

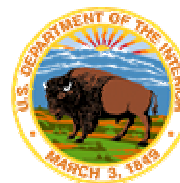
# U.S. Department of the Interior

## DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

Prepared by: Office of Financial Management

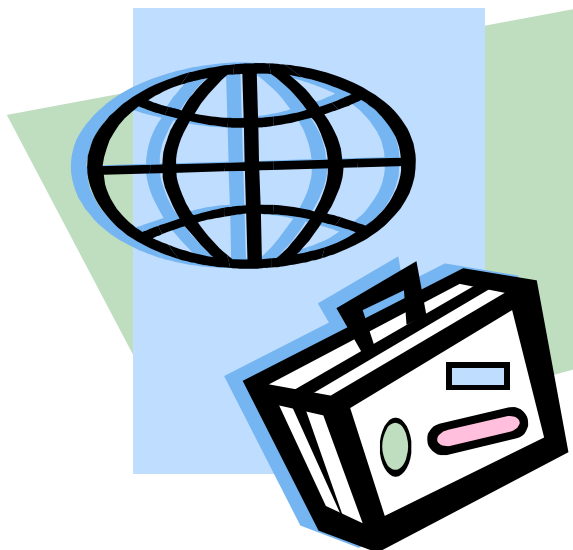
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## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the "Interior Travel Newsletter!" The newsletter, prepared by the Department's Office of Financial Management, is intended to provide DOI travelers with the latest news concerning the travel industry, Government travel, and DOI travel highlights and reminders. We hope that you find the newsletter to be informative and enjoyable. We especially welcome your comments as we strive to make the newsletter a helpful tool for planning your official travel!



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## IN THE NEWS

### Airline Labor News

A possible strike by Delta Airline pilots that threatened to shut down the nation's third largest air carrier, has been averted by a tentative contract agreement between Delta and its pilots' union. The five year agreement must be ratified by Delta's 9,800 pilots, a process that could take more than a month. Northwest Airlines has signed a tenta-

tive agreement with the Aircraft Mechanics' Fraternal Association (AMFA), the union that represents 9,795 mechanics, cleaners, and custodians.

Although the Delta and Northwest strikes seem to have been averted, the possibility of other labor disruptions in the airline industry still exists. Flight attendants at United Airlines have threatened to strike if the

company goes ahead with plans to buy most of US Airways. The American Airlines flight attendant union has threatened to strike; both sides are waiting for a negotiating schedule from the National Mediation Board before proceeding with talks.

### Other Travel Items of Interest:

- OWT Profile Updates
- Booking Hotel Reservations
- Overseas Travel Alert
- Helpful Tips for Travelers

## IN THE NEWS

### Airlines Introduce Kiosks to Speed Up Ticketing!

US Airways and United Airlines have introduced new E-ticket self check-in kiosks at airports that are designed to speed up the check-in process. Travelers with E-tickets can use the kiosks to print a boarding pass, select or change a seat assignment, and check baggage. US Airways has introduced the kiosks at Reagan National, Boston Logan, and LaGuardia Airports. United has been testing the kiosks in Aspen, San Diego and at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.



### "Roving Agents"

American Airlines has introduced a wireless check-in device called "Roving Agent" that allows agents to check-in passengers in departure areas. Airline personnel can now go directly to customers and issue boarding passes. The Roving Agent product was introduced this past summer at San Jose International Airport. American plans to expand the use of the Roving Agent in about 25 cities throughout 2001.

## GOVERNMENT TRAVEL NEWS

### Fuel and Energy Surcharges

Many hotels/motels are adding an energy or fuel surcharge to the daily lodging fee charged for each room. The surcharge is reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense when it is itemized on the hotel/motel bill. Hotels/motels in jurisdictions where this surcharge has been authorized have advised that there is no provision for providing an exemption to Government travelers, even though Government travelers may be exempt from local and/or state occupancy taxes in that jurisdiction. Unless your hotel/motel charges are centrally billed, you should claim the energy or fuel surcharge as a separate item on your travel reimbursement voucher [see [347 DM DOI FTR Implementing Instructions, 301-12.8](#)].



### Calendar Year 2001 Per Diem Survey

GSA is currently surveying hotels/motels in selected cities within the continental US to determine adjustments necessary to keep the per diem rates at a level adequate to allow Government travelers to lodge and eat in two or three-star rated hotels/motels. All hotels/motels being surveyed are on the list of FEMA approved fire safe hotels. The revised per diem rates are expected to be published in early September and become effective October 1, 2001.

### Premier Lodging Program

The Premier Lodging Program (PLP) is a new program initiated by GSA to alleviate some of the hardships placed on Government travelers going to high cost areas with a high concentration of travelers. Under PLP, the Government contracts with individual lodging properties in specific geographic areas to provide Government travelers with a guaranteed minimum of rooms at a contract rate that is at or below the per diem rate. PLP

recently started in Boston and is currently expanding to Chicago, Denver, New York, and Washington, DC. GSA has a goal of having the PLP in each of the top 75 Federal travel destinations in the Continental US. If you would like coverage in another large metropolitan area, please contact Mr. Patrick McConnell, GSA, at (202) 501-2362.

Ask your Omega travel agent about the PLP when making hotel reservations.



## DOI TRAVEL NEWS

### Quality Assurance Survey

Selected DOI travelers have been requested to complete a survey questionnaire regarding their experiences with making travel reservations through Omega World Travel. In an effort to monitor the ongoing quality of travel services being provided to DOI travelers, a selected number of travelers will be asked to complete a quality assurance survey form each week. We appreciate survey participants taking time out from their busy schedules to complete the survey!

### Exception to Mandatory Use of Travel Management Service (TMS)

In a [memorandum](#) dated February 28, 2001, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, advised of exceptions to the mandatory use of a TMS for DOI employees. The exceptions are:

- Pre-arranged lodging accommodations (training, conferences) where direct booking by attendees is necessary;

- Overseas lodging accommodations;

- Lodging accommodations for unplanned travel; and,

- Lodging accommodations at establishments exempted by the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act.

*Reference: 41 CFR 301-73-102*

### **REMINDER!**

#### Have You Updated Your Profile Lately?

The information contained in your secure OWT profile is of vital importance to receiving good travel service. In addition to containing your office address (to enable delivery of paper tickets), your email address (for delivering itineraries), your travel seating and meal preferences, and emergency contact information, the profile contains your Government Travel Charge Card Account – without which tickets cannot be issued.

Please be sure to log-on at the next opportunity you have, to make sure that your profile is complete and up-to-

date. The profile can be accessed on the following secure web site:

<https://profile.owt.net/doi/>.

### Booking the Hotel Reservation That You Want

Did you know that hotels hold back rooms from the Central Reservations system – just as airlines do? This means that when name-requesting a hotel while making your travel reservations, the OWT travel agent may advise you that no rooms are available. The travel agent is simply relating the information contained in the central reservation system. If you feel strongly about staying at the requested hotel, [ask the OWT travel agent to place a phone call to the requested hotel](#). More often than not, you may be able to book a room this way!

## TRAVELER “TIP BITS”

### Overseas Travel Alert!

The State Department has issued travel warnings for the following countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Yemen. US citizens should exercise caution in the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey, Egypt and Fiji. For the most up-to-date information on travel warnings, visit [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).



### Helpful Tips for Travelers!

- Make sure the front desk clerk never announces your hotel room number when you are checking in.
- Before you arrive, call ahead and ask about the hotel's security features. Make sure the hotel has 24-hour security personnel, electronic keys, dead-bolt locks, peepholes, and controlled access to the building. Make sure also that the hotel is in a safe, busy area and not in a secluded location.
- Park your car in a well-lit location, near the entrance to the hotel if possible.
- Have your key ready before getting to your door so you enter quickly.

### **Travel Contacts:**

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**TMC Comments and Feedback Form:**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html)

This newsletter is available on the Office of Financial Management web site at [www.doi.gov/pfm](http://www.doi.gov/pfm).