

✈ UP IN THE AIR

Airlines leave fewer seats empty

LA Times—If it feels a bit more crowded in your airplane cabin lately, it's probably not your imagination. Experts say the industry is rebounding from the recession partly by limiting the number of new planes while the number of passengers continues to rise. As a result, the percentage of seats filled on each flight — the load factor — has reached the highest levels in at least 10 years.

But some airlines cram their cabins closer to capacity than others. According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Hawaiian Airlines operated with an 85.49% load factor in the first half of 2010 — the highest of any airline. United Airlines ranked second with 84.24%, and Delta followed with 83.96%.

TSA Testing Modified Scanners

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration will begin testing new software on its body-scanner machines that "enhances privacy by eliminating passenger-specific images and instead auto-detects potential threat items and indicates their location on a generic outline of a person." The new software is scheduled to be tested in Las Vegas, Atlanta and Washington DC.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Avis Budget Puts Brakes on No-Show Fees

Avis Budget Group chairman and

CEO Ronald Nelson said the company does not plan to aggressively push no-show fees for U.S. car rentals in the near future and instead will rely on other tactics for fleet optimization, such as pre-payment.

HOTEL NEWS

Tiered Broadband Pricing on the Horizon?

Should hotels charge guests in-room Internet fees based on how much bandwidth they consume? That question was posed by Marriott International president and COO Arne Sorenson.

Pointing to the evolving needs of broadband users, Sorenson noted that "data required when you're streaming videos is dramatically higher than what you would do in the document and e-mail space...Clearly, we are having to increase the bandwidth that's coming into our hotels to handle the increased demands. It's not an inexpensive bit of improvement." Many business travelers bemoan that high-speed internet access is an add-on expense at most upscale hotels but a free perk at mid-scale brands.

ECONOMIC NOTES

Meeting Spends on the Rise

Average spending per meeting this year will rise nearly 5 percent from 2010 levels according to a Meeting Professionals International survey of about 250 meeting planners. Including corporate,

association, government, third-party and independent meeting planners, survey respondents indicated that 2011 per-meeting spending would average about \$197,000, up from about \$188,000 last year. The survey also determined that the average number of meetings planned by respondent organizations this year would be 196, up from 182 in 2010.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

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