

Business Travel Update

April 2008

A Business Travel Update provided by Professional Travel

Issue #7

Featured Articles

ATA Airlines Suddenly Ends Operations

After filing for Chapter 11 yesterday (April 2) in the US Bankruptcy Court in Indianapolis, ATA Airlines discontinued all operations this morning and canceled all current and future flights. Following the loss of a key contract for its military charter business, ATA says, it has become "impossible" to continue operations. "Unfortunately, we were not in a position to provide our customers or others with advance notice." ATA says it is currently unable to provide refunds to customers who purchased tickets directly from ATA with cash or a check. These customers may be able to obtain a full or partial refund for their unused tickets by submitting a claim in ATA's Chapter 11 proceedings, says the airline. Customers who purchased tickets using a credit card should contact their credit card company or travel agency directly for information about how to obtain a refund for unused tickets.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Aloha Airlines Shuts Down Passenger Service

Aloha Airlines ended its passenger flight operations on March 31, just 11 days it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The shutdown affected about 1,900 employees. The airline had "no choice," according to David Banmiller, Aloha's CEO. "Despite the groundswell of support from the community and our elected officials, we simply ran out of time to find a qualified buyer or secure continued financing for our passenger business. We had no choice but to take this action." Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle, not convinced that Aloha management did all it could to stay in business, has filed a motion in the US Bankruptcy Court in Honolulu to force Aloha to remain operating. However, Judge Lloyd King ruled that Aloha made a good-faith effort to continue operating and that he would not stand in the way of a "business decision."

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Delta Launches Online Check-in For Selected International Flights

Delta customers departing the US on international flights can now print boarding passes at Delta.com and proceed directly to security when they arrive at the airport. Those traveling with luggage can check in bags simultaneously at Delta.com, and make a quick stop at a Delta baggage drop location before heading to security. Delta.com check-in is available for travel to any destination served by Delta that does not require the customer to hold a visa. Customers can check in online up to 24 hours prior to departure using their SkyMiles number and PIN, a confirmation code, credit card or electronic ticket number.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Air France-KLM And Alitalia Break Off Merger Talks

Because Air France-KLM could not hammer out an agreement with Alitalia's unions, merger negotiations between the two carriers has ended. Alitalia Chairman Maurizio Prato, who had said that a merger with Air France-KLM was the carrier's only chance to continue flying, resigned after talks broke down. Air France-KLM and Alitalia's board of directors reached a preliminary \$1.1 billion merger agreement last month.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Is Your Firm Ready for a Travel Disaster?

Risk management can help protect the huge amount of money invested on travel. Here's how to be ready when an employee is hurt or stranded on the road.

Do you have a plan for when your Hartford-based sales manager collapses in the Spokane airport? What do you do when a prototype of a new security device that you were going to display to investors in Tokyo is stuck in customs?

[\(Full Story\)](#) Source Kiplinger 4/08

Courtyard By Marriott Unveils Redesigned Lobby

Courtyard by Marriott has completed its first redesigned lobby at the Courtyard Fair Oaks Fairfax in Fairfax, VA. The traditional front desk has been replaced with separate "welcome podiums" to create more personal and private interactions when guests check in, says Courtyard. Seating options include a communal table in the middle of the lobby, more private media booths with a high-definition TVs and semi-enclosed lounge areas. A signature element of the new lobby is the Courtyard GoBoard, a 52-inch LCD touch screen with local information, maps, weather and news. Guests can use the touch screen to find restaurants, local attractions and directions. A new patio and fire pit are outdoor elements integrated into the lobby design. Courtyard and its hotel owners and franchisees in the US and Canada expect to introduce the new lobby to at least eight more hotels this year and as many as 100 in 2009.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Delta Expands Food-For-Sale Program

Delta is now selling meals on all flights within the US of 750 miles or more and select flights between the US and beach destinations in the Caribbean and Latin America of 1,550 miles or more. Delta launched its food-for-purchase menu in September 2007 on coast-to-coast, mainline flights between New York and Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and Seattle.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Westin Convention Hotel Opens In Orlando

The Westin Imagine Orlando, located across from the Orange County Convention Center, has opened. The 315-room hotel has one- and two-bedroom suites and 7,200 square feet of meeting space.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

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Continued:

Skybus becomes 3rd US carrier to shut down within week

A brutal week for the US airline industry that featured the closure of two established carriers and embarrassing Congressional hearings concluded Friday night with the announcement that Skybus Airlines, an ambitious LCC based out of Columbus, had ceased operations.

The startup said in a message posted on its website that it "struggled to overcome the rising jet fuel costs and a slowing economic environment," but that those issues "proved to be insurmountable for a new carrier." Skybus started flying in May 2007, concentrating on secondary airports often on the fringes of metropolitan areas that did not receive significant service. It featured an ultra-low-cost model similar to Ryanair's with low fares (it sold select seats on every flight for \$10), no amenities or frills and an entirely Internet-based operation. It signaled its ambition in the fall of 2006 with an order for 65 A319s and reportedly was flying 13 leased aircraft last week to 17 destinations.

[\(Full Story\)](#) Source: ATW 4-7-08

Champion Air To Shut Down

Charter airline Champion Air will cease flight operations on May 31. The Minnesota-based airline is a partner of Northwest Airlines' Worry Free Vacations. "Unfortunately, our business model is no longer viable in a world of \$110 oil, a struggling economy and rapidly changing demand for our services," says Champion President and CEO Lee Steele. "Those factors also have impeded our efforts to attract new capital and new investors. Accordingly, the management team and our board of directors have decided that the best course of action is to cease flying and to wind up our operations in a responsible, deliberate manner." Compounding the challenges facing the airline was a growing trend in the marketplace away from charter carriers for certain types of flying, says Steele.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

FAA Encourages Inspectors To Report Safety Concerns

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association have jointly created the Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP), designed to foster a voluntary, non-punitive environment for the reporting of flight safety concerns by employees of the FAA. The agreement is for 18 months and will begin at several targeted facilities. If the program is determined to be successful after a comprehensive review and evaluation, both sides intend for it to be a continuing program. At a March 7 news conference called to address Southwest's flying of planes after missed safety checks, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.), chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said FAA inspectors found it difficult to take enforcement action against Southwest because FAA management was "too close to airline management." Oberstar added that inspectors feared they would be fired if they took enforcement action.

Oberstar has scheduled a hearing for today (April 3) on the FAA's alleged lapses in the enforcement of aircraft inspections.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

Red Roof Inn Unveils Redesign

Red Roof Inn has introduced a new hotel prototype that upgrades bathrooms and in-room technology. New bathrooms feature granite countertops, vessel sinks and oversized walk-in showers with rain-flow showerheads. Red Roof will also add wireless Internet and flat-screen TVs outfitted with auto-sensing remote jack packs, which will enable guests to interface their electronic devices with a portable video game player on their in-room TV display. In addition, rooms will have spacious workspaces with ergonomic seating and plush bedding, and lobbies will have lots of natural light, a decorative stone wall, a lounge area and an exercise facility, says Red Roof.

The brand's first location with the new prototype will be in Beaumont, TX. The hotel is currently under construction.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

US Airways Relaunches Transatlantic Business Class

US Airways says it has "freshened up" Envoy, the airline's transatlantic business-class service. In addition to a focus on "more personalized service," says the airline, improvements have also been made to Envoy meals. The new menus include a choice of three entrees and one optional express meal, available at the customer's leisure. The dishes feature fresh, higher quality ingredients with an emphasis on healthier choices. Also, in the past year US Airways has been installing new, near-lie-flat seats on its Boeing 767 fleet. Each seat is located on either a window or aisle and features a drop-down inner armrest and 170-degree recline. Envoy is available on all nonstop flights between US Airways' international gateways - Charlotte, N.C., and Philadelphia - and all 20 European airports served by the carrier, including new service to London's Heathrow Airport.

Source: Bus Travel Executive 4-3-08

U.S., Australia sign open skies agreement

The U.S. and Australia on Monday inked an open skies aviation agreement eliminating restrictions on air travel between the two allies that would lead to lower fares, officials said.

[\(Full Story\)](#) Marketwatch 3-31-08

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