

# News & Notes

TRAVEL • MANUFACTURER • RETAIL

TRAVEL

## In 2018 TSA Will No Longer Accept Driver's Licenses from Nine U.S. States



Heads up to travelers from nine U.S. states: your driver's license will no longer function as a valid ID for domestic air travel by this time next year. Residents of Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota,

Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Washington will have to use a passport or military ID in lieu of a driver's license to pass through TSA security checkpoints next year. The TSA has been placing signage around airport security checkpoints to inform travelers of the impending change. It's because IDs from these nine states do not meet the standards imposed by the federal government's 2005 Real ID act. Only 24 states comply with the act, and 17 others have been given an extension to comply. But if those nine states don't comply in time, residents will need to look elsewhere for appropriate identification.

SOURCE: TRAVEL + LEISURE

## Airlines Report Record Low Lost Bags and Canceled Flights

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, airlines canceled fewer flights and reported fewer mishandled bags in November of 2016 than any other month on record. Airlines cancelled just .29% of their domestic flights, beating a previous low of .33% set two months prior, and the lowest since 1995. Delta, Alaska and Frontier had the lowest rates of canceled flights, while ExpressJet, SkyWest and Spirit had the highest. There were 2.02 reports of mishandled bags for each 1,000 passengers during the month, which is the lowest in 30 years. The previous low was the month



prior, and one year earlier the mishandled-bag rate was 2.53. Airlines were also on time more frequently, though not at a record-setting pace.

SOURCE: USA TODAY



## U.S. Travel's February Outlook

The U.S. Travel Association says uncertainty surrounding the new Trump administration has complicated the outlook, but the underlying state of the U.S. economy is sound. Despite a two-year downturn in exports, domestic demand remains high. The labor market is expanding, wages are improving at an increasing pace and consumer confidence remains strong. In December of 2016, travel exports increased for the sixth time in seven months, marking a solid rebound from the first half of the year. The number of American households interested in domestic travel in 2017 climbed to 74%, up more than 4% over November. International demand for air travel grew strongly in December to the highest level in nine months and the USTA's Travel Trends Index cooled to end the year at 51.2, down from 52.1 the month prior.

SOURCE: USTA

## The Most Excellent Airline in the World

In its annual Airline Excellence Awards, [airlineratings.com](http://airlineratings.com) has named Air New Zealand the Airline of the Year for the fourth year in a row. The website praised the airline for its record-breaking financial performance, safety record, environmental leadership, in-flight innovations and motivated staff. Editor-in-Chief Geoffrey Thomas called it "an exceptional performance" that Air New Zealand finished in the top spot in virtually all of the site's audit criteria. Qantas, Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific also ranked highly in the Australian site's rankings. Virgin Atlantic, British Airways, Etihad Airways, All Nippon, Eva Air and Lufthansa rounded out the top 10.

SOURCE: CNN

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Travel Goods SHOWCASE Spring 2017

## Disney-Style RFID Wristbands Come to Cruising

Cruise lines are beginning to embrace technology as a way to personalize and improve the customer experience. Royal Caribbean and Carnival offer RFID-enabled wristbands that can do everything from open staterooms to recommend activities, locate family members onboard and even order drinks from the bar. Because benefits are not limited to guests, more cruise lines are sure to adopt the technology. The smart devices are able to cut down on lost room keys and even collect real-time data to determine where passengers are congregating and how they're moving about the ship in order to provide the necessary staff where and when it is needed.

SOURCE: NBC NEWS

## The New Small Trend in Recreational Vehicles

Historically low gas prices and interest rates combine with a rebounding economy to signal that millions of Americans will be traveling the country in new recreational vehicles this year. The RV industry expects to ship 383,000 new trailers and 55,000 motorhomes this year, marking eight straight years of growth. The newest trend in RVs is low weight trailers that can be towed by cars and small SUVs, which opens up RV travel to a whole new generation. The 2017 Airstream Basecamp, for instance, is 16 feet long and weighs just more than a ton, making it easy work for a small SUV. The \$40,000 sticker price, however, limits its audience. But many other manufacturers are also meeting the opportunity with less expensive compact trailers. Smaller and lighter inTech trailers can be had for around \$12,000.

SOURCE: USA TODAY

## Air India Adds Female-Only Seating

In an effort to improve the comfort of female passengers, Air India is adding a female-only row of seats on its domestic flights. "We will be reserving the third row, six seats, in the economy class of the aircraft for female passengers traveling alone," said Meenakshi Malik, Air India's revenue management chief. The seats can be requested up to one hour prior to check-in at no additional fee.

SOURCE: USA TODAY

## The U.S. Airports with the Fastest Wi-Fi

If you're going to sit around for hours in an airport, you might as well choose one with fast internet access. According to testing site Ookla Speedtest, the fastest Wi-Fi in a U.S. airport can be found at Denver International Airport (DIA) with 61.75 Mbps data transfer speeds. Travelers to Philadelphia (PHL) and Seattle-Tacoma (SEA) will be pleased to learn their airports came in second and third, respectively. According to an Ookla spokesperson, fast data speeds are no accident. DIA invested \$2.5 million to upgrade its Wi-Fi in recent years. Which airports should you avoid if internet access is important to you? Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport (ATL) limped in with just 2.71 Mbps transfer speeds. Cellular



users in Detroit will be happy to know their Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW) ranked highest with a cellular data transfer rate of 45.79 Mbps, while New Yorkers at LaGuardia (LGA) suffer through the slowest cellular network at just 7.25 Mbps.

SOURCE: TRAVEL + LEISURE

## The Bugatti Group Partners with Céline Dion

Canadian luggage maker The Bugatti Group has partnered with Céline Dion to launch the singer's first luggage and accessory collection. Set to be unveiled at the Project Women trade fair in Las Vegas on February 21, the 200-piece collection will include handbags, leather goods and luggage sets ranging from affordable to luxe. It will be available at retailers worldwide this fall. "As a woman who loves fashion," Dion said, "I am very excited to start a partnership with The Bugatti Group. Their vision toward my brand is impressive and their passion for fashion is as intense as mine. So guess what... We're going to have a really good time together! And, hopefully, all will enjoy the new collection."



SOURCE: THE BUGATTI GROUP

## Triforce Partners with David Tutera

Triforce Luggage has partnered with celebrity wedding planner David Tutera to launch an elite line of luggage and travel goods designed for sophisticated travelers. The partnership,

which blends Tutera's bridal experience with Triforce's commitment to exclusive luggage collections, will help Triforce increase its market share and broaden its audience.

SOURCE: TRIFORCE LUGGAGE

## DELSEY in Movies and TV

For the second year in a row, the iconic French luggage brand DELSEY was selected for inclusion at the EMMY Awards. At the 2016 event, DELSEY's MONTMARTRE+ softside case was the official gift bag for nominees and presenters at the ceremony. And for the third year in a row, the American Cinematheque Awards partnered with DELSEY to provide the brand's CHATELET SOFT+ case full of luxury goods to nominees and presenters at its annual awards ceremony. Autographed CHATELET SOFT+ cases were also auctioned off to raise funds for the non-profit awards. They included signatures by Bradley Cooper, Matt Damon, Kristen Wiig, Sigourney Weaver, Russell Crowe, Josh Hartnett, Sir Ben Kingsley, Ridley Scott and more. SOURCE: DELSEY



Actor Damon Wayans autographs a DELSEY MONTMARTRE+ softside case at the 2016 EMMY Awards. For the second year in a row DELSEY was selected for the EMMY Awards celebrity gift bag.

## Bella Los Angeles Celebrates TGA Member Brands

In a recent article titled "5 Must-Have Travel Products We've Tried and Love!" *Bella Los Angeles* magazine featured four Travel Goods Association members, naming their products travel essentials they will "never board a plane without." First was the Eagle Creek SwitchBack International Carry-On, which was called "brilliant" for its stylish and durable construction and versatile nature. Not only is it a backpack, but also a wheeled carry-on. Next, the Lapnap Travel Pillow earned high praise because it can provide support for travelers who want to nod off by leaning back or bending forward. The LUG 5-Piece Packing Kit was cited as "great for any kind of traveler" for its ability to help organize and pack more effectively. And finally, Travelon® received praise for two products: its Signature Slim Backpack with RFID blocking and slash-resistant pockets and straps for security with a spacious main compartment and slim profile, and the LTD Clutch which brings the same anti-theft functionality

to a much smaller bag that works as a cross-body bag, a wristlet or a clutch.

SOURCE: BELLA LOS ANGELES



The LUG 5-Piece Packing Kit was included, along with four other TGA member products, in *Bella Los Angeles*' recent article titled "5 Must-Have Travel Products We've Tried and Love!"

## Eagle Creek Honors

Adventure travel gear maker Eagle Creek was named by *OUTSIDE* magazine as one of the best places to work in 2016. Each year the magazine recognizes 100 U.S. companies that help their employees strike the ideal balance between work and play. The award is given in conjunction with the Outdoor Industry Association and Best Companies Group and the full list of winners appears online at [bestplacestoworkoutside.com](http://bestplacestoworkoutside.com).

Eagle Creek also honored Trailhead Sales as its 2016 Rep Agency of the Year. The Trailhead Sales Team is led by Jeff Sheets, principal, Associate Lisi Smith and Office Manager Melissa Wolny. Eagle Creek annually honors a rep or agency that delivers outstanding results along with superior customer service.

SOURCE: EAGLE CREEK



Eagle Creek named Trailhead Sales its 2016 Rep Agency of the Year. From left to right: Jeff Sermack, Eagle Creek sales manager for specialty markets North America; Lisi Smith, Trailhead associate, and Jeff Sheets, principal of Trailhead Sales.

## Carry Gear Solutions Invests in Factory

Carry Gear Solutions (CGS), Haiku's sister company, a private label bag designer and manufacturer since 1993, has added to its diverse manufacturing base with the purchase of a factory in Seattle's SoDo neighborhood. The company is assuming the assets of Unique Textile Experts, a 5,000-square-foot cut-and-sew facility founded in 2008. It includes a sample room and four production lines as well as prototyping, industrial sewing and die cutting. This will enable CGS to better serve its national client and military contracts. Along with bags, the factory can produce apparel, active wear, baby items, hats, gloves, belts and more.

SOURCE: CARRY GEAR SOLUTIONS

## Numinous London Wins BTAA Fashion Award

Smart luggage innovator Numinous Luggage has been honored at the British Travelgoods and Accessories Association's (BTAA) annual Fashion Awards at Autumn Fair 2016. The trade show brings together global brands and the United Kingdom's leading department store and home store buyers. The Numinous London Cabin Case earned distinctions for innovation and design for its use of smart technology such as a built-in mobile charger, biometric locks, puncture-resistant zippers and anti-slash construction.

SOURCE: NUMINOUS LUGGAGE



Numinous Luggage was honored at the British Travelgoods and Accessories Association's (BTAA) annual Fashion Awards at Autumn Fair 2016. Left to right: Autumn Fair Portfolio Director Naomi Barton, Chief Executive of the BTAA Paul Yates, Numinous Luggage's European Sales Director Ben Lowe and Chairman of the BTAA David Nathan.

## Business is Booming for Lojel

Japanese luggage and accessory maker Lojel posted huge growth in 2016. Even with an array of new products and a redoubled publicity effort, 30% growth is impressive. "We have been working very hard to get our name out there and we're finally starting to see it all come together," said Ming Chiang, executive VP of U.S. distribution. "With the tremendous success of the New York Times Travel Show we can foresee an even more promising future in 2017." Lojel also opened its first retail store on the East Coast, located in Flushing, Queens, and the U.S. branch of the company closed the year by donating 5% of its annual sales to the American Red Cross.

SOURCE: LOJEL



Lojel's display at the New York Times Travel Show. Lojel saw 30% sales growth in 2016.

## Biaggi Goes Viral

Foldable luggage brand Biaggi released a new video online to promote its ZipSak 22-inch Carry-On. Featuring British actress and television presenter Rachel Grant, the video shows Grant packing more than 100 items in the compact carry-on. It was a huge success as it was viewed on Facebook more than one million times in a single day and was shared by the likes of Oprah, Ashton Kutcher, Ellen DeGeneres and *TIME*® Magazine. It has now been viewed more than eight million times and during the month of its release Biaggi sold more ZipSaks than at any other time – even more than when the brand was featured on ABC's popular television show "Shark Tank." Watch the packing feat online at [facebook.com/biaggiluggage/videos/963416457118422/](https://facebook.com/biaggiluggage/videos/963416457118422/).

SOURCE: BIAGGI



In this still from the viral video, actor Rachel Grant demonstrates how to pack more than 100 items into a Biaggi ZipSak 22-Inch Carry-On.

## eBags News

eBags has lots of good news to share. First, by partnering with Goodwill and Give Back Box, the online luggage retailer has made it easy for customers to donate used bags to charity in exchange for a discount on the purchase of a new bag. The "Trade In, Trade Up" program provides customers with a 25% discount and a free eBags Connected Luggage Tag for their donation. The process is simple: customers download and print a prepaid shipping label, then pack and ship their used bags and luggage in any shippable box. It's this kind of forward thinking that has earned eBags so many happy customers, as exemplified by the company's 70% growth in 2016. The retailer attributes its "mobile first" strategy to the big gains, which reflect a mobile traffic increase of 53% for the year. In recognition of the retailer as an e-commerce pioneer, eBags' Co-founder and Executive Vice President Peter Cobb has been elected to the board of directors of the National Retail Federation (NRF), where he will serve a 3-year term.

SOURCE: EBAGS

A screenshot of the eBags "Trade In, Trade Up" website. There, customers can donate used bags to Goodwill and receive a 25% off coupon for a new bag.



## Retail's Biggest Challenges

At Retail's Digital Summit last fall, executives debated the biggest challenges facing the retail industry and how they can be met. First is Amazon, the online retail giant that presents a problem for every retailer, as evidenced by its unprecedented growth. The only way retailers can compete with Amazon is to beat it where it can't compete – the way Best Buy has begun speeding up deliveries by shipping from its 1,200 stores, for instance. Second, consumers are increasingly purchasing via mobile phones, but the process is still frustrating when retailers simply shrink down web sites and expect them to work well on mobile devices. Mobile shopping must be simple, full stop, or customers will not complete transactions. Another challenge is that many brands can now sell direct to the consumer, cutting out retailers altogether. According to the National Retail Federation, if retailers are able to meet these challenges correctly they'll survive. But they'll have little time to rest on their laurels, as the future brings new challenges from drone delivery to virtual reality shopping.

SOURCE: NATIONAL RETAIL FEDERATION

### Mobile Searchers are Ready to Buy

Mobile search is a strong indicator of a customer's immediate intent to purchase. That according to Nielsen research numbers cited by an e-commerce executive at the recent Mobile Marketer's Mobile FirstLook conference. Customers who search for products on mobile phones are 57% more likely to visit a store and 51% more likely to make a purchase. Understanding mobile search behavior, therefore, is more important than ever. Retailers can gain customers and earn



their repeat business with meaningful mobile loyalty programs.

SOURCE: MOBILE COMMERCE DAILY

### Amazon Go Unveils Its Store of the Future

First it was the success of online retailer Amazon that convinced traditional retailers to embrace online shopping. Now Amazon is pushing them to reconsider how they do business in their traditional brick-and-mortar stores as well. The online giant has entered the world of brick-and-mortar stores with its Amazon Go location in downtown Seattle. What makes the Amazon Go concept unique? It's done away with the checkout process completely. Shoppers simply use the Amazon Go app to enter the store, then pick up what they want and take it with them when they leave. No lines, no checkout, no problem. Computer vision, sensor

fusion and deep learning combine to detect and record what products are removed from shelves and added to a virtual cart. Shortly after the customer leaves the store, Amazon charges their account and sends a receipt. Now traditional retailers are clamoring to catch up, recognizing that the store of the future may have already arrived. Thankfully, tech firms from Google to Intel are working on the high-tech tools that will enable retailers to remake their stores in the mode of the new Amazon Go concept. Virtual reality headsets, service robots, Bluetooth sensors and more tech will soon find its way into the brick-and-mortar store of the future.

SOURCE: CNBC

### Consumers Demand That Brands Care



According to ad agency Wunderman, there is a new brand engagement criteria called "wantedness." It's essentially a measure of a brand's commitment to earning a customer's business. And according to a Wunderman poll, "wantedness" is more important than ever. The company's recent study found that 79% of U.S. customers only consider buying products from brands that show they care and understand their customers. So how does a brand ensure that its customers feel wanted? By emphasizing traditional customer service values such as "the customer is always right," exceeding customer expectations and proving that they will do anything to earn a customer's business. Shoppers are most dedicated to brands that make their lives easier.

SOURCE: ADWEEK

### Shoppers Hesitate to Complete Expensive Online Purchases

Consumers purchase all sorts of things online, from pantry staples to expensive electronics, appliances and even furniture. But according to a poll from web-financier FuturePay, more than three-quarters of buyers bought things like clothes and shoes online but only 40% would buy appliances and home goods. Two-thirds of those who responded said they might add big-ticket items to their virtual shopping carts, but they fail to complete the transaction when purchase terms are not to their liking. A lack of financing options caused 15% of shoppers to reconsider, while 75% said that it's important online retailers provide alternatives to credit card transactions. More than half of the surveyed shoppers expressed an interest in financing purchases larger than \$1,000.

SOURCE: CNBC