



Palmetto Progress

Motorcoach Association of South Carolina

P.O. Box 474, Columbia, SC 29202

888.376.1150 FAX 866.376.1156

Winter 2011

President's Letter

Bob Garrett

Sunshine Travel & Express
Lancaster, SC

Happy New Year!

I want to start the New Year by saying *thank you* to all members. It is because of you that MCASC exists. MCASC was established in 1998 to create a forum for operators essentially to achieve legislative goals and to impact the South Carolina motorcoach industry in a positive way. It was also established to create a forum for associates to meet operators face to face to establish relationships that result in greater group tour business. I believe these reasons are still the driving force for MCASC's continued existence. Faithful membership renewal and faithful attendance for MCASC events such as the annual meeting and market place and the annual roadeo are the keys to MCASC's stability. In exchange for that faithfulness, MCASC leadership attempts to provide benefit and service. Looking back as one is prone to do at this time of the year, I believe MCASC has held up to its side of the bargain. I, personally, and the MCASC leadership as a whole subscribe to the philosophy of "using members first." To me that is one of the greatest benefits of membership. While it may not happen 100% of the time due to the circumstances, I believe it is a philosophy that is embraced by our members.

In looking back, 2010 was a tough year for many of us in the motorcoach industry. Tours, generally, were down largely due to the weakened economy. Folks that routinely participate in tours several times a year held on to their money for more essential things. With budget cuts in the school systems, student travel suffered. Operators

who have a huge investment in equipment suffered. With tours in decline, our associates suffered. I read an article a few days ago that said hotel rates are going up in 2011. Is that a sign of anticipation that 2011 is going to be a much better year economically, or is that a delusion on the part of the writer of the article? I hope it is a forecast of a better year for all of us.

In assessing 2010, it was a good year for MCASC. Membership recruitment and retention was consistent with past years. Meeting attendance was slightly decreased but the annual meeting in August was successful in terms of benefit to members and fundraising for the association. The roadeo in Anderson was successful in terms of attendance, a learning experience for drivers, and exposure to the many "best kept secrets" for group tour opportunities in Anderson. Anderson has a great deal to offer that I think many of our operators did not know or had forgotten.

Looking ahead to 2011, I see potential for yet another successful year for the association. The upcoming roadeo in Florence will be another opportunity for drivers to build on their skills and knowledge exhibited in the past seven years. Florence was the host for the second roadeo and we're happy to return. I want to thank **Holly Young Beaumier** with the Florence CVB for her efforts on behalf of MCASC. I also want to thank **Jo Lynn Lott**, chairman of the roadeo committee and committee members, **Johnny Cauley (Jean's Bus Service)**, **David Parham (Ionosphere Tours)**, and **Brian Pinckney (Daimler Buses)** for what they have done thus far and will do to make the 2011 Coach Roadeo a meaningful experience for our drivers and mechanics. I hope all operators and our coach members have made plans to be in Florence February 15 for the roadeo. The board of directors will meet February 14 and Holly has arranged for you to experience some of Florence either by participation in a pre-roadeo tour experience or the evening dinner event. I will look forward to seeing you in Florence!

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



President's Letter Continued from Cover

Continuing to look ahead, I am so excited that MCASC's annual meeting and market place will be held jointly with the Georgia Motorcoach Operators Association in Savannah August 21-24. This will be MCASC's second joint meeting if you consider the first meeting held in Myrtle Beach with the Virginia Motorcoach Association as a joint meeting. VMA met with MCASC for its first meeting to give MCASC a "jump start" for future annual membership meetings. I am excited about the meeting for many reasons but the foremost reason is to give associate members of both associations a larger market place. Our associates have been asking for joint meetings to save travel expense and time. GMOA has included group leaders in its market place and will do that for the joint meeting. Last year, GMOA had approximately 80 group leaders. I believe that our associate members can anticipate about the same number for the joint meeting in Savannah. Mark your calendar and plan to be there!

I hope that all members are looking ahead for a better year in 2011. I can promise you that I will do everything I can working with your Board of Directors and committees to make 2011 as successful as possible for MCASC with membership benefit as an end result.

I wish you safe travels, good health, prosperity, and joy in 2011. Shirley is known for saying, "And, remember having a good day is your choice." Let's take that a bit further and realize that the joy of 2011 will be largely our choice.

Bob Garrett

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Changes

OPERATORS

GETAWAY TRAVELS

P.O. Box 2669
Orangeburg, SC 29116

WRIGHT TRAVEL

Kelsey Claude Wright, Safety Manager

ASSOCIATES

More changes have been made than space allows in this newsletter. Please check the web site listing for correct contact information for the following associate members:

HOTELS

Best Western Lakeside

Courtyard by Marriott Charleston Waterfront

SALES, SERVICE & PRODUCTS

CH Bus Sales

TOUR RECEPTIVE

GroupConnect, Inc.

TOURISM AGENCIES

Chattanooga Area CVB

Macon CVB

Tuscaloosa Tourism & Sports Commission

Valley Forge CVB

Visit Savannah

Attention Members

MCASC Renewal Invoices were mailed last week with a deadline of April 1, 2011.

If you have any questions about your membership, please email kelly_b@embarqmail.com.

Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority has a new and improved web site. The address is:

<http://www.pdrta.org/ourservice/overview.aspx>



Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators Meeting to be held February 1-3, 2011 at Hilton Wilmington Riverside

Operators have been invited from the 13 southeastern and south central states to come together for “operator to operator” discussion and workshop sessions. (Please review the schedule below.) This is not only an opportunity to discuss the industry “hot topics,” but it is also an opportunity to get to know operators in states where you travel and may need help at one time or another. I suspect that you prefer helping people you know and trust. The way you build knowledge and trust is to meet face to face and develop good business relationships. The southeastern operators will form a coalition to benefit operators who are members of the various state motorcoach associations in terms of organizing for emergency evacuation and for special events that require a large number of coaches. After nine years of annual meetings, with operators overwhelmingly voting to continue yet another year, a coalition will more formalize the forum to create a greater voice when it comes to greater utilization of your equipment for evacuation, special events, or other areas where a voice of hundreds of operators owning thousands of coaches will speak louder than any single state association or single operator. I hope you will plan to attend this meeting.

Tuesday, February 1

Operator-to-Operator Time

2:00 – 4:30 Registration

3:30 – 4:30 **Welcome and Introductions:**
Ray Robbins, President, NCMA
(H&R Tours, Boonville, North Carolina)

Round Table Discussion: State Association Current Activities and Issues/Greatest Challenges

Jim Harris, Chairman Southeastern Committee, NCMA
(Cardinal Coach, Warsaw, North Carolina)

4:45 Board Coaches

5:30 **Social/Dinner/Entertainment**

Sponsored by Duplin Winery

Guests will be greeted at a Social featuring Duplin wine and light hors d'oeuvres held in the Duplin Winery Museum which showcases wine artifacts and history. Dinner at the Bistro Restaurant is followed by an audience-infused theatrical performance of the Sensational 60's and 70's.

Wednesday, February 2

Operator-to-Operator Time

8:00 – 3:00 Registration

8:30 – 10:00 Breakfast

Sponsored by Allen Insurance Group and Daimler Buses North America

Emergency Evacuation Advisory Committee Report:

Jimmy Kelton, Advisory Committee Chairman (Kelton Tours Unlimited, Gadsden, Alabama)

Establishing the Coalition of the Southeastern Motorcoach Operators: Jim Harris

10:15 – 11:45 **Workshop:** Privatizing Transit Authorities
Speaker: **Bill Schoolman**, Classic Coach/Hampton Luxury Lines, Bohemia, New York

12:00 – 1:00 **Lunch**
Industry Comment: **Peter Pantuso**, **American Bus Association**

Sponsored by American Bus Association

1:00 – 2:00 **Workshop:** ABA/UMA Panel Discussion of Industry Hot Spots
Moderator: **Ray Land**, Fabulous Coach, Branford, Florida

2:00 – 3:00 **Workshop:** Accident Prevention and What to do if it is not prevented!
Speaker: **Larry Yohe**, Retired Accident Investigator, National Transportation Safety Board

Refreshments sponsored by North Carolina Motorcoach Association, Host Association

3:30 – 4:30 **Workshop:** Technology
Speaker: **Mike Deeb**, Saucon

4:30 – 5:15 **Workshop:** Pre-employment Screening and Rulemaking Update (NTSA and FMCSA)

Speaker: **Phil Hanley**, Consolidated Safety Services Board Coaches

5:45
6:00 **Social/Dinner on board the Battleship North Carolina**

(Coach members invited)

Sponsored by Battleship North Carolina and Wilmington/ Cape Fear Convention and Visitors Bureau

Thursday, February 3

Operator and Coach Members

(All Sales, Service, and Product Members)

8:00 – 9:00 **Breakfast**

Industry Comment: **Vic Parra**, **United Motorcoach Association**

Sponsored by United Motorcoach Association

9:15 – 10:15 **Panel Discussion: Seatbelts/Rule Status/Retrofitting**

Panelists from ABA, UMA, and Coach Manufacturers

Moderator: **Warren Newton**, Newton Bus Service, Gloucester, Virginia

10:15 – 11:45 **Coach Manufacturer Panel Discussion**
Topics: Transmissions, AC, Emergency Exits, Electronic Stability Control, Brake Maintenance, Wheel Seals, Tire Monitors, Fire Suppression, Accessory Components

Moderator: **Scott Merriman**, Scenic America, Bealeton, Virginia

Refreshments sponsored by North Carolina Motorcoach Association, Host Association

11:45 – 12:15 **Wrap Up/Evaluation/Discussion:**
Jim Harris

Determine Location for 2012 Meeting



MCASC Eighth Coach Rodeo February 14 - 15, 2011 Florence, SC

A block of rooms for MCASC members has been reserved at the Hilton Garden Inn. Call 864-226-1000 for reservations. The Hilton Garden Inn is located at 2671 Hospitality Boulevard, Florence, SC 29501 and the hotel telephone number is 843-432-3001. See directions to the Hotel and the Civic Center. **Guest room rate at the Hilton Garden Inn is \$79 plus tax.** A block of rooms has been reserved for MCASC for the night of February 14.

February 14, 2011

10:00 Pre-Rodeo Tour Option
(Be sure to sign up on the registration form.)
Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden, Bishopville
Young Pecan Plantation Outlet
Pee Dee State Farmer's Market
Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center
(downtown)
4:00 – 6:00 Board of Directors Meeting
Hilton Garden Inn

Refreshments sponsored by Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau and its Partners

This is notice to all operator members of the Board of Directors Meeting. All operator members are invited to attend.

6:00 Social Time
Hilton Garden Inn
Hosted by Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau and its Partners
7:00 Dinner and Trade Show
Lynches River County Park

February 15, 2011

All events will be held at the Civic Center
(See directions on reverse side.)
Complimentary Breakfast for Hilton Garden Inn guests only.
9:00 – 12:00 Registration
9:00 – 9:30 Continental breakfast for all participants
Sponsored by Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau and its Partners

9:30 – 10:00 Orientation for Judges
(Clipboards and score sheets)
9:30 – 10:15 Orientation to Written Tests for Drivers and Mechanics
10:15 – 11:00 Drivers Written Test
10:00 – 12:00 Seminar for Operators:
FMCSA's CSA 2010
11:00 – 12:00 *Skills Course Orientation for Drivers

12:00 – 1:30 Lunch for all participants
Sponsored by Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau and its Partners

1:30 – 5:00 Driving Skills Test in the Parking Lot
1:30 – 5:00 Test Review for Drivers
5:30 – 6:30 Awards presentation

*Orientation will be conducted by Brian Pinckney, Rodeo Committee
Committee members include: Jolynn Lott, Chairman, Johnny Cauley, David Parham, Brian Pinckney

DIRECTIONS TO HILTON GARDEN INN AND FLORENCE CIVIC CENTER

HILTON GARDEN INN
2671 Hospitality Boulevard
Florence, SC 29501
843- 432-3001

I-95 Exit 160 A to first light. Turn right on Radio Drive. Turn left at next light onto Hospitality Boulevard Hotel is on the left.

I-20 East to Exit 141 B To Business 20 Spur. Turn right on Radio Drive. Turn right on Radio Drive. Turn left at next light onto Hospitality Boulevard Hotel is on the left.

FLORENCE CIVIC CENTER

3300 W. Radio Drive
Florence, SC 29501
Phone: 843-679-9417

I-95 traveling north or south, take exit 160A. Proceed to the first traffic light and turn right. The Florence Civic Center will be directly ahead on the left.

I-20 traveling east, follow I-20 to David H. Mcleod Blvd (I-20 spur). Proceed to the first traffic light and turn right. The Florence civic center will be directly on the left.

From Myrtle Beach, travel west on hwy. 76 through downtown Florence. Bear right on David H. Mcleod Blvd (I-20 spur). Turn left at the third and/or the fifth traffic light to reach the Civic Center.

Coach Rodeo Driving Course



Canada Urges Bus Operators To Use E-311 Cards At Borders

Reprinted from ABA Insider, Issue 87, December 20.

The Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) is urging all bus operators to voluntarily use E-311 Customs Declaration Forms at the Niagara border crossing as well as the Detroit-Windsor border crossing “to streamline and expedite the clearance process.”

“For our bus operators, improved efficiency can help reduce delays associated with” crossing the U.S.-Canadian borders, CBSA wrote to ABA in a letter the agency urged be shared with all motorcoach operators. “For the CBSA, it enables enhanced risk assessment and more efficient” checks at heavily trafficked border crossing points.

CBSA offers operators “tips for easier border crossings” that include recommending that “Large coach movements should be reported to the appropriate border crossing prior to leaving Canada,” which will “allow CBSA to either schedule sufficient staff to process passengers upon your return or direct your vehicle to a less congested bridge where you can be processed more efficiently.”

CBSA further advises, “We suggest that large coach groups stagger their arrival times at the border,” as “Equal distribution of motorcoach traffic across all three Niagara-area bridges will also help to reduce delays and allow for faster processing at each location.”

E-311 cards are available free of charge (including free shipping) by calling 800.959.2221. The Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) reports that “buses with passengers who have filled out the E-311’s are reported to be processed faster. We believe that once all CBSA Officers are trained to recognize and accept these forms, it should help speed up bus clearance.” More information is available at <http://www.omca.com/documents/CBSAE311information.pdf>.

CSA 2010 Needs BASIC Refinements, ABA Tells FMCSA

Reprinted from ABA Insider, Issue 87, December 20.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s (FMCSA) launch last week of the online database of bus operator scores measured via Compliance Safety Accountability 2010 (CSA 2010) should be refined to ensure its safety value, ABA President & CEO Peter Pantuso wrote Administrator Anne Ferro.

“ABA Believes that CSA 2010 will eventually provide a much more accurate safety picture of all commercial motor carriers,” Pantuso wrote. “However, the bus industry has several concerns unique to commercial passenger carriers.”

ABA asked Ferro for “assurance that only injuries arising out of legitimate crashes are entered into the BASIC score.” The CSA 2010 Safety Measurement System database contains

motor carriers’ safety performance scores in seven Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASIC): Hours of Service violations and fatigued driving; unsafe driving; driver fitness; drug and alcohol use; and vehicle maintenance. Two of the BASICS, cargo-related (for truckers) and crash indicator, are being withheld from public view until the agency can determine if the changes they have made to those categories will work properly to identify unsafe carriers.

Another concern ABA identified with BASIC is with the fraudulent insurance claims being recorded no differently than actual crash injuries. Such meritless insurance claims “are unfortunately common in both the intercity and transit bus industries, with slip and fall incidents as the number one events reported,” Pantuso wrote. “ABA requests that documenting officials only report crash level injuries” in the new system. “There are a number of no-fault states, which assign crash blame to all involved parties,” Pantuso continued. “ABA seeks assurance that no-fault state data be carefully vetted so as not to skew the BASIC crash risk in favor of operators in states that do not operate on a no-fault basis.”

ABA also expressed its concern about the level of importance CSA 2010 gives to reports from the states. “Every state provides a high level of truck inspection oversight under the MCSAP program grants,” Pantuso wrote. “Unfortunately this is not the case with commercial passenger carriers,” because fewer than half of the states “have bus inspection programs that have been approved at the FMCSA baseline,” with “perhaps eight states that have bus inspection programs that perform at a level” providing assurance that scores measured under CSA 2010 metrics will be accurate. “Until all states have bus inspection and enforcement programs at a consistent level with the truck industry, there will be opportunities for carriers with poor safety management practices to find safe harbors, while safe, compliant carriers are left at a major disadvantage.”

ABA asked in closing for a meeting with Administrator Ferro to discuss these issues.

New University Study Shows Buses Continue Growth In Popularity Among Travelers

Excerpt from ABA Insider, Issue 87, December 20.

New statistics show the popularity of intercity bus travel continues to grow, according to a study released last week by the DePaul University Chaddick School for Metropolitan Development, “The Intercity Bus: America’s Fastest Growing Transportation Mode -- 2010 Update on Scheduled Bus Service.”

“For the third year in a row, the intercity bus service was the fastest growing mode of intercity transportation, outpacing air and rail transportation,” the study reports. “Intercity bus operations expanded by 6.0% in 2010, suggesting that the sector’s renaissance is continuing.”

Passengers getting out of their cars to take the bus instead have also helped America slash its total fuel consumption by 11 million gallons annually, which DePaul writes is “the equivalent benefit of removing 23,818 vehicles from the road.”



USDOT to mandate rear-view detection systems

Reprinted from Bus and Motorcoach News, issue Dec. 15.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is proposing to require that passenger cars, pickup trucks, minivans and minibuses under 10,000 pounds be equipped with a rear view system by 2014.

Under a notice of proposed rulemaking from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drivers of affected vehicles must be able to see directly behind the vehicle when the transmission is put into reverse.

The agency estimates that 228 people, mostly children, are killed each year by light-duty vehicles backing up. Pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles account for 140 of the fatalities, according to the agency.

The agency said it expects vehicle manufacturers will install rear-mounted video cameras and in-vehicle displays to meet the proposed standard.

The rule would be phased in beginning in September 2012 when 10% of affected new vehicles must comply, followed by a 40% compliance rate by September 2013 and 100% by September 2014.

The proposed rule was required by Congress as part of the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2007.

Two-year old Cameron Gulbransen, for whom the act is named, was killed when his father accidentally backed over him in the family's driveway, the agency said.

NHTSA is providing a 60-day comment period on this rulemaking. For more information, go to: www.nhtsa.gov/Laws-Regs.

New Entrant Safety Program to be audited for effectiveness

Reprinted from Bus and Motorcoach News, issue Dec. 15.

The U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General plans to audit the response by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to National Transportation Safety Board recommendations to improve the FMCSA's New Entrant Safety Assurance Program.

Under the program, the FMCSA oversees newly registered motor carriers (known as new entrants) by informing them of motor carrier safety standards and regulations, and determining whether the new companies are complying with the standards and regulations.

Over the years, it has proven very difficult for the FMCSA to assure that all motor carriers it has put out of service do not evade the law and become new entrants again under different names -- such operators are commonly called "reincarnated" or "chameleon" carriers.

After its investigation of a Jan. 2, 2008, motorcoach crash in Victoria, Texas, that resulted in one fatality and more than three-dozen injuries, the NTSB issued a report to FMCSA recommending it address weaknesses in the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program, including reducing the risk of reincarnated or chameleon carriers.

Specifically, NTSB recommended that FMCSA establish new program requirements and develop new computerized methods of identifying carriers that try to evade detection, assist the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in developing a database of information on commercial vehicles, and seek statutory authority to enhance its ability to oversee new entrants.

The NTSB investigation of the Victoria crash found the company operating the motorcoach was in essence a chameleon carrier.

In a July 2010 report on the fiscal 2011 USDOT appropriations bill, the House Committee on Appropriations directed the Office of Inspector General to evaluate FMCSA's response to the NTSB recommendations, all of which remain open.

Accordingly, the objective of the audit is to evaluate FMCSA's efforts to improve the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program by addressing key NTSB recommendations, says the USDOT OIG office.

Announcement of the audit came within days of an article published by The Trucker website, investigating a possible chameleon trucking company.

Sources told The Trucker during its investigation that FMCSA simply didn't have the resources to extend to trucking companies the vetting process it uses to check out new motorcoach companies and household goods carriers.

The FMCSA has made a special effort in recent years to sharpen its vetting process for new motorcoach companies in an effort to catch bad actors and operators that previously have been put out of service but have attempted to reincarnate as a "new" company.

The FMCSA deals with literally hundreds of new entrant applications each week -- the vast majority of them new trucking companies.

While the agency's New Entrant Safety Assurance Program is designed to cover the three primary sectors of motor carriers - motorcoach operators, household goods carriers, and property-carrying carriers, which by far comprise the largest group of the three, the FMCSA hasn't had the resources to extend the much more stringent process used for motorcoaches and household goods carriers to truckers.

The agency has focused on coach operators because there have been accidents with multiple deaths and injuries involving chameleon bus companies.



MCASC Newsletter Advertising Form

Putting your advertisement in the MCASC Newsletter gets you right in touch with motorcoach companies in South Carolina. We invite you to use this form to contract for your ad space.

The costs are as follows:

One Issue:

	Black & White	Color
1/4 page:	\$150	\$275
1/2 page:	\$225	\$425
Full page:	\$350	\$650

Advertising is also offered at a yearly rate (4 issues):

	Black & White	Color
1/4 Page:	\$350	\$800
1/2 Page:	\$550	\$1250
Full Page:	\$1050	\$2150

The ad should be received as a .JPEG or .TIFF file with a resolution of 350 or higher, or a PDF file with embedded font files and Macintosh compatible. A disk is preferred and should be accompanied by a "hard copy." The disk will be returned only at your request. Ads may also be emailed to angie_g@embarqmail.com, with a hard copy mailed to the MCASC office. If there is a question about format please contact the MCASC office at 888.376.1150 or email angie_g@embarqmail.com.

Space Dimensions

1/4 page: 3.5" wide x 4" tall
1/2 page: 7.5" wide x 4" tall
Full page: 7.5" wide x 10" tall

Upcoming Issues For Advertising

_____ Spring 2011	Deadline: February 1, 2011
_____ Summer 2011	Deadline: May 1, 2011
_____ Fall 2011	Deadline: August 1, 2011
_____ Winter 2012	Deadline: November 1, 2011

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Company: _____

Mailing Address: _____
City State Zip Code

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Make check payable to the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina and mail with hard copy to:

MCASC Office, 106 Main Street, Brookneal, VA 24528

Questions: 888.376.1150 or FAX: 866.376.1156 or Email: angie_g@embarqmail.com



Calendar

2011 ABA Marketplace
January 8 - 12, 2011 Philadelphia, PA

2011 UMA Motorcoach Expo
January 19 - 23, 2011 Tampa, FL

Southeastern Regional Motorcoach Operators Meeting
February 1 - 3, 2011
Hilton Wilmington Riverside, Wilmington, NC

2011 MCASC Annual Coach Rodeo
February 14 - 15, 2011
Florence Civic Center, Florence, SC

MCASC & GMOA Joint Annual Meeting & Market Place
August 21 - 24, 2011
Marriott Riverfront, Savannah, GA



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