

TRAVERSING THE GLOBE

What's New?

In MSU "Business" Travel...

It's been a busy year for the MSU Travel Program and hopefully, the changes to date have made a positive difference in how you arrange and reimburse University business travel.

- In late February, the [Preferred Travel Agencies](#), Tower Travel Management and Passageways Travel, began providing service to Michigan State University. If you haven't had the opportunity to utilize these agencies and will be traveling in the future, I strongly recommend that you do.
- Airfare receipts, based upon University guidelines, issued by the MSU Preferred Travel Agencies moved from paper receipts to electronic invoices e-mailed to travelers and travel arrangers.
- Through MSU's relationships with Tower Travel Management and Passageways Travel, and by consolidating the University's buying power, airline discounts have been successfully negotiated with Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, and Air Emirates.
- Section 70 Travel Regulations of the Manual of Business Procedures was rewritten and will soon be posted on the Controller's Office website. Updates of which you should be aware and review are the Travel Authorization section and advance purchase of airfare/rail.
- Work began and continues on the development of the MSU Travel Portal. The projected rollout date has been moved to February 2010.

More Changes:

Updates to the Travel forms...

The Travel Authorization and Emergency Contact form and the Travel Voucher are no longer linked together. What this means to you is that when completing the Travel Authorization, data will no longer automatically be transferred to the Travel Voucher. This has taken place in preparation for MSU's new financial information system in which accounting data from the Travel Voucher will be input onto the Disbursement Voucher.

Please direct any suggestions or comments to the University Travel Manager, Debbie Gulliver, at telephone (517) 355-0343, or email gullive5@ctr.msu.edu or fax (517) 432-4656. 1

Airline Discounts:

Available to MSU travelers...

Michigan State University recently signed agreements with Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and Air Emirates to provide university travelers with discounted airfares. The contracted discounts are only available through MSU's Preferred Travel Agencies. Please contact Tower Travel or Passageways Travel for further details.

Club Quarters:

New Contract brings New Opportunities...

Michigan State University recently signed an agreement with Club Quarters. Club Quarters are business hotels located in New York City, Chicago, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Houston, Boston, and London. The rates are available to anyone associated with MSU. Regular rooms start at \$106 per night, single occupancy. For more information or to book your stay at Club Quarters, contact either [Tower Travel](#) or [Passageways Travel](#).

Car Rentals:

Renter Advice...

Both National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent a Car offer Michigan State University travelers a discounted rate which includes loss damage waiver and liability insurance. In some instances, as a renter, the insurance coverage is needed due to an accident. Please be advised that a police report is required if damage is done to your rental car or other property. Without a police report, the renter is held responsible for the damage to the rental vehicle and any associated costs.

More Travel News on Page 2...

TRAVERSING THE GLOBE

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by Debbie Gulliver, University Travel Manager

December 2009

Direct Billing Airfare:

What are the benefits?

Michigan State University has contracts with Tower Travel Management and Passageways Travel so that MSU business travelers have the opportunity to purchase airline tickets and bill the cost to the University. This eliminates the financial burden of carrying expenses until after the MSU business trip has been completed and a travel voucher has been processed.

By utilizing these agencies, travelers also have access to Michigan State University's negotiated discounts on airfare, hotel, and car rentals.

There are fees associated with utilizing these travel management companies, which are based upon the way the airline ticket is booked and the type of airline ticket purchased. [Fees](#) are posted on the Travel Office website.

Use of direct billing also gives the traveler access to service 24 hours a day/7 days a week:

- Services offered, but not limited to: direct billing of airfare/rail, access to travel discounts, reservations of air/rail, car, hotel, Visa applications, and assistance with reservation changes and cancellations.
- The agents at the Preferred Travel Agencies are well versed in MSU travel policies and procedures, federal regulations such as Fly America, and NCAA rules and regulations.
- The Preferred Travel Agencies are able to assist travelers wherever they are in the world.
- Access to on-line booking tools, Get There and ResX, which are supported by each travel management company.

Electronic Invoices:

Please review...

After the Preferred Travel Agency has made your reservation and your ticket has been purchased, they will send you an electronic invoice via e-mail. It is extremely important that you immediately review this for accuracy. In the first 24 hours after issuance, it is much easier for the Preferred Travel Agency to make corrections. Beyond that, especially as the departure date nears, it could cost the department cancellation fees and the price of a new airline ticket.

Please notify the issuing agency if you do find any discrepancies.

International Per Diems:

Helpful Hint...

Did you know that the U.S. Department of State divides the international M&IE proportions by individual meal and incidentals? Visit the State Department's link to these proportions at

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=114&menu_id=81.

Direct Deposit:

The way of the future...

Please remember to place an "X" in the box at the top of the Travel Voucher so that reimbursement may be direct deposited into your bank account. Anyone who is set up for direct deposit through MSU Payroll may have reimbursements direct deposited too.

The Travel News on Page 3...

TRAVERSING THE GLOBE

Airfare Study:

The Latest in Pricing...

To have a greater understanding of why travelers choose to purchase airline tickets on such websites as Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, and Priceline, a study was done comparing airfares obtained from these on-line booking tools and Get There and ResX, which are the booking engines supported by Michigan State University's Preferred Travel Agencies. Findings indicated that pricing was consistent across the board.

Consistencies:

- Dates/Times of Travel: January 11 – 15, 2010, morning departures (before 11 am) each way
- Roundtrip airfare from mid-Michigan to San Diego

Findings:

- Prices from Lansing were the highest starting at \$621 (Priceline) to \$776 (Travelocity)
- Prices from Flint were the lowest at \$298.40 (Expedia & Travelocity). The highest was \$399.40 (ResX); also posted on Kayak.com
- Prices from Detroit were the same; all websites offered the same price of \$354.40
- The lowest prices from Grand Rapids were posted on Get There and ResX (\$519.64); the others posted \$532

Conclusions:

- Lowest prices are available through MSU's Preferred Travel Agencies.
- The same flights were available on all websites.

"Take Aways":

- Receipts from the Preferred Travel Agencies meet the University's receipt requirements.
- Receipts from Expedia, Orbitz, Priceline, and Travelocity require additional documentation such as a passenger receipt and credit card statement to meet the University's receipt requirements.
- Purchasing travel through the Preferred Travel Agencies provides travelers with access to travel assistance 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- All reservations purchased through the Preferred Travel Agencies go through quality control checks to be sure that reservations "make sense" and are in compliance with University policy as well as regulatory policies such as Fly America.

Stay tuned...for updates on the long-awaited MSU Travel Portal.

Cost Savings:

Begins with time savings...

How much is your time worth? If you're like me, you may equate this to an hourly wage. The expectation in the United States, within the State of Michigan, and at Michigan State University, is that we do more with less. When planning a business trip, this equates to less time researching flights, hotels, and ground transportation and more time on the additional responsibilities of the "job".

The Preferred Travel Agencies are standing by to assist you with airline, hotel, car rental, and ground transportation reservations. Mode of Communication includes calling, faxing, or e-mailing travel needs to either Tower Travel Management or Passageways Travel, OR booking on-line utilizing the booking tools provided by each agency.

The Preferred Travel Agency consultants will provide low fare options from which to choose based upon the parameters you provide. Be sure to let them know if you have flexibility in travel days, times, and departure/arrival airports. MSU Travelers and Travel Arrangers may have the Preferred Travel Agencies research and make reservations by contacting the Preferred Travel Agencies by telephone, fax, or e-mail:

Tower Travel Management

Telephone: 355-0255 or 866-658-4228
Fax: 630-954-3008
Email: onlinesolutions@towertravel.com

Passageways Travel

Telephone: 353-9898 or 800-684-7384
Fax: 517-432-7400
Email: eservices@pways.com

OR

To book on-line utilizing the booking tools provided by Michigan State University's Preferred Travel Agencies, visit either site:

<http://wx1.getthere.net/DispatcherServlet?requestType=logging&site=towertraveldmm>

User Name: Your MSU email address
Password for first time users: "travel"

<http://msu.pways.com/>

Company Name: msu
User Name: First and Last Name, no spaces
Password for first time users: leave this field blank