

Higher cost of travel this year won't keep people 'Home for the Holidays' Maritz Poll® reveals that travelers are resigned to digging a little deeper into their wallets this year

ST. LOUIS (November 15, 2005) – According to a recent Maritz Poll®, rising travel costs won't be a deterrent to family holiday gatherings this year. U.S. highways and airways will be just as congested this holiday season, as Americans still plan to travel regardless of gas prices being 33 cents higher than last year.*

Still Traveling After All These Years

The survey, which polled Americans on their holiday travel plans, revealed that the percentage of people who plan to travel remained similar to the past several years:

Year	Percentage That Planned Holiday Travel
2005	27 percent
2004	25 percent
2003	26 percent
2002	28 percent

The poll taken this past month, when gas prices were near their peak, showed that only 8 percent of total respondents planned to cancel a trip they would normally take due to higher gas prices. The majority of these people described themselves as less habitual holiday travelers, with only a few regular holiday travelers indicating that rising gas prices affected their plans this year. Apparently, those canceling plans were offset by approximately equal numbers who said that they were planning to take a holiday trip this year that they normally don't take.

“At a time when Americans were pumping \$40 and \$50 into their gas tanks every week, it's surprising to see no decline in the number of people who planned to travel over the holidays,” says Rick Garlick, Ph.D., director of strategic

consulting for Maritz Research Hospitality Group.

“With gas prices declining, it should be a nice gift to those holiday travelers.”

Prepared to Pay the Price

Those who value holiday travel make it a priority despite higher costs. This year, half (51 percent) of those planning to travel say they will spend more this year than last.

This figure is significantly higher than previous years:

Year	Percentage Who Plan to Spend More than Last Year
2005	51 percent
2004	39 percent
2003	28 percent

In addition, the average amount travelers plan to spend on holiday travel is up slightly, at \$108 more than last year:

Year	Planned Spend on Holiday Travel
2005	\$1,251.41
2004	\$1,143.60
2003	\$824.90

“Each year, inflation pushes the cost of travel up, so it's not surprising to see people saying they expect to pay more for holiday travel this year,” according to the Garlick. “However, when analyzing all the data, including the high percentage of people who plan to spend more and the minimal increase in the actual amount they plan to spend, it would appear that Americans are far more resigned to paying higher costs than in previous years. And, most importantly, they aren't going to let it stop them from traveling.”

** The average price of gasoline during the week of Nov. 14 was \$2.30, which is a 33 cent increase from the week of Nov. 14 last year. The average price for a gallon of regular grade gasoline in the U.S. when the study was conducted from Oct. 18-31 was \$2.60.*

Maritz Poll® is a national consumer opinion survey conducted periodically by Maritz Research. The recent telephone poll, conducted October 18-31, 2005, featured responses from 2,007 randomly selected adults from throughout the United States. Respondents for this poll were split evenly between males and females. The margin of error for the overall poll is +/-2 percent. The survey polled Americans on their holiday travel plans, their finances in relation to travel and gas prices, modes of travel/transportation, and their opinions about travel, holiday dining, hotel accommodations and service. Maritz Research has been conducting similar holiday travel polls yearly since 2001.

About Maritz Poll

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About Maritz Research and the Hospitality Group

As one of the world's largest marketing research firms, Maritz Research, a unit of Maritz Inc., helps many of today's most successful companies improve performance through a deep understanding of their customers, employees and channel partners. Founded in 1973, it offers a range of strategic and tactical solutions concentrating in a variety of business sectors. The Maritz Research Hospitality Group, based in Oak Brook, Ill., is uniquely positioned to provide strategic research and consulting to the hospitality industry by focusing on measurement and training issues related to customer service, performance improvement, and employee engagement. The company has achieved ISO 9001 registration, the international symbol of quality. It is a member of CASRO and official sponsor of the American Marketing Association.

About Maritz Inc.

Maritz Inc., based in St. Louis, is ranked No. 166 on the most recent Forbes list of 500 Biggest Private Companies. Maritz provides market and customer research, communications, learning solutions, incentive initiatives, meetings and event management, rewards and recognition, travel management services, and customer loyalty programs. Maritz has key offices in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Spain. For more information, visit the Web site www.maritz.com.

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