The Alaska Department of Administration, Division of General Services awarded To-paz International a contract to perform an audit of the state's travel management program (E-Travel) on both the travel management company (TMC) and the online booking tool (E-Travel Online). The audit focused on whether airfare and hotel costs purchased through E-Travel are the lowest available to the state from all possible sources and to what extent traveler choices affect cost.

Overall, the audit showed that managed travel does provide significant savings to the state. Evaluation of E-Travel Online shows that the system is working effectively to increase compliance and to lower the costs overall. Functionality and access to content is very good. Contract fares and lowest fares are readily available. E-Travel Online's response time is slower than average. This is partly due to the amount of customization and policy rules that have been added to ensure compliance with state requirements.

Booking hotel and rural travel in E-Travel Online presents challenges due to vendors not participating in the GDS. TMC fees are reasonable and lower than most agencies considering the uniqueness of booking travel within Alaska.

As a result of the audit, US-Travel will perform an assessment of the customization and policy rules in E-Travel Online to determine ways to improve the slow response time. Air fares and hotel rates will be verified on a periodic basis.

A link to the audit will be posted on the travel website under the Contract tab later this month.

As a follow-up to the audit, a State of Alaska Survey will be sent to travelers as an opportunity to provide feedback that will be used to develop and implement improvements for E-Travel services.
E-Travel Office

USTRavel

E-Travel Online Help Desk
(907) 500-4290 / 877-500-4290
Email: e-travelhelp@ustravel.us

Reservation Call Center
(907) 500-4292 / 866-762-8728
FAX: (907) 465-8288
Email: e-travelaprvl@ustravel.us

Research
Email: soaresearch@ustravel.us

ETMT

Kathy Adair
State Travel Manager
(907) 465-6534

Carmen Engen
Accountant IV
(907) 465-2447

FAX: (907) 465-3798
Email: doa.doef.e-travel@alaska.gov

See us on the Web!
http://statetravel.alaska.gov

Bed Bugs

There has been a growing infestation of bed bugs around the country. Bed bugs are small reddish-brown, non-flying insects that resemble a tick. They survive on human or animal blood and leave small red itchy bite marks on your skin. Afterwards they leave tiny brown stains in the surrounding area.

Bed bugs are most often found in areas where people sleep but they can live in any area of a home / hotel. They tend to concentrate in cracks and crevices, including curtain seams, upholstered furniture, carpet edges, dresser corners, and bed frames and mattresses.

Once contact has been made, bed bugs can easily be transported from one place to another in items such as clothing, boxes, and suitcases.

To avoid infestation, do not place luggage and clothing on the bed or the floor of your hotel room, and inspect the room. The best place to look for bed bug signs is in the seams of the mattress, bed linens, bed frame, and headboard.

If bed bugs are found, report it to the hotel and ask for another room in a different area of the hotel, or move to a different hotel. Contact USTRavel if immediate assistance is needed.

There are several resources on the web that travelers can use to find out how to get rid of bed bugs, and to check for bed bug reports. One reporting website is the Bed Bug Registry, a free public database of submitted reports from travelers who have encountered bed bugs in the United States and Canada. The Bed Bug Registry allows users to search by a specific hotel or by location. A note of caution - if a hotel shows up on the search, it does not necessarily mean that they currently have a bed bug problem. The report may be outdated and the problem fixed.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

In the News

Seattle Tourism Improvement Area

On September 26, 2011, the Seattle City Council passed a city ordinance establishing the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area assessment (STIA). The STIA will enable Seattle’s Convention & Visitor’s Bureau to compete and grow tourism market share.

The STIA assessment will add a $2.00 per room, per night, fee beginning November 1, 2011. The assessment applies to all hotel rooms, including those that were contracted before the establishment of the STIA. This city-mandated assessment is in addition to Seattle’s occupancy tax of 15.6% and any other applicable fees.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Documentation Verification

The TSA began testing travel document authentication technology in July 2011 in an effort to stay ahead of evolving threats and to improve the passenger screening experience.

The TSA plans to purchase new technology designed to authenticate a traveler’s identification and to verify that the identification matches their boarding pass. The TSA will begin testing the technology at select airports in early 2012.

This technology will eventually replace the current procedure used by security officers to verify fraudulent or altered documents.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,
- 72414 M&IE,
- 75600 Construction,
- 73751 Conservation/Environmental Services,
- 73062 Interest Expense,
- 73526 Electrical Services,
- 73527 Water/Sewage Services,
- 72930 Cash Advance on Charge Cards, and
- 73528 Disposal, Trash/Dump Fees.

Please ensure that all travel related fees for USTRavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.

Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for USTRavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay USTRavel fees. Some examples include:

- 72416 Travel Reimbursement to Employees,