



# E-Travel News

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## New E-Travel Booking Tool

The software tool, RESX, used by the State to plan and purchase travel itineraries has not changed or been upgraded in nearly six years. The lack of improvements to functionality and capabilities has limited the ability to resolve some customer requests and improve customer service. Recently the Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Finance

(DOF) reviewed a new booking tool, GetThere, which was being offered by US-Travel.



GetThere's navigation and functionality is very similar to the booking tool Travelocity. A comparison of some RESX and GetThere functionality shows that:

- RESX provides four destinations for booking flights.
- **GetThere provides seven destinations for booking flights.**
- RESX provides the ability to select seats for either all flight legs or none at all.
- **GetThere provides the ability to view, select, or change seats for any flight leg or only one leg.**
- RESX displays only one rate type in car searches.
- **GetThere displays rates for up to five car types checked.**
- RESX displays a list of hotels. Users cannot see hotel availability or the rate until the hotel is selected.
- **GetThere displays hotel availability, WSCA and Preferred Properties, and the lowest rate prior to selection.**

GetThere also provides additional functionality such as the ability to:

- Check air rates up to three days before or after a selected date
- Book hotels from a location map
- Express book a car
- Provide a cancellation confirmation

Coming soon:

- Ability to reissue simple tickets
- Ability to void and refund eligible tickets without having to call US Travel

While improved functionality is important, it is just as important that any conversion to a new booking tool be straight forward with minimal, if any, impact to agencies. With these criteria in mind, USTravel and DOF performed beta testing of the tool in January. This included multiple data conversions and synchronization requirements for the various interfaces. It was critical that a successful conversion and firsthand benefits were realized before continuing with any further movement towards offering an improved travel booking tool. DOA participated in the pilot phase in late January and February. The feedback from current users has been very positive.

The intent is to schedule agency conversion from mid February through April. Management within your agency is working with DOF to schedule your agency's conversion. The effort on the part of travel coordinators/planners to become proficient with GetThere is minimal, and DOF / US Travel will offer 3-hour training sessions to each agency.

### Inside this issue:

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**The future  
belongs to those  
who believe  
in the beauty  
of their dreams.**

*Eleanor Roosevelt*



**Seward's Day - March 25**  
Commemorates the signing of the Alaska Purchase treaty.

### E-Travel Online Training

Contact your [Department Travel Coordinators](#) to sign up.

RESX - March 14 9:45 a.m.  
GetThere - To be announced.

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

## Managed Spend Cards

Managed spend cards are Visa cards very similar to One Cards. They are different in that managed spend card limits do not cycle (refresh) each month. The established limits decrease as transactions post. The limits can be changed at any time to reload or reduce purchasing capability. A managed spend card can be set to expire in one or two years (no renewal card) or three years (renewal card is issued).



Managed spend cards can be used for:

- Infrequent travel (including out-of-state travel) – issue a card and set up limits to cover some or all costs of the trip. The card will have a zero or minimal balance at the conclusion of the trip. The cardholder can retain the card for future travel,

and the limits can be increased again just before the travel takes place.

- Specific use – issue a card to a traveler who only needs to charge transactions at a specific type of vendor. Assign very limited MCCs to the card and spend limits that approximate the cost of the use. For example, a managed spend card could be set up for seasonal vehicle rental and have
  - An assigned MCC for Budget Rent a Car, or
  - An assigned MCC for several car rental agencies, or
  - An assigned car rental MCC group.

It is up to the departments to determine if the managed spend card is an option for traveler use.

## American Airlines / US Airways Merger

American Airlines and US Airways expect to merge into one carrier, operating under the American Airlines name, by the third quarter of 2013. Together they will form the world's largest airline and be the fourth major merger in a five year period.



Until the merger is complete, US Airways and American Airlines will remain separate compa-

nies and each company will service its respective corporate customers as usual.

The combined company is expected to maintain all hubs currently serviced by American and US Airways, with increased service to existing markets and service to new cities.

Loyalty Program members can expect to have more opportunities to earn and redeem miles from an expanded global network of routes and partnerships because of the merger.

## Unused Tickets

Unused, refundable tickets are automatically refunded in sixty days by USTravel. If a refund is needed prior to sixty days, the process to request the refund is to call an agent or send an email to [soaresearch@ustravel.com](mailto:soaresearch@ustravel.com).

Unused tickets listed in E-Travel Online can be applied to future travel by placing the request in the special instructions box. Agents will verify validity and restrictions governed by

carrier fare rules, which may vary from ticket to ticket. If the unused ticket is ineligible to exchange, an agent will contact the travel arranger to let them know that certain restrictions apply that do not allow them to process the exchange.

An unused ticket report containing additional information regarding each ticket is sent monthly to department Travel Coordinators.

## Travel E-Qs



There will be a random quarterly drawing in March for a prize from the answers submitted by March 15, 2013 to: [doa.dof.e-travel@alaska.gov](mailto:doa.dof.e-travel@alaska.gov).

1. Which of the new booking tool features appeal most to you?
2. What is a Managed Spend Card used for?
3. How many major carrier mergers have there been in the past five years?
4. When are refundable unused tickets automatically refunded?
5. Who receives a monthly unused ticket report?

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



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