

A Business Travel Update from Milne Business Travel Services. 24 Airport Road, West Lebanon, NH 03784 (603) 298-6644

Airlines

After Month-Long Hiatus, Airlines Try Another Fare Hike

The airfare monitoring website FareCompare.com reported that Northwest Airlines upped its domestic fares by nearly \$80 roundtrip in over 4,000 city pairs for both business and leisure travelers. The increase came after nearly a month of no airfare hikes. Rick Seane, CEO of FareCompare, said that fares may be topping out, due to a sluggish economy and the fact that oil is down, relatively speaking, to the mid \$120s per barrel. He said revenue from added fees is also kicking in. (Source: FareCompare.com).

Delta Doubles Fee for Second Bag, Northwest Charges for First Bag, FF Ticket

Delta Air Lines upped its charge for a second bag to \$50 from \$25. It also said it would increase fees for specialty items that require special handling such as surfboards or ski equipment on domestic and international flights. The new fees apply to tickets bought after July 31 for travel on or after Aug. 5. First Class, BusinessElite and Medallion customers will continue to be able to check up to three bags at no charge. Customers checking bags on international flights may continue checking a first and second bag at no charge.

Northwest Airlines instituted a \$15 charge for the first checked bagged, following American Airlines, United Airlines and US Airways' lead; this applied to tickets sold after July 10 for travel starting Aug. 28. Frequent flier elites are exempt from the policy, along with full-fare coach passengers. As of Sept. 15, it will also begin charging service fees for frequent flyer tickets: \$25 for domestic, \$50 for transatlantic and \$100 for transpacific travel. (Source: Delta, Northwest press releases).

Hawaiian Charges for First Bag, Phone Bookings

Hawaiian Airlines began charging \$15 for the first piece of checked luggage on flights between the mainland U.S. and Hawaii; the first bag remains free on interisland flights. Hawaiian will also begin charging a \$10 ticketing fee for telephone bookings for interisland flights, \$20 for all other routes and \$25 for ticketing at the airport. (Source: Hawaiian Airlines press release).

Flight Attendants Decry Turning Planes into Flying Vending Machines

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA), lamented the fact that US Airways is now charging for soft drinks in flight, saying it was turning aircraft into "flying vending machines." The group said the airline is nickel and diming passengers and turning flight attendants, who are safety pros, into cashiers. (Source: AFA-CWA press release).

Delta Restructures Loyalty Program, Upping Some Mileage Requirements

Delta Air Lines said it was restructuring its SkyMiles frequent flyer program, saying it wanted to give its members greater flexibility and more options when redeeming miles, including the ability to again book the last seat on a flight using miles and three redemption tiers for Award Travel within the continental United States, Alaska and Canada.. Tiers will start at 25,000, 40,000 and 60,000 miles round-trip rather than the two current Award levels starting at 25,000 and 50,000 miles for travel within the continental United States, Alaska and Canada. (Source: Delta press release).

Northwest Ads Nonstop Milwaukee-Los Angeles Service

Northwest Airlines is beginning daily nonstop service between Milwaukee and Los Angeles beginning Sept. 6, using the 148-seat Airbus 320. (Source: Northwest press release).

Hotels

American Express and Starwood Offer New Benefit to Gold Card Members

American Express and Starwood Hotels & Resorts have a new benefit for all consumer American Express Gold Card members in the United States that will provide a \$75 food and beverage credit whenever Gold Card members book a stay of two or more consecutive nights at Starwood brands, including W Hotels, Westin Hotels & Resorts, Le Meridian Hotels & Resorts and Sheraton Hotels & Resorts. The benefit is available through the Gold Card Destinations program, a collection of special travel

benefits offered at no additional cost on all consumer American Express Gold Cards. (Source: American Express press release).

Hilton Baltimore Opens This Month

The new Hilton Baltimore is opening this month and is offering an opening rate of \$199 per night from Aug. 24 through Sept. 7. The \$301 million city-owned property will be the first hotel in the area providing guests with direct access to the Baltimore Convention Center via an enclosed pedestrian sky bridge. The hotel is in Baltimore's inner harbor, directly adjacent to Camden Yards, with views of Oriole Park, (Source: Hilton press release).

Rail Services

Amtrak Renames, Upgrades Northeast Corridor Service

Amtrak is revamping its Northeast Corridor Regional service, which serves Boston, New York, Washington, Richmond and Newport News, Va., renaming it the Northeast Regional. Improvements include 36 refurbished, all-table Café cars, refurbished Business class seats and interiors, as well as increased en-route cleaning. (Source: Amtrak press release).

Spotlight On.....

Watching Out for Your Laptop

Watch out for your laptop! A recent study found that up to 12,000 laptops are lost in airports each week and 65 to 70 percent of them are never reclaimed. The study also found:

Most are lost at security checkpoints

- 53 percent of business travelers surveyed carry sensitive corporate information on their laptops
- 65 percent of those who carry confidential information haven't taken steps to protect it
- 42 percent say they don't back up their data.

The study, by Dell and the Ponemon Institute, recommends backing up data, using biometric readers to secure information on your laptop, personalizing it with your business card or a 'skin,' and using cable locking devices. Finally, give yourself plenty of time at the airport and always watch your laptop as it goes through security. (Source: Dell press release).

Benefits of Using a Travel Agent

Best Value – Travel agents work hard to get you the best value for your dollar. While we can't control prices, we can provide you with accurate information on the latest deals and special promotions. We can explore what options and quality products exist so you can make an informed decision.

Convenient one stop shopping – Save time and money by having your travel agent handle every aspect of your trip including air, hotel, car rental, black car, rail and more.

Consumer Advocate – Travel agents don't stop working for you once you've booked your trip. In the event that you experience problems along the way, your agent can act on your behalf and see that restitution is made ~ have you ever been hit with a hotel no-show fee? We can help.

Expert Guidance – Experienced travel agents know the ins and outs of the system and can help you take full advantage of them. We have access to more content, options and choices than individual vendor websites and can help you find the product, schedule and price that is right for you.

Personalized Service – Agents are not some impersonal voice or lifeless web site. We know you and your travel needs and offer unbiased information. We work for you - not the airlines. We also strive to exceed your expectations – we want you to be our customer today and tomorrow.

Milne Travel American Express is committed to providing you with useful information on the latest developments in travel.

