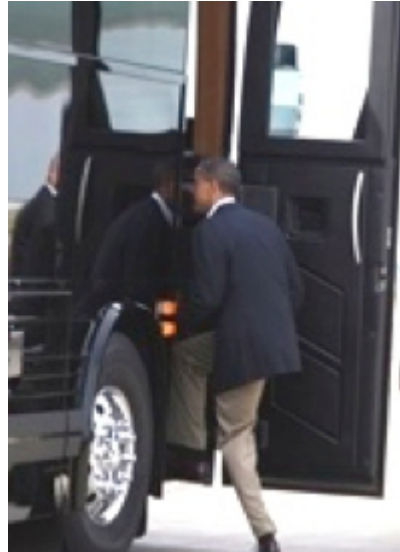




Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 18, 2011

## President's \$1.1M "Stagecoach" Made in Canada

President Barack Obama has been traveling in style — Canadian style — while riding through the Midwest to talk about creating jobs in America. The *New York Post* reported Wednesday that the \$1.1 million bus (pictured, left)—one of two purchased for the Secret Service — carrying the President through Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois, was made by the Quebec company, Prevest. It is the top of the line, VIP H3-45 model used by many rock bands and country music acts, Christine Garant of Prevest told the *Post*.



"That's the more luxurious model," Garant said. "When we have the Country Music Awards, we sometimes see a lot of them," she said, naming Kid Rock, David Lee Roth and Kenny Rogers among the owners of the luxury vehicles.

Like the presidential limousine, made by General Motors and nicknamed "The Beast," the bus carrying the President has armored doors. Inside is a large, flat-screen TV, chairs, sofas and electronic equipment that allows the President to teleconference with people in any part of the world. It has a bathroom, but unlike the buses used by many of the big-name entertainers, it has no bedroom or sleeping area. Its Secret Service code name is "Stagecoach" when the President is on board, sources told [ABC News](#).

The luxury buses were purchased for \$2.2 million from Hemphill Brothers Coach, of Tennessee. The Nashville company installed custom interior upgrades, accounting for about half the cost. "The contract lists the country of origin as Canada and place of manufacture as 'outside U.S. - Trade Agreements,' a possible reference to the North American Free Trade Agreement," the *Post* reported.

An ad on the Hemphill web site for a similar bus, costing \$100,000 less than the presidential "Stagecoach," describes the coach as "appointed with the finest materials and the latest in high tech electronics and was built for a top entertainer to travel efficiently without losing the luxuries of home. It is the perfect coach for entertainers, sports stars, NASCAR drivers, executive travel, or anyone accustomed to the very best." The company lists Beyoncé, Cher, KISS, Van Halen, Jennifer Lopez, Lady Gaga, and Pope Benedict XVI among its clients.

"It's just a better situation for us rather than leasing something and then putting in temporary equipment," Secret Service spokesman Ed Donovan told the *Post*. The buses will remain in use by the Secret Service and will be available to others entitled to Secret Service protection, including the Republican nominee for President in 2012.

Obama's bus tour through the Midwestern states has been billed as a presidential trip rather than a campaign event, though his appearances and speeches have had a strong partisan flavor. The President blamed Republicans in Congress for the lack of progress in solving the nation's deficit problems and



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reviving a stagnant economy. He plans to present a new jobs program to Congress and the American people when he returns from vacation after Labor Day.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus knocked both the bus tour and the vacation plans in a [conference call](#) with reporters Wednesday.

"This is an outrage that the taxpayers of this country would have to foot the bill so that the campaigner-in-chief can run around in his Canadian bus and act as if he is interested in creating jobs in our country," Priebus said. The GOP chairman said the President should spend more time in the White House working on ways to solve the nation's high unemployment rate instead of "planning his next vacation in Martha's Vineyard."

A Gallup poll released on Wednesday shows the President's approval rating on his handling of the economy has fallen to a new low, with just 26 percent approving and 71 percent say they disapprove. The rating marks a sharp decline since May when 50 percent approved of Obama's approach to economic issues. The latest poll was done by telephone interviews with 1,008 adults from August 11 through 14. The margin of error is four percentage points.

*Photo: President Barack Obama boards his bus after arriving at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, on Air Force One, seen reflected in the side of the bus, Aug. 15, 2011: AP Images*



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