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ABA Insider

▶ THE INSIDER Q&A: **Scott Riccio, President, NorthEast Charter & Tour, Lewiston, Maine**

ABA | Please tell our readers about the new program NorthEast Charter & Tour has initiated to make its drivers and other staff more aware of how their actions can save fuel to go green and save money at the same time.

SR | NorthEast Trailways has initiated driver and garage staff idle limits, implemented company maximum speed limits, and purchased a 6,000-gallon above-ground double-walled diesel fuel tank so that we do not fuel on the road anymore, saving more than 4,000 gallons of fuel each year. We recycle everything—scrap metal, any plastic, cardboard, white paper, beverage cans, and bottles consumed while aboard the coach. We've installed building lights on timers to save energy, fans in the ceiling of the garage to push the heat to the floor, and block heaters in all coaches so they can be plugged in at night while on overnight trips instead of running all night. For tune-ups to coach engines for better performance, we have been using true synthetic oils in our engines to achieve better engine life and fewer oil changes. Last year, we traded in two of our older units for two 2009 coaches equipped with 2007 clean burn engines and ZF Transmissions. We have not only been able to reduce our carbon footprint, but have created a new logo as a result: "See why riding with us is a breath of fresh air."



ABA | You recently joined ABA's Environmental Committee, chaired by Board of Directors member Darren Berg. What motivated you to become active in the group?

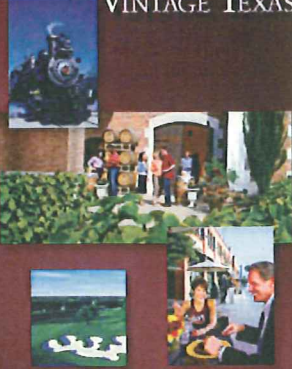
SR | I contacted Peter Pantuso with a list of things we did at NorthEast Trailways that I thought I could share with the industry. From there he asked me to participate in the Environmental Committee meeting at 2010 Marketplace. As an industry, we are promoting that we are an environmentally friendly mode of transportation to the general public. We all need to extend our practices to how we run our daily businesses. We at NorthEast have become better stewards of the environment both via our equipment and through adopting environmental best practices across the company. If each company implements one new policy that equals a best practice towards the environment, we will all be doing our part to promote a cleaner environment, reduce our carbon footprints, and cut our fossil fuel dependence.

ABA | What are some of the demographic changes and trends in ridership you are seeing at NorthEast Charter & Tours?

SR | We have recently taken an aggressive approach in understanding more about our customers that we hope will equal more coach bookings. With budgeting becoming a factor in school districts, I have offered our services to them on days when we have coaches sitting around. I hope to bring awareness of NorthEast to

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the schools by providing a superior mode of transportation to the kids. Our newly launched [Web site](#) will inform the general public about what we do and who we are. Please e-mail me at sriccio@northeastchartertour.com with your thoughts.

ABA | You recently made it a point to equip your entire fleet with ABA's safety tools for pre-trip passenger safety messaging. What drove you to make public awareness about safety such a priority?

SR | We have found that it is one more way to take care of our customers. Years ago, I implemented a mandatory driver introduction program that started with a "welcome aboard" speech from the driver, but also called for reviewing guidelines to the passengers and what to do in the event of an emergency. I was shocked at the number of passengers who would tell drivers they have been riding coaches for years and had never heard this type of welcome/safety speech before. When ABA made available DVDs talking of safety and emergency procedures, we had the drivers use them before a trip got started and referred to the safety cards that were in each seatback magazine pocket. I have always felt that the more information you can provide to your customer the better. The ABA pre-trip passenger safety message does just that. It's a great tool. In both of our divisions, NorthEast Trailways in Lewiston, Maine, and Richards Coach of Lincolnville, Maine drivers and staff are sure each coach has a sufficient number of these Safety Cards in each coach prior to each trip.

ABA | What was your reaction to the Capital Region Marketplace 2010 last month?

SR | Marketplace 2010 was amazing. I was able to spend time on the floor, at the Product Pavilion, at educational seminars, networking and partaking in the Bus Industry Safety Council meetings. In true ABA fashion, I was able to accomplish what I set out to do and enjoy what ABA has to offer. Marketplace is always a great opportunity to promote what you do, network with your peers and keep on top of industry trends.

▶ ABA Co-Hosting Transportation & Infrastructure Convention

ABA is participating once again as a National Co-Host Organization for the third annual Transportation & Infrastructure Convention slated for March 10-12, 2010 in Washington. The goal of the meeting is to educate officials on critical transportation issues that require urgent attention, and to create new opportunities for the private sector to engage with governmental leaders on those issues. Scheduled speakers include



U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.), Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.), the Committee's Ranking Member, and many other members of Congress.

"ABA's leadership as the voice of the motorcoach, tourism and travel industry at this influential gathering will give us an historic chance to position buses as a crucial part of the transportation solution," said ABA SVP for Government Affairs Clyde Hart.