

AAA Forecasts Small Decrease in Labor Day Holiday Travel

2008-08-25

Coming holiday marks third consecutive travel period with a projected year-to-year decline in travelers

AAA projects a slight decrease in the number of Americans traveling during the Labor Day holiday weekend. Nearly 34.38 million Americans will travel 50 miles or more from home this Labor Day holiday weekend, down 0.9 percent, or almost 320,000 Americans, from the 34.7 million who traveled last year. This year marks the first decline in Labor Day holiday travel since 2006.

"More travelers concerned about the economy, gasoline prices and rising airfares are opting to travel by train, bus, motorcycle and cruise ship to their holiday weekend destinations," said AAA President and CEO Robert L. Darbelnet. "This trend points to a desire on the part of the American public to seek alternatives to flying and driving to enjoy the traditional end of summer vacation."

Approximately 28.64 million Americans (more than 83% of all holiday travelers) expect to travel by automobile, a 1.1 percent decrease from the 28.97 million people who drove to their holiday destinations last year.

The national average for self-serve regular gasoline is \$3.69 per gallon. Americans traveling by automobile will encounter gasoline prices about 40 cents less than the Fourth of July travel holiday, but still 91 cents more than this time last year.

Almost 3.96 million Americans (11.5 percent of holiday travelers) intend to travel by airplane, a 4.5 percent decrease from the 4.14 million people who flew last year.

A projected 1.8 million Americans (5 percent of holiday travelers) plan to travel by train, bus or other mode of transportation. That represents an increase of 12.5 percent (or 200,000 travelers) more than the 1.6 million who traveled by a mode other than automobile or airplane last year.

AAA's Leisure Travel Index (LTI), which is based on available rates this holiday, reveals that Labor Day holiday travelers can expect increases in other travel costs when compared to last year. Those traveling by airplane will find air fares over the holiday weekend 15 percent higher last year. AAA advises travelers that many airlines now charge fees for checked baggage and other services that were previously complimentary, so travelers should check with the airline or their travel counselor about any additional fees for their trip. Hotel rates for AAA Three Diamond hotels are unchanged from last year's Labor Day holiday travel period.

AAA's LTI shows an average increase in car rental prices of two percent. However, car rental rates vary from location to location, with some cities in AAA's index showing significant increases, while others show significant decreases compared to a year ago. AAA's index for car rentals is based on the average lowest intermediate size car daily rate in 20 U.S. airport locations. The rates do not include sales tax, insurance or other miscellaneous charges.

The greatest number of Labor Day holiday weekend automobile travelers will originate in the West with 7.2 million, followed by the Southeast with 6.6 million, Midwest, 5.5 million, Northeast, 4.8 million, and Great Lakes, 4.5 million.

The West is expected to produce the largest number of air travelers with 1.5 million, followed by the Southeast with 1.3 million, Northeast, 500,000, Great Lakes, 400,000, and Midwest, 300,000.

The AAA Fuel Gauge Report Web site (www.aaafuelgaugereport.com) lists average daily prices for the nation, all 50 states and more than 250 localities for all grades of gasoline.

Research for Labor Day weekend holiday travel projections are derived from the Travel Industry Association's (TIA) Holiday Travel Forecast Model. The model was developed based on consumer travel intentions and TIA's quarterly travel forecast data. The travel intentions data are collected through an online survey of over 2,000 adults nationwide, supplemented by an additional 6,500 Americans surveyed from the top 10 states of travel origin in the United States. Historical travel volume and other economic data such as GDP, disposable income, employment and travel costs (including fuel prices) are also incorporated into the model. Analysis of the data and the forecasts are produced by the Travel Industry Association, which conducts special research for AAA.

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides more than 51 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA clubs can be visited on the Internet at www.AAA.com.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article34242.html>

© 1998 - 2008 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

Distribute your news on our Network

See what all the buzz is about at:

http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html