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## **YARTS: first public transit agency installs PREMIER® seat on motorcoaches**

Merced County, CAL.—May 13, 2010—Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS), a Joint Powers Authority in Central California, is the first public agency in the country to purchase PREMIER® motorcoach seats. PREMIER combines lap-shoulder belts with full compartmentalization, protecting both belted and unbelted passengers. YARTS received their first motorcoach with PREMIER seats in late April.

The inclusion of seat belts on YARTS motorcoaches was inspired by an email announcement from Senator Barbara Boxer from California about the Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act 2009 (S554), which is focused on safer and stronger commercial motorcoaches. Boxer, a safety advocate, is cosponsoring the bill with Senators Sherrod Brown (OH), Roland Burris (IL) and Kay Hutchins (TX). Although the legislation is pending, YARTS is staying ahead of the curve.

The agency currently contracts their motorcoach operations, and is now buying its own vehicles. With its new purchase, "YARTS wants to be proactive with our passengers' safety...We want to give more assurance to our customers and provide the safest ride," states Dick Whittington, YARTS Transit Manager. He adds

that the agency currently has an excellent track record with no accidents or injuries, and wants to keep it that way. One of their longest routes is 125 miles one way in the mountains between Mono County and Yosemite Valley.

MCI, who worked with YARTS on their vehicle acquisition, led them to American Seating's PREMIER® seat since it offers the full passenger protection that YARTS was looking for. "We can't make our passengers wear seat belts," Whittington comments. "But then we learned about PREMIER's compartmentalization after viewing American Seating's website, and we realized we can still protect our customers who choose not to buckle up."

PREMIER's SafeGuard SmartFrame™ technology provides the highest level of protection for passengers by integrating a patented seat design encompassing two structures. The inner structure provides lap-shoulder belts and absorbs energy for the belted passenger, while the outer seatback structure remains upright to cushion anyone behind the seat who isn't wearing a seat belt. The agency will also place advisories on the backs of their new seats urging passengers to buckle up, and make announcements prior to departures.

YARTS' first motorcoach using PREMIER seats is scheduled to be in service in May. Funding for three additional buses was recently approved and YARTS is preparing those orders now. They hope to acquire five more in order to complete a fleet motorcoaches with PREMIER seats in the next 18 to 24 months.

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