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FIRST JOINT OMCA/ABA TOUR OPERATOR SUMMIT A SUCCESS

Representatives from more than 100 companies packed the first-ever Tour Operator Summit hosted by the American Bus Association (ABA) and the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) March 30-31, 2011, at the Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York.

The OMCA/ABA Tour Operator Summit featured educational seminars, business sessions, networking events, and a mini-trade show. Forty-five bus and tour operator and 77 tour supplier members of both organizations from both sides of the border attended the event.

“The location brought the border issues to the forefront and the feedback from both the operators and suppliers has been extremely positive,” said OMCA President Brian Crow. “And we thank our title sponsors the Turning Stone Resort & Casino and New York State Tourism for their gracious hospitality in hosting this vital event.”

“We received valuable insight from both U.S.- and Canadian-based tour operators at this event, due to their active participation,” said ABA President & CEO Peter Pantuso, CTIS. “This summit addressed issues that included tour trends and demographic developments, U.S.- Canadian border crossing issues; social networking and much more.”

The two-day Summit included an Operator-to-Operator Session (both OMCA and ABA tour operators), a mini-trade show featuring tour and travel partners, as well as educational seminars covering tour trends and demographic shifts in group travel. The summit also covered the timely topics of border crossing issues; online business building using GroupConnect; social networking; and U.S. and Canadian liability concerns.

OMCA and ABA are currently evaluating all aspects of the Summit and working with participants to make recommendations of future joint efforts to build on the success of the Summit.

The American Bus Association is the trade organization of the intercity bus industry with more than 1000 motorcoach owner and tour company members in the United States and Canada. Its members operate charter, tour, regular route, airport express, special operations and contract services. Another 2,800 members are travel and tourism organizations and suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry.

The Ontario Motor Coach Association is one of the largest travel and tourism-related associations in Canada, and the voice of private sector bus operators, inter-city bus lines, charter and coach tour companies in Ontario.