



TRAVEL NEWSLETTER #11



JULY 2002

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

The staff of Travel Services would like to extend our thanks to the Travel Coordinators for improving the timeliness and accuracy of their expense report submittals. We still have a ways to go, but as a result of your efforts many of the audited expense reports don't look as messy as they did this time last year.

FOREIGN CURRENCY CONVERSION RATES

When performing a conversion from a foreign currency to USD please remember to use one of 2 dates to determine the applicable rate. (1) The rate on the date the Traveler arrived in the foreign country; (2) the rate used to convert USD to local currency upon arriving in the foreign country. The only exception to this rule is when a charge was placed on a credit card and the statement is being used as a receipt, that charge should be the USD amount of the transaction on the credit card, whatever exchange rate the bank used.

For a visitor coming to JLAB, that purchases their own airfare, the conversion rate is determined by the day they bought their airline ticket (for airfare costs only). Any other expenses incurred on departure or return should use the conversion rates on the day they left the country and the day they arrived back in-country. Consequently, on a visitor there might be as many as 3 conversion rates.

Always attach a copy of any conversion tables used. Conversion rates for JLab should be from the OANDA.COM website.

EXPENSE REPORT RESEARCH UPDATE

Meetings have been held between MIS and Business Services to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of three options. Maintain Status-Quo; Develop expense report in-house; Obtain commercial package. To aid with our final analysis and recommendation to Roy Whitney and the MIS Committee, each Travel Coordinator, Cost Accounting Manager and Travel Services staff member were asked to provide their own advantages and/or disadvantages of automating the Expense Report. There were a total of 20 replies received. Our thanks to those who took the time to give us your opinion.

Additionally, a demonstration by Deltek was conducted on July 24. Deltek owns the accounting software package, Costpoint, currently used by the Lab. They just recently announced an expense reporting module which might meet our requirements. From this demonstration it was decided to look at the application in more detail before making a final recommendation. We will keep you informed.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/07/20020722-1.html>

SAFETY AT THE GAS PUMP



The Petroleum Equipment Institute is working on a campaign to try and make people aware of fires as a result of "static" (that is, static electricity) at gas pumps. They have researched 150 cases of these fires. The results were very surprising:

- 1) Out of 150 cases, almost all of them were women.
- 2) Almost all cases involved the person getting back in their vehicle while the nozzle was still pumping gas, when finished and they went back to pull the nozzle out the fire started, as a result of static.
- 3) Most had on rubber-soled shoes.
- 4) Most men never get back in their vehicle until completely finished. This is why they are seldom involved in these types of fires.
- 5) Don't ever use cell phones when pumping gas
- 6) It is the vapors that come out of the gas that cause the fire, when connected with static charges.
- 7) There were 29 fires where the vehicle was reentered and the nozzle was touched during refueling from a variety of makes and models. Some resulting in extensive damage to the vehicle, to the station, and to the customer.
- 8) Seventeen fires that occurred before, during or immediately after the gas cap was removed and before fueling began.

NEVER get back into your vehicle while filling it with gas. If you absolutely **HAVE** to get in your vehicle while the gas is pumping, make sure you get out, close the door **TOUCHING THE METAL**, before you ever pull the nozzle out. This way the static from your body will be discharged before you ever remove the nozzle.

As mentioned earlier, The Petroleum Equipment Institute, along with several other companies now, are really trying to make the public aware of this danger. You can find out more information by going to <http://www.pei.org> <<http://www.pei.org>> . Once here, click in the center of the screen where it says "Stop Static".

I ask you to please send this information to ALL your family and friends, especially those who have kids in the car with them while pumping gas. If this were to happen to them, they may not be able to get the children out in time. Thanks for passing this along. (email from Mark Waite, Director, Business Services, 7/17/02)

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR PEANUTS?

If you're still wondering why the peanuts disappeared from your last flight, here's a 10-year comparison of taxes/fees on a typical \$270 roundtrip ticket, provided by Northwest Airlines:

1992- your cost was \$270. Government got 10.5% (\$28.49) in Excise Tax and Fuel Tax

2002- your cost still is \$270. Government gets 25.5% (\$68.76) in Excise and Fuel Taxes (\$24.76) PLUS \$44.00 of new stuff: PFCs, Segment Fees, Security Fees, and the pending Excess Security Cost Fee. Taxes/fees have increased 141% over the 10-year period.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Travel Card Orientation	July 30, 2002	11:00am	VARC, 47
Travel Card Orientation	August 15, 2002	2:30pm	VARC, 47
Coordinator Roundtable	Sept 19, 2002	10:00am	CC, L104

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Mark Waite for Press Release of ANL visit

Thanks to Mark Waite for "Safety at the Gas Pump"

Thanks to Chris Nicholas, Nicholas Travel for "What Happened To Our Peanuts?"