



E-Travel News

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E-Travel Audit

The Alaska Department of Administration, Division of General Services awarded Topaz 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 work-

ing 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.



Special Note of Interest

A reminder that USTravel is switching their reservation system from Apollo to Sabre in mid November.

USTravel expects a smooth transition with minimal impact to the services they provide.

Your patience and feedback is appreciated during the transition as the agents continue to learn the new reservation system.

E-Travel Online Training

No Classes are scheduled during November due to USTravel's Sabre conversion.

See E-Travel Online's User Home Page for more training opportunities by USTravel.

Alaska Airlines Club 49

Alaska Airlines has launched a new program exclusively for residents of Alaska who are mileage plan members. Club 49 offers Alaska residents special perks, including free baggage and travel discounts.

This program is intended for personal use and does not apply to state purchased travel. Travelers may utilize the free checked bag allowance for state business travel, and then should not request reimbursement for checked baggage fees.

Weekly fare sales are available for public use and are loaded in E-Travel Online. These fares are very restrictive. Seats are limited and may not be available on all flights. Fares are available for travel on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays with a 14 day advance purchase on non-stop flights, and tickets are non-refundable.

It is recommended that travel arrangers [read the rules](#) prior to purchasing a weekly special fare to ensure it is the best purchase option.

Daylight Saving Time NOVEMBER 6



It's that time of year again when the leaves are changing color and falling off the trees, snow is slowly creeping its way down the mountains, and daylight is gradually fading away.

Fall is here and it's almost time to "fall back" for daylight saving time. Mark your calendars for **November 6** as the day to set clocks back by one hour, thus losing one more hour of morning daylight.



E-Travel Office

UStavel

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-travelaprvt@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.dof.e-travel@alaska.gov

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



Travel E-Qs



There will be a random quarterly drawing in **December** for a prize from the answers submitted by November 15, 2011 to: doa.dof.e-travel@alaska.gov

1. What was the purpose of the E-Travel Audit?
2. Why might the Alaska Airlines special fares NOT be the best choice for state travel?
3. How do you check for signs of bed bugs?
4. What is the STIA assessment for?
5. What is the correct account code to use for payment of UStavel fees?

Contest prize winnings are considered non-cash compensation, and will be included as W2 earnings

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.

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.

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 UStavel 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.

No one can go back in time to make a new beginning, anyone can start right now to make a brand new ending.
Juli Moore



Tips & Tricks

Account Code 73819 / Payment for UStavel Fees

Division of Finance, Systems Administration happened to come across some odd account codes used to pay UStavel 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 UStavel (PVN UST97223) fees are being properly charged to AC 73819.