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Benedict's Bus Service began our charter company in September 1991 with four Motorcoaches purchased from Chamberlain's Transportation in Mansfield. We began the company with only charter transportation...groups that would simply book transportation. Bob Benedict arranged his first all-inclusive tour, offered to any individual that wished to book, in November 1991. This trip filled up quickly and two motorcoaches headed to New York City to see the Christmas Spectacular and the famous Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. He then arranged his second tour in January 1992 to the PA Farm Show. This was the start of a whole new division for this business. In January 1992, Tammy Benedict Mengee began a newsletter, offering tours which began in March 1992. Her first tour was to Binghamton to see the Stars on Ice.

Back then, starting the newsletter was a slow process. We worked diligently to add customers to the list....with a start of school bus employees and church members. Word of mouth became the best advertisement and the less-than-100-member newsletter mailing list has now become well over 3,500 today. We began with 4 motorcoaches in 1991 and now, in 2020, have a fleet of 7 motorcoaches.

On May 13, we will be joining over 800 hundred motorcoaches at a rally in Washington, DC. We will depart at 2:30 am and drive two of our motorcoaches in a convoy with other empty motor coaches to raise awareness of the industry's plight. Owners Tammy Mengee and Maria Frank, along with a few family members and staff will be onboard. We will also be partnering up with JGM Coach, as he and his staff are taking four motorcoaches as well. This is part of a gathering that we hope will raise governmental awareness of the Covid-19 caused crisis in the motorcoach industry. This gives a grand total of six motorcoaches leaving Wellsboro to support our travel industry.

The nationwide rally, named "Motorcoaches Rolling for Awareness" (MRFA), sponsored by American Bus Association (ABA) and United Motorcoach Association (UMA) will wheel into Washington on May 13, 2020, hundreds strong, ready to shine a spotlight on an arm of the transportation industry that is essential, but has seemingly been forgotten by those doling out financial assistance.

How crucial are motorcoaches in the United States? On April 24, 2020, House Ways and Means Chairman, Richard Neal (D-MA) and House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) emphasized that, "In the longer term, if bus companies go out of business, hundreds of thousands of travelers who rely on buses to get to their jobs and reach vital services, intermodal connections and educational facilities, especially in rural America, risk losing what may be their only means of transportation."

Bus companies are often called upon during national crises to take the needed emergency management workers and supplies to hard-hit areas, along with providing essential housing for workers and volunteers with self-contained entertainer coaches at the disaster impact sites. Added Neal and DeFazio, "Our national emergency response capabilities are at risk, as motorcoaches provide key evacuation services during times of weather – and security-related events.

Motorcoach industry officials are pleased that Congress is now taking notice of their concerns. The MRFA rally will unite over 300 bus companies from across the country and raise even more awareness of the industry's critical situation.

Since March 13, the entire Benedict's Bus Service and JGM Coach fleets have been idle and 38,000 motorcoaches across the nation are parked, driverless and unable to carry passengers. Companies are faced with the challenges of making bus payments, paying employees and staying up to date on insurance. There are a few thousand entertainer coaches parked – buses that carry your favorite bands, their staff and crews. We happen to be blessed with such a company in our area....JGM Coach, which began in 2004 and is owned by Jamie Morral. The live music industry and the events to which they take passengers will not rebound for many months. These are forgotten essential industries, left out of the Cares Act unlike the airlines, cruise lines, railroads, hotel, and restaurant industries.

On May 13, when Benedict's Bus and JGM Coach leaves to join the MRFA convoy heading en masse to our nation's capital, the buses will be evidence of the important role motorcoaches play in the transportation needs of everyday Americans. If you see the motorcoaches en route, give them a wave or a honk and by all means, think of motorcoaches when you are ready to travel again.

Remember your favorite destinations and events and the ease with which motorcoaches get you there. Start to look forward to travel again. And when you do, please remember your family-owned and –operated local motorcoach company. We will be ready to serve you once again.

www.benedictsbus.com
www.jgmcoach.com