

TRAVERSING THE GLOBE

Volume 4, Issue 3

by Debbie Gulliver, University Travel Manager

May 2007

ResX

ResX Announces New Look...

On Friday, May 4, 2007, Passageways Travel's online booking tool, ResX, was upgraded so that it looks and feels like the current industry standard. Please be assured that if you have been using ResX to book airline, hotel, and/or car reservations, all of your information is intact. Passageways Travel is providing a 30 minute tutorial on ResX that will walk you through the changes. If you would like to view the tutorial, please sign into ResX at <http://msu.pways.com/>. Instructions for viewing the tutorial are on the "Welcome" page. Questions should be directed to Passageways Travel's eServices Desk at 1-866-838-6182.

Passports

Please Allow Sufficient Time...

Passport processing and renewals are taking 10 to 12 weeks. Expedited processing of a passport or renewal, which requires an additional \$60 fee, takes approximately 5 weeks. The staff at the U.S. Post Office on Collins Road is very helpful in assisting travelers with passport processing, including photos. For Passport and Visa information and applications, in addition to checking the status of your passport application (once submitted), please visit the U.S. Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/index.html>.

If you need a passport quicker than this, you will have to make an appointment with the Chicago Passport Agency. This agency serves customers who are traveling within 2 weeks (14 days), or who need foreign visas for travel. An appointment is required. The appointment telephone number is 1-877-487-2778 and the hours of operation for the Chicago Passport Agency are 9 am to 4 pm (local time) M-F.

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.

Exchange Rates...

Helpful Hint...

A University traveler has just returned from a business trip to a foreign destination. All of the receipts are in a foreign currency. How can these be converted into U.S. dollars and cents?

The MSU Voucher Processing staff advises that Travel Voucher Preparers should use the OANDA conversion tables at an exchange rate called the "Typical Cash Rate Plus 4%." To access this table, please visit the MSU Travel Office website or go directly to the following link: <http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic>.

The table is easy to follow by filling in the blanks. For example, converting 1 Euro as of 5/1/2007 at the Typical Cash Rate Plus 4% would equal **1.418 US Dollars**. You may either multiply the total of each reimbursable receipt by this amount or individually convert each total reimbursable receipt.

Voucher Processing asks that you attach a printout of the conversion to the Travel Voucher.

Documentation Requirements:

When traveling for business ...

If you are including personal travel in your business trip (which is **not** recommended) please be sure to exclude all expenses related specifically to the personal portion of your trip. In addition, if you are flying to a different destination for personal reasons, please be sure to obtain a written airfare quote from one of the Cluster Travel Agencies for the business portion of your trip. You may claim the lesser of the two costs as a reimbursable travel expense. Airfare which includes both business and personal travel should not be direct billed to a MSU Account Number.

More Travel News on Page 2...

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Candlewood Suites...

Improvements to Their Services...

Effective June 4, 2007, breakfast will be served in the Four Seasons Room of the Henry Center. Breakfast is open to all Candlewood Suites guests, members, Henry Center meetings, and to the public. Offerings will include eggs made to order, breakfast meats, potatoes, cereal, Danish, fruit, juice, and coffee.

In addition, the Candlewood Suites has added a new bedding collection to all of their guest rooms. The mattress is deeper with a quilted topper, the sheets are sateen and the pillows are new and improved.

Other Hotel Updates...

Local Hotels Exchange Names...

The Comfort Inn and Holiday Inn Express in Okemos have changed names. The Comfort Inn is now the

Holiday Inn Express and Suites, 2209 University Park Drive, Okemos, MI 48864

Phone: 517-349-8700

Website:

<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/ex/1/en/advancedsearch?hotelCode=lanok>

The Holiday Inn Express is now the Comfort Inn, 2187 University Park Drive, Okemos, MI 48864

Phone: 517-347-6690

Website: www.okemoscomfortinn.com

Airfare Searches...

Where to find the best rates...

There are currently a number of search engines on the internet promising to find the lowest airfare for your next trip. These include airline websites, websites such as Expedia and Travelocity, and websites that search these sites and more to find you the lowest price. Two of these, **kayak.com** and **mobissimo.com** have been written up by Consumer Reports as quality search engines. A new website has emerged, **farecast.com**, which will not only search for the lowest airfare but will forecast the movement of airline prices on a particular route. All three of these websites search hundreds of airfare offerings making their searches very comprehensive.

National Car Rental

Did You Know...

All Michigan State University employees and retirees, spouses and children, over the age of 21 (permanently living in the same household), are eligible to participate in Michigan State University's car rental program with National Car Rental.

All MSU employees are eligible through our contract with National Car Rental to become an Emerald Club Member for free. The \$50.00 administrative fee is waived.

By becoming an Emerald Club Member, you are guaranteed a car when reserved in advance of the pick up date.

National Car Rental provides electronic coupons to Michigan State University on its intranet site available through the MSU Travel Office website.

By making your National Car Rental reservation on the intranet site available through the MSU Travel Office website, you are given an additional discount of up to 10%.

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