workforce if these regulations are adopted. Join your colleagues and allies Wednesday, Sept. 12th at 10:00 am at the Frank S. Farley Service Plaza, Mile Marker 21.5 on the Atlantic City Expressway, Hammonton, N.J. SJTA will accept public comment regarding the proposed re-adoption of its Bus Management Regulations. GNJMA will continue to fight the proposed changes to the regulations.



SJTA Wants to Restrict Buses on Two Major Roads into Atlantic City

Can't wait for the ABA Insider to make the office rounds?

Sign up today to receive it automatically via e-mail every other week.

Click here to be added to the ABA Insider distribution list.

ABA members may also submit comments to SJTA by sending e-mail to Rose Marie Rodriguez (rrodriguez@sjta.com) prior to the hearing.

The SJTA wants to restrict buses on two major roads into A.C. so they can collect tolls via the pay-as-you-go Atlantic City Expressway, which loses that express effect every few miles as drivers slow routinely at toll booths. The extra tolls and miles add up quickly for many mom-and-pop small operators.

The Authority also proposes to do away with annual bus medallions, requiring bus operators to purchase fleet medallions, which are based on the number of times a bus enters the city in a year multiplied by a \$2.80 daily trip fee. Operators would be forced to prepay and receive no volume discounts. SJTA also proposes elimination of the single-day permit.

SJTA inspectors would be permitted to direct buses for NJDOT inspections, which is clearly outside the agency's legal authority.

Enforcement costs will rise, as SJTA wants to require bus companies to report violations to the SJTA (legally questionable, as SJTA is not a regulatory agency).

Atlantic City billboards entice visitors with the tagline, "Always Turned On." SJTA must receive the message that those lights stay lit thanks to countless bus companies carrying passengers to play, dine and relax without excessive regulations on their backs.

Evacuation Summit To Focus On Emergency Preparedness

ABA members are invited — and encouraged — to attend a regional evacuation summit at the Baltimore Convention Center Nov. 8. The summit will focus on cross-border evacuations and best practices underlying their planning and implementation.

Designed for emergency personnel, first responders, and disaster relief experts, this event is also critically important to officials in transportation at all government levels, law enforcement officers and rescue specialists. This summit will also focus on situations where two or more states need to coordinate their efforts to plan and implement successful evacuations. More information on the event, held in conjunction with the All Hazards Forum, is available at www.i95coalition.org

NAFTA Audit Highlights Flaws In Bus Inspections

The U.S. DOT's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) last month issued a memo urging the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to correct several major problem areas of concern in their southern border commercial vehicle inspection program. The recently conducted follow-up audit highlighted several deficiencies the OIG deems serious enough to require immediate corrective action. Problems include insufficient data relating to Mexican carrier drug and alcohol testing and driver convictions; inadequate bus inspection programs and a lack of inspection facilities; and a failure to assure that vehicles entering into the United States are in compliance with federal manufacturing safety standards. In answer to the OIG's findings, FMCSA Administrator John Hill issued a response memorandum in which he said the agency agreed with all of the findings, and is beginning corrective action on all points. This is good news for all U.S.-based bus operators who have expressed concern about strong enforcement of U.S. safety rules on Mexican "cross-border" bus operations.

Insider Q&A: ABA Chairman Doug Anderson of Anderson Coach & Travel

ABA Chairman of the Board Doug Anderson spoke recently with the Insider about issues facing the motorcoach, tour and travel industry, the industry's future and how the NYC congestion plan will play out. Anderson's family business — Anderson Coach & Travel (www.goanderson.com) started in 1937 transporting kids to and from a one-room schoolhouse. Now it serves more than 500,000 customers each year.

What does being chairman mean to you?

It's an exciting opportunity to participate in the leading motorcoach, travel, and tour organization with its lobbying and communications strengths.

What's your vision? Is there anything you plan to do or to change in your role?

Strategically, we have seized an opportunity to bring a strong communications focus into the American Bus Association to raise the industry's profile on Capitol Hill with legislators as well as with the general public.

How so?

The bus industry has a very strong story to tell about customer service, quality, economic development and solutions to many of the congestion and environmental issues that currently face the country — including foreign oil dependency. And, unfortunately, I believe that not enough people in the general public consider us as a viable alternative.

Why is that?

Well, we are a small industry that doesn't have much national presence. There are a lot of small, independent carriers scattered across the country

that individually do great things within our own marketplace — but on a national level, we oftentimes go unnoticed or we're taken for granted. And, unfortunately, without some type of a national presence for the motorcoach industry, it's very difficult for the key decision-makers in government policy to consider us a viable transportation and travel option.

What do you think is next for the industry?

I think the industry has great opportunities; we need to seize the moment and be able to tell a much better story about how green the motorcoach industry is. By "green," I mean how we reduce congestion, how we reduce pollution, how we get the most fuel-efficient per passenger mile transportation vehicle to a higher level of acceptance within our culture.

How do you see the New York City congestion policy being played out?

Obviously, ABA is on the front side of the congestion policy in NYC. We've hired a very strong legal and lobbying group to represent us in NYC as well as in Albany. I would hope that all buses: charter, commuter, and schedule service, become a more instrumental tool in solving the problems that NYC currently has. As opposed to how we have been treated with lack of parking, tough idling restrictions, and almost unfair enforcement of traffic rules and regulations.

Do you think the motorcoach industry has been discriminated against?

I don't think we've been treated with the respect we should when we're bringing 56 passengers in with large spending ability and we're taking 56 private automobiles off the highway every time we come in and out of NYC.



ABA Chairman
Doug Anderson of
Anderson Coach &
Travel

Why do you think the motorcoach industry hasn't been treated with the respect it deserves?

We just haven't done a good enough job of telling a great story.

What story would you like to tell?

We are part of the fabric of this country. We do contribute significantly to the tour and travel economies in NYC and all the metropolitan areas and many of the rural areas that we visit. And we can become a much more integral part of the fabric of the country if we educate people well enough. And that's a broad-based education of the consumer legislation.

How did you get into the motorcoach industry?

I'm second generation — it's a family business. We've been in the people transportation business for 70 years. We operate school buses as well as motorcoaches.

What made you decide to join the family business?

I grew up with it in my blood. I went away to college, I looked at the alternatives when I got out of college — and what the opportunities were in the motorcoach industry — and made a decision that I wanted to make a career out of expanding our existing business.

Why?

Because we go to nice places with fun and interesting people and we truly solve a problem for customers.

New York City Names 17 Members Of Congestion Panel

New York City has officially named the group of 17 who will serve on its congestion mitigation study panel. ABA will work vigorously to ensure each one receives the message that motorcoaches are part of the congestion solution, with every full coach removing as many as 55 single-occupant autos from gridlocked streets.

With 1,000 motorcoaches serving the Big Apple each weekday as commuter buses, bringing workers from Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Staten Island, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the role of motorcoaches in unsnarling traffic is especially amplified in Manhattan. ABA will continue to repeat the simple fact that slapping a congestion tax on motorcoaches is bad public policy.

The "Gotham 17" are: Bloomberg's former Deputy Mayor Marc Shaw, MTA Director Elliot Sander, Port Authority Director Anthony Shorris, Naderite Gene Russianoff, NYCDOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan, activist Elizabeth Yeampierre, Assembly members Richard Brodsky (D), Vivian Cook (D), and Herman Farrell (D); Nassau Chamber of Commerce President Richard Bivone, SUNY Trustee Thomas Egan, labor leader Gary LaBarbera, the Rev. Edwin Reed, Drum Major Institute Director Andrea Batista Schlesinger, Partnership for NYC President Kathryn Wylde, attorney and urban planner Gerard Ronski and Environmental Defense activist Andrew Darrell.

Canadian Wins Top Honors At 2007 Inspectors Competition

For two years straight a Canadian commercial vehicle inspector has come away from the annual North American Inspectors Competition as the grand champion. James Trombley, a CVSA certified inspector from the province of Alberta, captured the title after scoring the highest overall marks over 54 other competitors in the six competition inspection categories.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in the bus inspection category went to John Toto of Massachusetts; Donald Woodal of Maryland; and Adrian Armprister of New York. The bus inspection portion of the event is sponsored by the American Bus Association and by [ABC Bus Companies](#). ABC contributed four new coaches, drivers and service personnel to the event.

Did You Know That...

Quebec City is the only walled city in North America?



EDUCATION

CTIS Mentoring Program Encourages Enrollees

The Certified Travel Industry Specialist Program, American Bus Association's commitment to continuing education for the group travel and motorcoach industry, offers a mentoring program to assist program enrollees with their goal – graduation!

Mentor duties include:

- Offering support and encouragement to your enrollee

- Sharing advice on having a full-time job and still managing to complete all of the assignments
- Serving as a sympathetic ear when your enrollee might feel overwhelmed
- Attending your enrollee's graduation at Marketplace

Mentors and mentees should contact each other on a regular basis to make the most of the CTIS Program. If you have questions regarding the CTIS Program or our mentoring program, or want to participate in either program, contact us at 800-283-2877.

MARKETPLACE PACE

Charlotte Already Looking To 2009; Next Marketplace Host City Captures Award For Logo Design

Charlotte civic leaders aren't standing in line waiting for 2009. The next host city for Marketplace is already preparing for the big event. And earning national honors in the process.

Charlotte's Marketplace 2009 logo has claimed the American Corporate Identity Award. The logo, created by A3 Design, will be featured in a forthcoming HarperCollins book on design. With more than 1,000 entries seeking this coveted award, Charlotte bested them all.



Sellers Sold On Marketplace's Unique Value

How can Marketplace help your long-term business growth? Just ask Becky Sellers of Texas.

Becky Sellers of *Texoma Tours* donated a couple of buses to assist the Grapevine CVB with transportation during Marketplace 2007. Becky and her staff were wonderful volunteers who went above and beyond to shuttle our delegates from location to location. She recently reported to Heather Kisabeth at the Grapevine CVB that her business is up and she's crediting it to the role Texoma Tours played at Marketplace. She says not only are their tours up but other suppliers from the area who volunteered during ABA have been hiring them for their programs. Way to go, Becky!

Becoming involved in Marketplace as a delegate, sponsor or committee member will help you build your business.

Market YOURSELF at Marketplace -

Volunteer, Sponsor, Network & Increase Your ROI!

Did You Know That...

ABA aids you in the proposal process for wheelchair lift and security grants? In all, ABA members have received more than 90 percent of the grants awarded to the motorcoach industry over the past six years.

Have your message read by the right people.

Reach out to the motorcoach, tour and travel industry audience in the ABA Insider.

Contact Brian Parker for information on sponsorship opportunities, (215) 321-9662 x41, bparker@buses.org.

Charter Notices

Schuylkill Transportation System, St. Clair, PA.
Submissions due by September 22, 2007.

Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC), Lynchburg, VA.
Submissions due by September 20, 2007.

Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX), Orlando, FL.
Submissions due by September 20, 2007.

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PENDING OPERATORS

The following companies have submitted applications for membership between August 14 - August 27, 2007.

New Millenium Vacations Inc.

Lawrence Weygand, President
Aurora, Colo.

Wilmac Tours Inc.

Willie McGee, President
Detroit, Mich.

Snyder Tours

Maria Burrigge, General Manager
Buffalo, N.Y.

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

NEW MEMBERS

Following are new members who joined ABA between August 14 - August 27, 2007.

ASSOCIATES

Family Publications

Gail Granet Velez, Publisher
325 W 38th St., Ste. 306
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Motorcoach Marketing & Innovations

Mike Kavanagh, Principal
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Perth, WA 6148 Australia
PH 011-61 4-3299 4336, FAX 011-61 8-9354 3432

TRAVEL INDUSTRY MEMBERS

Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum

Meghan Smith, Group Sales Supervisor
1300 S. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60605-2403
PH 312-294-0361, FAX 312-322-9117

AEG National Group Sales: Tutankhamun and Real Pirates Exhibits

Rachel Carr, Manager
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PH 213-763-4669

Best Western Carriage Inn

Colleen Goldberg, General Manager
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Sherman Oaks, CA 91411

Comfort Inn Clearfield

Janet Morris, General Manager
1821 Industrial Park Road
Clearfield, PA 16830
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Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

James Hoffman, Marketing Director
6500 S. New Hope Road
Belmont, NC 28012
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Entertainment Cruises/Bateaux/Odyssey/Seadog/ Spirit/Mystic Blue Cruises

Liz Gilbert, Nat.'l Dev. Mgr., Travel & Tourism
Pier 62, Chelsea Piers, Suite 200
New York, NY 10011-1015
PH 646-358-3125, FAX 212-352-1367

Forever Resorts

Michelle Kien, Sales Manager
P.O. Box 52038
Phoenix, AZ 85072
PH 480-998-7199, FAX 480-998-9965

Golden Spike Tower & Visitors Center

Lisa Cox, Interim Director
P.O. Box 1207 / 1249 N. Homestead Road
North Platte, NE 69103
PH 308-660-3776, FAX 308-532-5914

High Country Inn

Kurt Fonseca, General Manager
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Banff, AB T1L 1A7 Canada
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Horizon Hospitality Mgmt. Alpharetta & Acworth

De Anna Robinson, Marketing Manager
200 North Point Way
Acworth, GA 30102
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Howard Johnson Inn Colorado Springs North

Robert Teegardin, General Manager
8280 Highway 83
Colorado Springs, CO 80920
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Metropolis Area Tourism Commission

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P.O. Box 168
Metropolis, IL 62960
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Myrtle Beach Pelicans LP

Derek Martin, Asst. G.M./Ticket Sales
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Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
PH 843-918-6002, FAX 843-918-6001

Native Discovery

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18505 Grapevine Rd.
Red Owl, SD 57787
PH 605-985-5249, FAX 605-964-5249

Ozark Mountain Hoe-Down

Randall George, Owner
3140 E. Van Buren
Eureka Springs, AR 72632-9498
PH 479-253-7725, FAX 479-253-6629

Quality Inn Pensacola

Kathy Wilkins
6550 Pensacola Blvd.
Pensacola, FL 32505
PH 850-477-0711, FAX 850-479-1977

Quality Suites

Andy Wu, General Manager
2701 Hotel Terrace Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92705
PH 714-957-9200, FAX 714-641-8936

Radisson Hotel Bloomington by Mall of America

Virginia Van Sluis, Senior Sales Manager
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Radisson Hotel Reagan National Airport

June Campola, Director of Sales
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Arlington, VA 22202-3698
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Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau

Keith Toler, Executive Director
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Santa Fe, NM 87504
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Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel & Conference Center - Valley Forge

Ruth Boyle
480 N. Gulph Road
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Tidewater Inn Cape Cod

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