

# News & Notes

TRAVEL • MANUFACTURER • RETAIL

TRAVEL

## TSA Tracks Some U.S. Citizens After Foreign Travel



*Boston Globe* reporting recently revealed that the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA) briefed Congress in August that the agency initiated a 2012 program to screen the identities of domestic travelers by checking travel histories and affiliations, then selecting some for additional searches or pat-downs at airport security checkpoints. In March of this year, the agency added an undercover surveillance program using air marshals to follow select travelers on their next domestic flight. The program, known as Quiet Skies, chooses passengers for “special mission coverage” when their travel patterns or behaviors match those of known or suspected terrorists, or if they are potentially affiliated with someone on a TSA watch list.

Program guidelines permit air marshals to follow passengers all the way to the airport curb, allowing them to make note of the license plate of the vehicle picking them up. Air marshals also document whether passengers sweat, fidget, use a computer or “have a jump in their Adam’s apple” or a “cold penetrating stare,” among other behaviors. The 2,000 to 3,000 TSA air marshals have traditionally tracked subjects of open FBI terrorism investigations and provided their findings to law enforcement agencies. A TSA spokesman says that while the program has not yet deemed any of the approximately 5,000 passengers monitored suspicious enough for further scrutiny, Quiet Skies “adds an additional line of defense to aviation security.”

Some are concerned about the civil rights and privacy implications of a program that follows U.S. citizens on domestic flights. “Quiet Skies is the very definition of Big Brother,” said U.S. Senator Edward Markey of Massachusetts, a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. “American travelers deserve to have their privacy and civil rights protected even 30,000 feet in the air.”

SOURCE: BOSTON GLOBE



## Iberostar to Eliminate 200 Tons of Plastic Waste in 2018

The Iberostar Group, operators of more than 110 four- and five-star hotels throughout 17 countries, has committed to eliminating more than 200 tons of plastic waste generated in its hotels in 2018. In an effort to honor its strong ties to oceans and seas (with more than 80% of its hotels boasting seafront locations) the hotelier has implemented its “Wave of Change” program designed to reduce plastic pollution and promote sustainable fishing and the conservation and protection of marine ecosystems worldwide. The company will replace single-use plastic products such as bottles, bags and amenities with eco-friendly alternatives and guarantee all rooms in its 110 hotels will be single-use plastic free in 2019. The company launched its first phase of the program in 2017 by eliminating the use of 10 million plastic straws, followed by removing all disposable plastic items from its hotel rooms in Spain in 2018.

SOURCE: THE IBEROSTAR GROUP

## Adventure Travel Gaining Popularity

A new survey shows the number of adventure travelers is growing, and not just among young travelers. The survey, conducted by travel agency Travel Leaders Group and the Adventure Travel Trade Association, found that travelers aged 41-50 all but equal the number of adventure travelers in the 29-40 age range. Perhaps more surprising, more than one in five adventure travelers is aged 51-60. The survey also found the top destinations include Belize, Italy and Argentina, while the top types of adventure travel are culinary, cultural, cycling and hiking. Adventure travel is a \$683 billion industry.

SOURCE: TRAVEL LEADERS GROUP

## Cities Clamp Down on Airbnb

The list of cities and towns implementing rules and restrictions on Airbnb, HomeAway and other short term home rental services is growing. Most recently, the New York City Council unanimously agreed to significant restrictions aimed to prevent landlords and tenants from illegally renting apartments for a few days at a time to tourists – a practice that is aggravating the city’s housing crisis and driving up rents due to decreased supply. Short term rentals, on the whole, can be more profitable than long-term leases. When similar regulations were implemented in San Francisco the number of Airbnb listings fell by half. New York City expects new disclosure requirements, which force rental services to provide names and addresses of hosts on a monthly basis, to eliminate many of the 50,000 units in the city listed on Airbnb.



In a similar move, San Diego’s city council recently voted to ban secondary homes from the short-term rental market, limiting listings on Airbnb and other services to primary residences only. The move is expected to affect as many as 80% of the city’s more than 11,000 vacation rentals. New Orleans’ city council has implemented a nine-month ban on short-term rentals while the city planning commission studies the impact on neighborhoods. Many European cities, such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin and Paris also restrict short-term rentals in an effort to keep real estate prices in check.

SOURCES: SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE, NEW YORK TIMES, BUSINESS TIMES

## NYC Bucks Tourism Trends

Despite new travel restrictions implemented by the Trump Administration, New York City set a travel record in 2017 marking the eighth year in a row with a new high mark. The city welcomed 62.8 million visitors last year, 2.3 million more than the previous year, according to the city’s official tourism-marketing organization, NYC & Company. Gains were spread among domestic and international travelers, which increased 3.9% and 3.4%, respectively.

Industry insiders feared a decline due to President Trump’s ban on travelers from certain countries, however it appears those concerns were unfounded. More international airlines are providing service to local airports, and new attractions are opening in the city including NYC Ferry, a service that connects destinations throughout the city by boat. The city is especially appealing to travelers from China and the United Kingdom, each of which sent more than 1 million visitors to New York in 2017. However, the broader trend for international travel to the U.S. is declining, with a drop of roughly 55 million visitors, or 3.8%, from January through September 2017.

SOURCE: WALL STREET JOURNAL



## The Airlines Charging the Highest Fees

Airlines are making more from ancillary services than ever before. Those added fees on top of the base airfare include everything from baggage fees to charges for online booking and for conveniences such as seat selection and Wi-Fi access. These fees are more prevalent on low-cost airlines, which take an a la carte approach, and can in practice eliminate any savings from a discount ticket.

That said, legacy carriers can be found among the worst offenders as well. The airlines averaging the highest fees are Spirit, at \$51 per passenger, WOW Air at \$49, Allegiant at \$49 and Frontier at \$48. Rounding out the top 10 are Jet2, Qantas Airways, United, AirAsia X, HK Express and Wizz Air. The lowest fees by far are from Southwest, which validates the brand’s marketing claims of charging lower ancillary fees than its competi-

SOURCE: USA TODAY

## Airline Satisfaction Remains Relatively High

According to the results of J.D. Power’s North American Airline Satisfaction Study, 2017 was a banner year for happy travelers. Previous surveys found that airline satisfaction has been improving steadily for several years thanks to airline investment in new planes, better overhead storage and cheaper fares. In-flight services – including food, beverage, Wi-Fi and entertainment – are the primary exception to the positive results. And those results should be taken with a grain of salt, J.D. Power reports, because on the whole the airline industry is among the lowest rated in travel – with rental car companies and hotels scoring much higher overall. Alaska Airlines and Delta Air Lines rank first and second among traditional carriers, with Southwest Airlines and JetBlue leading the ranks of low-cost carriers. Most improved airlines are Allegiant and Air Canada, with significant gains in overall satisfaction from the previous year.

SOURCE: J.D. POWER

## Hawaii Tourism Down Due to Volcano

Fewer tourists visited Hawaii this summer as eruptions from Kilauea volcano have destroyed more than 600 homes, injured dozens and closed more than two thirds of the Big Island’s Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Tourism makes up more than 30% of the Big Island’s private sector jobs, and resorts and tour operators are seeing a decline of 30% over the same time last year. The decline has affected businesses a good distance from the volcano as well and even on neighboring islands despite the volcanic activity having no physical effect outside of a small portion of the island.

Some Hawaii-based hotels have reported summer bookings down 40% compared to 2017. “Most people don’t have a sense of the island’s vastness and how small the eruption area really is,” said Pat Fitzgerald, president of the Kohala Coast Resort Association. “Our resorts are on the opposite coast from the volcano, almost 100 miles away from the lava flow. We have some work to do to educate travelers that the island is fine, safe and welcoming guests every day.”

SOURCE: ACCUWEATHER

**Asia Popular Among International Travelers**

Asia is a more popular travel destination than Europe and the Americas, according to new research from analytics company GlobalData. On the top 10 list of popular international travel destinations, seven are Asian. They include Bangkok, Singapore, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur and Shenzhen, with one city each in Europe, North America and the Middle East – London, Dubai and New York City – rounding out the list. The researchers found that depreciation of most Asian currencies (with the exception of Chinese Yuan) was a key factor in attracting international visitors to Asian destinations. For the third year in a row, Bangkok remained the top international destination, with more than 20 million visitors in 2017, thanks to tourism-friendly visa policies in Thailand, along with strong promotional efforts and relative low cost of connectivity.

SOURCE: GLOBALDATA

**Advice for Cruising with Kids**

Cruises are popular with passengers of all ages, but parents of young children know that traveling with kids isn't always a vacation. CNN put together a list of seven tips for cruising with the whole family. First, choose a cruise line that caters to kids – such as Carnival, Disney, Norwegian and Royal Caribbean – which offer big ships with lots of child-friendly bells and whistles. Failing that, ensure the ship has pools and water parks to entertain young ones.

The type of cabin is important too; if suites or adjoining cabins are out of the budget, look for family friendly staterooms with divider curtains, separate seating areas and even a balcony (assuming the kids are old enough to use it safely).

Joining kids' clubs, which are typically complimentary, allows parents to drop off children with professional counselors for age-appropriate activities from scavenger hunts to arts and crafts and pool games. To avoid disappointment be prepared for limited options for babies and toddlers under age 3, and book a shorter itinerary to see how the kids do at sea, while remaining flexible with the planned activities.

SOURCE: CNN

**Targus Wins Design Award**

Targus has been named a Green Good Design™ Award winner for its eco-friendly backpacks. The Balance™ EcoSmart® Backpacks were recognized by the prestigious Global Awards Program, run by the Chicago Athenaeum, for Design Excellence and Design Innovation. The 15.6" checkpoint-friendly backpack is made from recycled water bottles, with fabric that is PVC free and hardware that is nickel free, along with recyclable zipper pulls and a build that is certified ergonomist-approved. "It is a company-wide team effort to bring meaningful products to life," said Andrew Corkill, Targus vice president of marketing and channel management. "Today our whole company and everyone involved is recognized for creating a contemporary backpack that has a 'green,' ecofriendly product design. A big thank you to everyone involved."

The Balance EcoSmart checkpoint-friendly laptop backpack was named a Green Good Design 2018 Award winner in the Green Product/Graphic Design category.



SOURCE: TARGUS

**Eagle Creek News**

Adventure and travel photographer Andy Mann has partnered with adventure travel goods maker Eagle Creek to expose Eagle Creek audiences to some of the most beautiful places on earth. "Andy's work is the essence of adventure and travel," said Monica Rigali, director of marketing at Eagle Creek. "His enviable spirit of adventure, conservation work and exploration is contagious through his photography, and perfectly aligns with Eagle Creek's mission of encouraging people to get outside more and to experience the transformation of travel." Mann is currently starring in Eagle Creek's National Geographic Guide Series short films, and his photography will be featured prominently across Eagle Creek's social media channels as well.



Adventure and travel photographer Andy Mann has partnered with travel goods brand Eagle Creek to help bring the beauty of travel to a broader audience.



Lauren and Jake Adams are the principles of Adams Outdoor Sales in Owosso, MI and will represent Eagle Creek in the Great Lakes East territory, which includes MI, IN, OH and KY.

In another audience-centric move, Eagle Creek has launched an infographic series outlining the benefits of travel. Aimed at a broad audience, the infographics are designed to break down travel information into palatable pieces that are easily shared across social media. Eagle Creek has also announced a new partnership with Adams Outdoor Sales as the brand's representatives for one of Eagle Creek's largest territories – Great Lakes East, which includes Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

SOURCE: EAGLE CREEK

## Aleon Receives Patent Protection

Luggage maker Aleon Inc. is very pleased and proud to announce it has been granted a patent for its unique line of luggage and business cases. United States Patent number D824169 now protects the iconic, unique design of all Aleon luggage and cases. It also protects Aleon and its authorized dealers against infringement from those looking to copy and capitalize on Aleon's innovative designs and success in the travel goods marketplace.

SOURCE: ALEON INC.

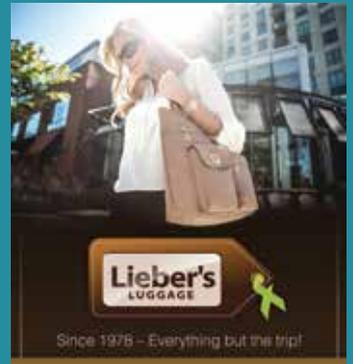


## Lieber's Luggage Sold

On July 1 Landmark Luggage began operating the popular Albuquerque, NM travel goods retailer Lieber's Luggage.

Leslee Richards and Frank Fine announced in May that they would be selling their retail store to Landmark's Ray Krut. Fine founded Lieber's in 1978 and Richards managed it for the last 20 years. "40 years is enough," they wrote in their announcement. "We are confident that Ray will continue the successful operation of Lieber's. We are very proud of our accomplishments in the luggage industry." Recognized as one of the country's top 20 luggage retailers and honored by the Travel Goods Association with a Community Service Award, Lieber's Luggage was also a Briggs & Riley ALDA Retailer of the Year. The store will continue to operate in the same location and with the same local staff.

SOURCE: LIEBER'S LUGGAGE



## LiteGear® Bags celebrates its 5th Anniversary

LiteGear recently celebrated its fifth year in business. LiteGear's Founder and President, Margaret Raible, invited friends and customers from the community to celebrate with a warehouse sale and cookout with grilled hot dogs and free beer from Mare Island Brewery. "I created the LiteGear brand to offer travelers lightweight, durable, affordable travel gear and accessories," Raible said. "I'm grateful that LiteGear is such a success! Thanks to our retailers and fellow travelers."

SOURCE: LITEGEAR



LiteGear President Margaret Raible grilled hot dogs and hosted a warehouse sale in celebration of LiteGear's fifth anniversary.

## Lightest Carry-ons Worth Flying With

Outlining the advantages of light carry-on luggage that makes skipping the baggage claim easy, *Forbes* editors praised products from several TGA member manufacturers in a recent article titled "Lightest Carry-on Luggage Worth Flying With." Hartmann's 22" 7R Global Spinner joined the Eagle Creek Expanse AWD International Carry-on, Delsey's Chatillon Carry-on Expandable Spinner, it Luggage's World's Lightest Los Angeles, and Travelpro's Maxlite 4 International Expandable Carry-on Spinner as favorite light luggage options for travelers of varying needs and budgets who can all agree on the importance of a convenient, low weight bag.

SOURCE: FORBES



The Hartmann 22" 7R Global Spinner was among several TGA member products highlighted in *Forbes* magazine's recent profile of the best and lightest carry-on bags.

## Millennial Parents Shop Differently Than Other Parents

Millennial parents shop differently than other parents. So says the Spring 2018 Consumer View report from the National Retail Federation (NRF). Half of children in the U.S. have a parent age 37 or younger, according to the report, while 1.3 million millennials became new mothers in 2015 alone. These days the parent class is increasingly made up of millennials, and these young parents like subscription services (such as meal delivery from the likes of Blue Apron and Marleyspoon, or clothing supplied by Stitch Fix) because they provide both convenience and an opportunity to discover new things. Millennials are about twice as likely to use subscription services as other generations.

Thanks to their noted affinity for smartphones, millennial parents have a wealth of information at their fingertips and turn to those phones at every stage of the buying process. Speed and convenience – including same-day delivery – are essential for nine of 10 millennial parents. Unlike their own parents, when it comes to brand loyalty millennial parents put price and quality equal at the top of their list, followed by customer service. Other parents put price first, followed by quality and convenience before customer service. Millennial parents are also significantly more likely to shop at retailers that reflect their social or political values, with nearly half of them researching a brand or retailer's views on personally important topics.

SOURCE: NRF

## How Brands Use Stores to Connect with Customers

So many retail jobs have been lost since 2016 that the phrase “retail apocalypse” has been used to describe the trend. Yet in the face of that decline some retailers have found a way to use physical stores to their advantage, curating interesting experiences that can’t be had online. E-retailers themselves are using pop-up store locations to connect with customers and build brand loyalty. Some of these boutiques, for instance, use a guest list for entry – like a club or concert venue – complete with bouncers granting access. Others fill their spaces with quirky, brand-relevant activities that take the place of traditional selling. That’s key, according to journalist Kassia St. Clair. “They want to create events that really fit with their identity,” she says, “and are very memorable. They’re now just sort of spaces – or they can be spaces – where brands can speak to customers in a new and exciting way.” SOURCE: MARKETPLACE.ORG

## Jobs Report Mixed

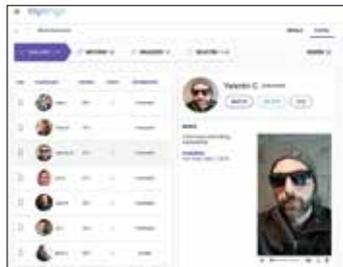
The economy added 157,000 jobs in July, short of economist expectations. A Bloomberg survey of economists anticipated 192,000 jobs to be added. At the same time, unemployment fell from 4% to 3.9%, according to the U.S. Labor Department, nearing an 18-year low. The two reports go hand in hand, as the result of falling unemployment is that employers have an increasingly difficult time finding workers – especially with the economy growing at the fastest pace in three years. Still, monthly job growth has averaged more than 200,000 in 2018, up from 182,000 per month in 2017. The worker-friendly labor market has encouraged more Americans to enter the job market. Economists also say the additional labor supply is soon to dwindle, slowing job growth and driving unemployment lower. Average hourly wages rose slightly from June, up 2.7% from the year prior and show steady growth month over month. Too sharp an increase in wage growth could prompt the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates in order to head off inflation.

SOURCE: USA TODAY

## A New Way to Fill Retail Jobs

Global trade association Shop! has created a millennial-friendly recruiting platform for the retail industry. The online resource helps member companies efficiently fill job openings with qualified talent. The mobile-first tool is specifically designed to attract the next generation of job seekers, connecting candidates with opportunities without the need for resu-més. The free mobile app uses a job seeker’s interests, talents and capabilities to automatically match candidates with employers. The Retail Recruiter Platform is available at no charge for a 60-day trial, after which Shop! members will receive a 15% discount on each match completed. “Job matching is always a challenging and critical function for any business,” says Todd Pittman, executive director of Shop!. “We are excited to deliver something that can help our members better navigate the temporary and full-time recruitment challenges they face.”

SOURCE: SHOP!



## Retail’s Top Tech Investments Today

Every year, Forrester Research Vice President and Principal Analyst Brendan Witcher examines popular buzzwords before sitting down with retailers to ask what’s on the horizon and why. They want technology that addresses customers’ pain points, he says, not technology that’s too far ahead of customer expectations. To that end, here are the top five technology investments he says retailers are making at the moment.

- Next generation personalization, which creates an individualized customer experience based on preferences for everything from style and fit to fabric and texture.
- Omnichannel commerce – the ability to buy online and pick up in store. When offered, 14% of consumers utilize BOPIS.
- Email address – age, gender and zip code no longer cut it in terms of data. Now stores ask customers to log in with an email address to enter a fitting room, for instance, in hopes of building a customer journey that adds value while permitting additional data collection for the retailer.
- Interaction – because customers are so used to stimulation at every turn, retailers must create spaces where customers can interact. It makes the shopping experience fun – a necessary ingredient, consumers say.
- Artificial intelligence, which can improve processes from warehousing and logistics to labor and business intelligence. AI helps Coca-Cola, for instance, to restock vending machines by analyzing a picture of the interior to determine what needs to be refilled.

SOURCE: NRF

## Fresh Relevance and Contactlab Deliver e-Commerce Excellence

Fresh Relevance, a real-time personalization platform for email, mobile and web, has partnered with Contactlab, an engagement marketing platform for e-commerce companies as well as fashion and luxury brands. The partnership is aimed at providing true omnichannel marketing by allowing full integration of insights from online and in-store shoppers. Retailers can monitor online customer behavior (such as what they looked at, what products were placed in shopping carts, and so on) in order to determine visitor particulars – including when and how they came to a site as well as what they may have purchased while there. “The ability to accurately join the dots of the customer journey as they move between offline and online has been the missing piece in the retail puzzle,” said Eddy Swindell, co-founder and CRO of Fresh Relevance. “Retailers using Fresh Relevance fully integrated with Contactlab can harness this valuable insight in real-time, to improve how they engage with every customer across all touch points.”

SOURCE: FRESH RELEVANCE

