

MEDIA ALERT: On the day NTSB will issue final report on 2008 multiple fatal motorcoach crash, victims' relatives and safety advocates to warn unsuspecting Americans about motorcoach bus dangers, call for swift federal action to protect nation's bus passengers.

WHAT: MEDIA AVAILABILITY with relatives of motorcoach occupants killed August 8, 2008 in a crash on US-75 near Sherman, Texas, which resulted in 17 deaths and 39 injured. They will join leaders of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (www.saferoads.org) at the National Transportation Safety Board public meeting where the safety agency will issue its Sherman crash final report and recommendations. The relatives and safety advocates will warn American motorists about motorcoach bus dangers, and will urge swift action by Congress to enact the Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act (S.554 and HR 1396) and regulatory action by U.S. Department of Transportation.

WHEN: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2009 at 9:00am ET
(1) 9:00am: Crash victims' relatives and vehicle safety advocates will provide statements to the media just before the 9:30am start of the NTSB meeting.
(2) Immediate after NTSB issues final report and safety recommendations, the relatives and safety advocates will provide reaction statements.

WHERE: Outside the Board Room and Conference Center of the National Transportation Safety Board, located at 429 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Washington, DC

WHO:

- Dr. Yen-Chi Le (Houston, TX), daughter of deceased, Catherine Tuong Lam.
- Mr. Nghia Nguyen (New York, NY), whose sister-in-law's father, Khiem Nguyen, died.
- Jacqueline Gillan, Vice President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.
- Jerry Donaldson, Senior Research Director, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

BACKGROUND:

On August 8, 2008, a motorcoach traveling on US-75 in Sherman, TX, crashed, resulting in 17 deaths and 38 injuries. Victims' relatives and safety advocates will call for swift passage of the **Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act (S.554 and HR 1396)** to make long overdue safety upgrades to federal vehicle and driver safety standards, including seat belts, protection against dangerous motorcoach interior impacts, crush-resistant roofs, protection against fires, and occupant ejection prevention countermeasures, such as advanced glazing on windows, stability technology to help stop rollovers, and better federal and state oversight of unsafe motorcoach operators. The number of motorcoach crashes and fires reported since the Sherman crash is 42, and there have been 50 since the Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act was first introduced in November 2007.

The General Accounting Office launched an investigation following the Sherman crash and found the bus operator was "reincarnated" after being ordered off the road just weeks earlier. The company re-registered using the same mailing address as its predecessor. The GAO report ("Reincarnating Commercial Vehicle Companies Pose Safety Threat to Motoring Public") found that nearly 10 percent of interstate bus operators with their federal permits revoked for safety violations can quickly resume business by "reincarnating" themselves as new companies, and that 20 of the 220 motorcoach operators ordered to stop service by DOT in 2007 and 2008 remained on the road by re-registering under a different and sometimes same name.

In 2006, more than 630 million passengers took trips in motorcoaches -- almost as many as U.S. commercial airlines carried that year. Today, nearly 3,700 interstate motorcoach companies operate over 34,000 motorcoaches, and thousands of others operate in intrastate commerce. Each year the number of new interstate motorcoach companies increases by about 900. Yet, DOT does not require motorcoaches to have the same occupant protection safety features routinely designed into passenger vehicles.

DIRECTIONS TO NTSB BOARD ROOM: Front door located on Lower 10th Street, directly below L'Enfant Plaza. From Metro, exit L'Enfant Plaza station at 9th and D Streets escalator, walk through shopping mall, at CVS store take escalator down one level. Board room will be to your left.

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