

Near-record numbers to travel, says AAA

As estimated 34.8 million Americans will travel 100 miles or more from home over the Labor Day holiday—the second highest total ever, according to AAA Blue Grass/Kentucky. That figure represents an increase of nearly 2 percent over a year ago. The record for a Labor Day weekend is 34.9 million in 1997.

"This year's near-record number of travelers comes despite an 18-cent increase in gas prices over the same period last year," said Dan Dickson, spokesman for AAA Blue Grass/Kentucky. The AAA Fuel Gauge Report shows the average price of a gallon of self-serve unleaded gas is \$1.255 per gallon. "A relatively healthy economy is why travel numbers remain high, despite rising gas prices," said Dickson.

Approximately 29.2 million people say they will travel by airplane, light truck or recreational vehicle, up 1 percent from a year ago. Holiday travel by air, bus, rail or ship will reach 5.6 million, an increase of a healthy 6 percent compared to last Labor Day.

Most auto travelers will originate in the West, with 7.7 million. A majority of travelers—23 percent—plan to visit cities, with another 20 percent going to smaller towns or rural areas and 19 percent visiting oceans or beaches. 47 percent plan to stay overnight at a hotel or motel.

AAA's travel projections are based on a national survey of 1,500 adults by the Travel Industry Association, which conducts research for AAA.

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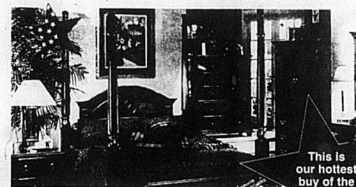
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