

The rental transportation options in some tourism areas have diversified to include many alternatives other than rental cars. For example, in Kitakyushu City, Japan, users can choose from ultra-lightweight vehicles (ULVs), electric-assisted bicycles, electric scooters, and electric four-wheel carts. When consumers have options for rentals in short transportation situations such as this, which option do they chose? It was not the car, but the ULV.<sup>13</sup>

## Motorcoaches

Motorcoaches have come a long way since their predecessor (stagecoaches) bounced across the countryside. There are now two primary categories of motorcoach (often called bus) transportation—scheduled intercity travel and charter/tour groups. Intercity bus travel, like rail travel, has continued to command less and less of the scheduled travel market in the United States. As with railroads, the importance of scheduled bus service in the United States peaked in the 1940s, and the decline continues today. In 1980, bus travel accounted for 12% of all interstate travel, but it now accounts for only about 6% of that market segment. Although the number of passengers utilizing interstate buses has continued a gradual downward trend, this mode of transportation still provides a vital link in domestic and international transportation systems.

In the United States, schedules, fares, and routes of intercity buses were closely regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) until passage of the Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1982, which eliminated most regulations except those pertaining to safety. In this deregulated environment, intercity bus lines have continued to consolidate and pare their schedules and now focus primarily on trips of less than 250 miles. Greyhound Lines is now the dominant intercity bus service provider in North America carrying over 20,000 passengers daily in Canada and the United States. Although the primary market segment served remains visiting friends and relatives, several diverse target markets, including lower-income groups and riders under the age of 24 or over the age of 65, are proving to be fertile ground for future growth.

As Greyhound continues to rationalize its routes, many rural communities have found themselves without bus services and miles away from any rail or air connections. Luckily, many of these abandoned routes have been picked up by regional carriers.



*Motorcoaches provide stress-free travel for group tours.* Photo by Cathy Hsu