

## *Airlines*

### ***Summer Fares Trend Lower***

The cheapest airfares this summer are down by 8 and 15 percent this summer compared to 2005 and 2006, according to Rick Seaney, CEO of FareCompare.com, the airfare tracking site. Seaney said one reason is that last year the airlines tried seven or eight fare increases and most stuck. This year, they again tried five or six times but only one stuck. That's because Southwest didn't play along as it had last year. In addition, Seaney said there has more softness in the summer leisure sector than expected; usually it's a very high demand season. Reinforcing this, moves such as those by AirTran, he said, which continually announces new fare sales, although what it really does is briefly raise fares and then lowers them in order to announce another sale. Seaney said that airlines are yielding higher on coast-to-coast fares, so those are markets where travelers may have some trouble finding low fares, but that is the exception rather than the rule. (Source: Rick Seaney interview).

### ***Low Fare Carriers Tackle Transatlantic Routes***

Two low-fare carriers, Canada's Zoom Airlines and Scotland-based Flyglobespan, have entered the transatlantic market, flying between the U.S. and the British Isles. Zoom flies between New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport and London Gatwick for \$199 each way. It offers Premium Economy seats for an additional \$179. Flyglobespan is offering flights from New York and Boston to Ireland West Airport Knock, with one-way fares starting at \$203 from New York and \$259 from Boston; from JFK to Liverpool, with flights starting at \$99 and from Boston to Glasgow, with flights starting at \$99 one-way. (Source: Zoom, Flyglobespan press releases).

### ***Study Finds JetBlue, Continental Tops***

The J.D. Power and Associates 2007 North America Airline Satisfaction Study has found that JetBlue ranks highest among low-cost airlines and Continental is highest among traditional network carriers. The study measures overall customer satisfaction based on performance in seven measures (in order of importance): cost and fees, flight crew, in-flight services, aircraft, boarding/deplaning/baggage, check-in and reservation. JetBlue ranks highest overall for a third consecutive year, earning the highest ranking for low-cost carriers in 2006 and 2007. JetBlue also earned particularly high ratings in the low-cost carrier segment across all seven customer satisfaction measures -- despite a double-digit segment decline in overall satisfaction since 2006. Frontier Airlines and Southwest Airlines ranked second and third. Continental Airlines, improved in six measures: reservations, check-in, boarding/deplaning/baggage, aircraft, flight crew, and cost and fees. Delta Air Lines and American Airlines ranked second and third respectively. Traditional network carriers are defined as airlines that operate multi-cabin aircraft and use multiple airport hubs. (Source: J.D. Power press release).

### ***TSA Takes Over Security Checks at JFK***

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is now validating passenger identification and boarding passes at a number of security checkpoints at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK). The Port Authority Police Department provides law enforcement support. TSA security officers are conducting document checking at more than 200 smaller airports, as well as Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) and Phoenix Sky Harbor (PHX) in addition to JFK. Airline contract employees previously conducted document checking at these facilities. In addition to fraudulent document detection, TSA officers serving in this role are also trained in interview techniques and methods to identify suspicious behavior. As part of the fiscal year 2008 budget request, President Bush has requested funding from Congress for an additional 1,300 document checking security officers. (Source: TSA press release).

## ***Car Rental***

### ***Car Rental Gets Greener***

Three of the nation's major car rental companies have added hybrid vehicles to their fleets. Enterprise has more than 3,300 hybrids in its fleet as well as more than 38,000 flex-fuel vehicles that are fueled with E85, an alternative fuel that is 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. Hertz, which introduced its "Green Collection," high-mileages, low-emission vehicles, last fall, is adding 3,400 Toyota Prius hybrid vehicles to its fleet. And Avis is also adding 1,000 hybrids, the Toyota Prius. (Source: Avis, Hertz and Enterprise press releases and interviews).

### ***Avis Offers In-Car Wi-Fi at Newark***

Travelers at Newark Liberty International Airport now can rent Avis Connect, the portable Wi-Fi service. Units are also available at Avis locations in San Francisco, San Jose and Fort Lauderdale, and will be offered at airports in Dallas, Los Angeles and Miami within the coming weeks. Avis Connect compatible with all Wi-Fi enabled devices including laptops, Ultra-Mobile PC handhelds and PDAs. (Source: Avis press release).

## ***Hotels***

### ***Wingate by Wyndham***

Wingate is now Wingate by Wyndham! A different name, but Wingate still offer the same great advantages for all business travelers. Wingate offers everything you will need for one convenient all-inclusive price, including a hot continental breakfast, wired and wireless high-speed Internet access, 24-hour business center, local calls & long distance access, and a whole lot more. Plus, their affiliation with Wyndham Hotels and Resorts offers more choices in more destinations when planning travel.



## ***Spotlight On....***

### ***What Air Travelers Want***

***A new study by Maritz Research has pinpointed areas where airlines could improve their customer service. The study interviewed travelers who have flown in the past six months.***

- ***Three-quarters believe there should be a family section on planes***
- ***Frequent fliers are finding flights but finding restrictions on redeeming miles are a problem***
- ***More than half believe allowing cell phones in flight is a bad thing***
- ***Sixty-three percent would pay more for extra leg room***
- ***Forty-two percent said that they would pay more for better food.***

***The study concluded that airlines can no longer compete on price but must find what customers really want. (Source: Maritz press release).***

***ABC Travel is committed to providing you with useful information on the latest developments in the travel industry. The following information has been compiled from a variety of sources and is updated monthly.***