

AMSA Today

**September 16, 2008**

As you know, AMSA's Board of Directors and all of our committees met here last week. It was a very productive session and we accomplished a lot - so much, in fact, that I've decided to publish a special edition of AMSA Today next week that will be completely devoted to bringing you up-to-date on all that happened.

But in the meantime, we have a lot to share about what's going on here and in the industry. I know that for those of you with children - or even college students - they are back in class. AMSA is also offering a wide variety of educational and training opportunities this fall for you and members of your staff. I'd especially like to point out our Leader's Program. Details are in this edition of AMSA Today, but if you have some up-and-coming employees that you see as future managers or even executives, please look into giving them this chance to develop their skills and make your company that much better.



Linda Bauer Darr  
President & CEO

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## State Associations Prompt Craigslist Links



Three AMSA-affiliated moving associations recently spearheaded successful efforts to add links to consumer protection information about the moving industry to the popular classified ad Web site Craigslist.

Trend-setting California's group the California Moving & Storage Association was the first, followed by Illinois in August and then Wisconsin.

For cities in Illinois, visitors to the "labor/move" pages (under "Services") will find a prominent hyperlink labeled BEFORE HIRING A MOVER. Clicking this link takes them to the Illinois Commerce Commission's consumer information page for household goods moving, where they can search for movers licensed by the ICC and find consumer publications.

"The Illinois Commerce Commission reports they have had their first consumer inquiring that is a direct result of the new link on Craigslist," reports Pat McLaughlin, executive director of the Illinois Movers' and Warehousemen's Association. "Because of that link, the shipper was able to choose a reliable mover instead of an unlicensed

bad guy."

McLaughlin, who also serves as the chair of the National Council of Moving Associations, sent congratulations to her counterparts in Washington for becoming the third state association to succeed.

Executive Director of the Washington Movers Conference, Jim Tutton, thanked Sharon Wallace, assistant director of the WUTC's Consumer Affairs and Business Practices office and her staff for their help. "Without the commission's letter to the leadership of Craigslist, it would not have happened," Tutton explained, adding that he hopes "this change will provide a major setback to 'rogue moving companies' operating throughout Washington State and that the WUTC will continue to take action against illegal operators who use Craigslist to scam consumers and deprive the state of lawful fees and tax revenues."

McLaughlin is urging other states to act as well. "Now that California, Illinois, and the state of Washington have enjoyed success in getting Craigslist to add a consumer warning to their website, other states are also actively working on their own regulatory agencies to apply pressure to Craigslist."

"I've heard from Florida, Texas, New York, and Pennsylvania that they're working on it, too. We're very excited!"

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**National Safety Conference Helps Movers  
Reduce Risk, Prevent Accidents, and Save Money**

### **Hands-On Vehicle Inspection Added on October 29th!**

[Are you the person responsible for safety, operations and risk management at your company? If so, we invite you to attend the National Safety Conference](#), October 27-28 in Tempe, AZ, where you will find sessions on vehicle maintenance, driver recruitment and retention, workers' compensation, environmental issues, and much more. You will also learn how to conduct an effective accident review and tips on preparing for a FMCSA Audit.



We've also added a one-day training event on Wednesday, October 29 to ensure your drivers and their vehicles will pass the Critical Item Inspection. This practical course, presented by the North American Transportation Management Institute and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, includes a walk around field inspection to help you detect a vehicle's safety-related defects or violations before it enters a highway. This session requires an additional registration; visit

[NATMI's website](#) for more information.

September 26 is the deadline to make reservations at the Tempe Mission Palms. To register online, visit [www.missionpalms.com](http://www.missionpalms.com), enter group code 2TD48K and click "Check Availability" or dial (800) 547-8705 and be sure to mention the American Moving and Storage Association.

Interested in sponsorship or exhibiting opportunities? Contact [Norma Gyovai](#) at (703) 706-4965 to learn more about how your company can be involved.

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## FMCSA to Survey Consumers on Household Goods Program



The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) plans to conduct a telephone survey of about 1,500 consumers who've recently made an interstate move. The purpose is to try to quantify their awareness of the agency's Household Goods Consumer Information Program to help develop future education and outreach initiatives by surveying consumer awareness of the "Protect Your Move" campaign and other household goods messages. Each call is expected to last 15 minutes.

According to the Federal Register, "the study will determine the interstate moving public's recognition or knowledge of the program's activities or messages, such as the 'Protect Your Move' campaign. Results of the study will not be published, but used for internal research purposes by FMCSA in developing future HHG campaign materials, identifying target audiences, and determining distribution strategies to provide better consumer information." A follow-up telephone survey will then be conducted two years later and compared against the results from the baseline assessment.

For more information, contact Brian Ronk, Office of Outreach and Development at FMCSA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590, call (202) 366-1072, or e-mail [brian.ronk@dot.gov](mailto:brian.ronk@dot.gov).

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## New Wheaton Executives Named

Wheaton World Wide Moving has named Mark Kirschner as the company's next CEO and Dave Witzerman as the company's next president. The changes take effect Jan. 1, 2009. Current president and CEO Stephen F. Burns will remain



chairman of the board.

The changes, according to Wheaton, are part of a strategic plan putting Kirschner at the company helm "to set the vision and business strategy for Wheaton in the quickly evolving relocation industry and oversee the implementation of that strategy."

Burns, who led the company for more than 20 years, will move into a consultative role and assist the executive team with growth opportunities such as acquisitions and strategic partnerships.

Kirschner, a 26-year industry and Wheaton veteran, will be ultimately responsible for all facets of Wheaton's internal and external operations and business activities. Kirschner has held several positions throughout his career with Wheaton, from operations to finance. Before being appointed CEO, he was the company's chief operating officer.

Witzerman, currently executive vice president, started with Wheaton in 1993 and is a 25-year industry veteran. He has also run various departments throughout the company with a focus on sales, marketing, customer/account services and agent network growth. Witzerman will help implement strategy, explore strategic partnerships, and maintain oversight of the sales, marketing and customer service organizations.

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## New Frontiers, New Opportunities



AMSA's 2009 Annual Education Conference & Expo offers a unique gateway to discover new frontiers and business opportunities in today's global marketplace. As the premier industry education event of the year, our Conference & Expo will feature education tracks on diversification, leadership, innovation, and process improvement.

There's never been a better time for business owners and leaders to think big - as Texans are known to do - and consider where untapped market opportunities lie.

Don't miss this great forum and the opportunity to learn from business experts and industry leaders, to collaborate with peers and to adopt new technologies and best practices that open up new markets and improve your bottom line.

AMSA is once again combining forces with the General Services Administration to bring you the GSA Household Goods & Freight Forum. If you are doing business with GSA or want to provide

transportation services to the government, this is the event for you.

Registration opens October 15, 2008. Click [here](#) for details, or e-mail [Jaime Barnhart](#), CMP, AMSA Director of Conferences, to add your name to our mailing list.

For exhibit and sponsor opportunities, e-mail [Norma Gyovai](#), our Director of Advertising and Sales, at (703) 706-4965.

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## GSA Notice to Move Managers

GSA's Federal Acquisition Service issued a notice on Aug. 27 to TSPs and move managers about bill payments. The notice says that if a civilian agency has delegated its transportation functions to a move manager, then the move manager should forward all quotations, tenders or contract of special rates, fares, charges or concessions with TSPs, including memoranda of understanding and one-time-only quotes to:



GSA  
 Transportation Audit Division (QMCA)  
 2200 Crystal City Drive, CP4, Suite 300  
 Arlington, VA 22202

If the information is in a format approved by the Audit Division, it may be e-mailed to [QMCA Tariffs@gsa.gov](mailto:QMCA Tariffs@gsa.gov).

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## JD Power Movers Survey Released



The second annual J.D. Power Full-Service Moving Company Customer Satisfaction Study (8/08) analyzed responses from nearly 3,000 customers who used a full-service moving company in the past 12 months. The firm looked at customer satisfaction for insurance/valuation coverage; loading and unloading service; packing service; shipping estimate; and transportation of belongings. Please click [here](#) for the

press release.

Among the findings:

\* 44% reported lost or damaged items. 56% of them, or 25%, filed a claim, and they reported they received compensation 17% higher than

they expected as fair value for their loss. The median compensation equaled their perceived fair replacement value.

\* Customer satisfaction is lowest, on average, during June through September -- and is highest from January through March and October through December.

\* More than nine in ten (91%) respondents received their belongings on time. Among customers who report that their belongings were delivered late, two-thirds were informed ahead of time.

\* Customer loyalty and advocacy, however, is low, providing an opportunity for companies to differentiate themselves from the competition. Slightly more than one-third say that they "definitely will" recommend their moving company and even fewer say they "definitely will" use the same company again.

The study finds that many customers cite the availability of the company within a desired timeframe and the originally-quoted price as important considerations. Customer satisfaction, however, is driven by the quality of the service, including delivering belongings on time and without damage or loss.

"Although consumers view moving services as a commodity, they should be aware that...finding the best value can be different from finding the lowest price," according to Michael Drago, senior account manager for the real estate and construction industries practice at J.D. Power. "The challenge is to help consumers understand these differences to aid in their ability to make an informed decision."

He added, "When loss or damage does occur, moving companies seem to do a good job of providing fair compensation to their customers."

In the first survey last year, 45% of long-distance move customers and 23% of local move customers reported receiving their belongings late or damaged. The 2008 survey information released so far, however, does not break the data out by local vs. long-distance or loss vs. late.

J.D. Power gave its 2008 award to Two Men And A Truck, but added that Graebel was a close second and that North American was also a "top performer."

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## Fuel Surcharge Update

The DOE's nationwide diesel fuel price reported on Monday September 1st was \$4.121 per gallon, a decrease of more than 38 cents from last month's price but still more than \$1.22 higher than one year ago.



Detailed information on the application of the fuel surcharge along with historical fuel surcharge information is available on our [www.promover.org](http://www.promover.org) website under the "Government Affairs" tab. As a reminder, AMSA is able to provide you with the latest DOE fuel prices for the military (SDDC) and GSA rate tenders. However, since Tariff 400-N is no longer in effect and we no longer have the necessary antitrust immunity to publish the tariff, we no longer provide fuel surcharge amounts for any of the former bureau tariffs.

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## Families First Chief Promoted



President Bush has nominated Brigadier General James L. Hodge (USA) for promotion to the rank of major general. Hodge is the commanding general of the Defense Department's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, the command responsible for the Families First program.

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## ProMover Promoted Through Newspaper Pieces

AMSA's upcoming ProMover certification program was the subject of an op-ed earlier this month in The Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel by Linda Bauer Darr. Tied to the end of the traditional moving season, Labor Day, the piece noted that "rogue operators" remain a problem for consumers, but stressed that the vast majority of movers are dedicated, proud professionals who are committed to their communities. The op-ed then explained how ProMover will work and concluded by saying that it "will be a guiding light for harried consumers. If they take advantage of it, we know next year's moving season will be even more satisfying for everyone, except the criminals."



And this past Sunday, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published a letter to the editor from Linda on the ProMover program. The letter responded to a front-page story the previous Sunday reporting on an audit that showed the Georgia Public Service Commission had insufficient resources to properly enforce the state's regulations on the moving industry. Linda's letter noted that while better enforcement may help at the state level, ProMover was the industry's voluntary response at the national level.

Linda's letter can be seen [here on the AJC website](#).

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## National Traffic and Road Closure Information



A reminder that the Federal Highway Administration has created a Web page entitled, "[National Traffic and Road Closure Information](#)." Visitors can click on any state on a US map for a list of the best links to information on traffic and road conditions in that state, including weather issues. These links are more important than ever during the summer and fall months because of both the road construction season and the hurricane season.

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## AMSA's New Exceptional Customer Service Training

### Does your company provide Exceptional Customer Service?

This live webinar series trains your staff to create and maintain exceptional customer service throughout your organization.



Nationally-recognized speaker, coach and author Steve Beck provides the insights and methods so your employees will understand their ability to make the key difference with your customers. They'll get the understanding and tools to change their attitude and mindset so they can make their day flow smoothly with their customers – internal and external.

For one low price, you and your entire staff can receive the very best customer service training available without ever leaving your office, whether it's for one person or your entire staff.

Part One: Everyday Customer Service (Oct. 22, 2:00 PM-3:30 PM EDT\*)

Participants discover that their job is actually not their job, but rather a performance of "How to be Great Every Day" -- that they set the tone for every customer interaction and can make a positive difference with every customer every day.

Part Two: Communications (Nov. 5, 2:00 PM-3:30 PM EDT\*)

Participants focus on all levels of communications at work -- how to handle the angriest customer in a positive and friendly way, reduce stress and mistakes, and head off tomorrow's problems today. They'll also learn how to apply these techniques with everyone in their lives.

Part Three: Exceeding the Customer's Expectations (Dec. 3, 2:00 PM-3:30 PM EDT\*)

Participants learn what it takes to become the employee of the year and how to exceed customer and co-worker's expectations every single time, while creating exceptional customer loyalty. This dynamic training is presented live via webinar by Steve Beck, founder and president of Beck & Associates. He brings more than 20 years of experience as a corporate executive with a background in the securities industry; and has provided his customer service training to the U.S. Army, Drexel Burnham, Motorola dealerships and the Special Olympics-Illinois, among others.

Your company can take part in the complete series for \$500 -- or participate in just one session for only \$200. For more information, contact [MaryScott Tuck](#).

(\*all times tentative)

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### New! Records Storage Training for AMSA Members



AMSA is now partnering with Professional Records & Information Services Management (PRISM) to bring you the latest in records storage training. If you've ever wondered if records storage would be a good diversification for your company, this is a great opportunity to find out! PRISM is offering a two-day Fundamentals of Records Center Management workshop in Orlando on November 3rd and 4th.

The workshop will include 14 sessions covering the expenses of start-up in records storage, how to attract customers, what liabilities you would have, what equipment you would need and facility operations. Participants will also tour a records storage facility.

Registration fee for AMSA members is \$599 (\$699 after Sept. 29th). For more information, please contact either AMSA Director of Training and Certification [MaryScott Tuck](#) or AMSA Senior VP for Marketing, Communications and Education [Sandy Lynch](#).

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### It's Not Too Late to Join the Leaders Class

The [AMSA Leaders Program](#) identifies industry and corporate leaders and creates special executive career tracks for them. The program consists of two tandem tracks: one for leaders and the other for managers. Participants in each receive training in corporate financial statements, strategic thinking and decision-making. The information is presented in a variety of ways, including self-study, discussions and a seminar. Space in each track is limited to allow participants to gain the most from the materials, trainers and seminar.



The next class starts on Oct. 6, and the seminar will be held Feb. 8-9, 2009, in Dallas, Texas with graduation at the general session of AMSA's Annual Conference & Expo on February 10. Applications are being accepted until Oct. 1.

For more information or to download an application please visit [www.promover.org](http://www.promover.org) and go to Training under the Products and Member Services tab. For more details, e-mail [MaryScott Tuck](mailto:MaryScott.Tuck@amsa.org).  
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## You're Invited to the AMSA ProMover Summit



ProMover, the industry's landmark consumer protection program, is just around the corner. It will be a fact of life in January. Your competitors will be touting it and your customers will be asking about it. But is your company ready? Do you know what the requirements are? Its value to the industry? How to promote it?

Get all the answers at the AMSA ProMover Summit. Participants will also get an exclusive first look at the program's next phase, now under development, that can give you an extra edge -- even on other ProMovers! In this special two-day series of seminars, you'll:

- \* Learn how the ProMover program works
- \* Find out how to stay legal with complex consumer regulations
- \* Be briefed on safety compliance by safety experts
- \* Brush up on your claims and arbitration basics
- \* Hear how the industry is complying with the latest antitrust laws
- \* Get an update on the next federal highway bill and what it will mean for the industry and your future, and the latest on the military and GSA markets.

The ProMover Summit will be in Alexandria, Va. on November 12th and 13th. For more information please contact [MaryScott Tuck](mailto:MaryScott.Tuck@amsa.org) or [Dave Hauenstein](mailto:Dave.Hauenstein@amsa.org).  
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For more information, please e-mail [Norma Gyovai](mailto:Norma.Gyovai).  
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