



Graphic by Lorraine Kath

Student holiday travel increases; travel problems remain the same

By Sarah Kitchen
Of the Emerald

Holiday travel is up this year from last, with many students flying either to domestic or foreign destinations.

Kristen Petersen, manager of Valentine's Campus Travel Center, said that ticket sales over the Christmas break is up over last year, and people are buying their tickets earlier this year.

"This year we found that people who traveled last year who booked their tickets in November had to buy their tickets in October this year," Petersen said.

The probability of airlines offering the specials they did last Christmas is not expected this year.

"We don't anticipate the airlines doing the crazy things they did last year such as \$58 round-trip tickets to San Francisco with a maximum stay of 48 hours," Petersen said.

There has been a particular problem finding seats on planes for people traveling to Asia, Petersen said. Many students flying to Singapore have been on waiting lists since September, she said.

Petersen suggested that students planning to travel to Asia next Christmas make their travel plans during the summer in order to avoid the possibility of being stuck on a waiting list.

Any low rates offered by United Airlines during the holiday period apply only if the ticket is purchased 30 days in advance, said a United spokeswoman. On several routes, 14-day advance tickets are still available, with the restriction that a Saturday fall between the departure and return trip, she said.

The closer it is to Christmas, however, the more likely the routes will be sold out, she added.

The Eugene-San Francisco and the Eugene-Los Angeles routes are almost all booked, especially from Dec. 18-23, the spokeswoman said. Delays, which are more likely to occur over a holiday period, occur only when they cannot be avoided, she said.

"The airplanes stay in the air all day long," she said. "For example, a plane may originate in Washington, D.C., and then go to Denver, to San Francisco, and then to Los Angeles, back to San Francisco and on to Eugene. If there is a delay anywhere along the line, especially because of weather in the east, the whole schedule is thrown off."

"Delays are avoided by the airline because they cost of hundreds of dollars since the whole route is thrown off, and we may lose customers," she added.

Another cause of delays over the holiday season is airline overbooking which usually results in the airline asking volunteers to give up their seats.

A plane may be overbooked when travelers are given tickets that have not been specifically booked with the airline, especially by corporations that are able to write their own tickets, the spokeswoman said.

"There is no way of us knowing that someone booked a space with us or not," she said.

Today the airline has a system of asking for volunteers to give up their seats; in the past the customer was just out of luck, she added.

"If a plane is overbooked we

offer a free ticket to the person who gives up a seat," the spokeswoman said. "Also, we assure them a seat on the next available airplane out."

Trailways Bus System is offering a round-trip ticket to any destination it has routes to for \$159; however, the traveler must return within 16 days, a Trailways representative said.

Apart from this special, Trailways is offering discount tickets to Washington and California. There is an additional discount if the tickets are purchased 14 days in advance.

The number of people traveling on Trailways is no heavier during the Christmas break than any other time, he said.

Harold Lorimer, Eugene station manager for Greyhound Bus Lines, said special tickets are offered during the Christmas holiday. For instance, a round-trip ticket to the San Francisco Bay Area is \$99.95, and a round-trip ticket to Seattle is \$54.

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