State Travel Office News

In The Spotlight

The current contract with US-Travel for travel management services expires on November 4, 2009. The Department of Administration, Division of General Services, in conjunction with representatives from the State Travel Management Team (STMT), Fish and Game, and Health and Social Services, evaluated proposals for new travel management services.

A new travel management services contract was awarded on May 28, 2009 to USTravel. The initial term is for two years with the option to renew for three additional one-year terms.

USTravel and the STMT are currently working on changes to ResX, the online booking tool. Travelers identified by their departments as being able to book their own travel, all travel desks, and travel planners will be trained to use the new upgraded tool.

The booking request form will be discontinued once training on ResX is complete. Direct contact with USTravel via the telephone will be the alternate form of communication when not using the online booking tool. The fees will be structured to save the State money when using the online booking tool with no agent intervention. Current users of the tool report overall satisfaction with the tool, but suggestions for improvement have been forwarded to the implementation team.

More information will be provided as the team works on the implementation of the new contract. Training will take place around the State and session times and places will be announced once they have been arranged.

More About Secure Flight

Secure Flight information, legal name, date of birth, and sex is collected prior to flight check-in and is passed on to Transportation Security Administration (TSA) 72 hours prior to flight departure to compare with their No Fly watch list. The airlines, travel agencies, and on-line booking tools are gearing up to expand name fields to accommodate long names.

At security check points, TSA is not checking for Secure Flight information. They are verifying that the name on the boarding pass matches the name on the government-issued ID.

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Passport Requirements

On June 1, 2009, the U.S. government implemented the full requirements of the land and sea phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The proposed rules require most U.S. citizens entering the United States at sea or land ports of entry to have a passport, passport card, or WHTI-compliant document.

U.S. citizens who board a cruise within the U.S., travel only within the Western Hemisphere, and return to the same U.S. port on the same ship may present a government-issued photo ID, along with proof of citizenship, such as an original or copy of their birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or a Certificate of Naturalization issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. A passport may still be required to enter foreign countries visited during the cruise.

All persons traveling by air outside of the United States will be required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the U.S.

Persons traveling by land and sea outside of the United States are required to present a passport book, passport card, or other valid travel documents to enter or re-enter the United States. The passport card is valid only for land and sea travel, and not for air travel.

U.S. citizens under the age of 16 arriving by land or sea from a contiguous territory may also present an original or copy of their birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or a Naturalization Certificate.

Delta Goes Paperless

Last year Delta Air Lines, in conjunction with Transportation Security Administration (TSA), began testing paperless mobile check-in for customers traveling from New York LaGuardia to any U.S. destination.

Mobile check-in is now available in Atlanta, Minneapolis, Las Vegas, Memphis, Cincinnati, and Salt Lake City.

Mobile check-in saves time by allowing travelers to download their boarding pass from anywhere, within 24 hours of departure, to a Web-enabled mobile device, such as a BlackBerry or iPhone.

The electronic boarding pass contains an encrypted barcode with traveler name and flight information.

At the airport travelers present their mobile device to TSA security screeners and airline gate agents who scan the barcode with a handheld device to verify authenticity.

One Card Program

The One Card Alaska credit card program is a Visa card administered by the Systems Administration section of the Division of Finance, through a contract with U.S. Bank.

The One Card is to be used for all approved business travel expenses including the following allowable uses: airline tickets, lodging, and rental car expense.

New employees can obtain a One Card until their employee number is issued in the payroll system. Once the completed appointment paperwork is forwarded to the appropriate HR Service Center, HR staff makes every effort to enter the information within three days of receipt. After this entry is completed, the process of issuing a One Card may continue.