



CONTACT:

Jessica Brady, manager, AAA Public Relations, (813) 288-7294 office, (813) 532-5327 cell

Jim Sweat, managing director, AAA Travel Agency, (813) 289-1453

AAA: ALMOST THREE-FOURTHS OF MIDDLE/WEST TENNESSEANS PLAN TO TAKE A LEISURE TRIP DURING 2010; TRAVEL SALES UP YEAR OVER YEAR

38 percent of Middle/West Tennessee residents said economy has no effect on future travel plans

TAMPA, Fla. (April 5, 2010) — Almost three-fourths (72%) of Middle/West Tennesseans plan to take a leisure trip during 2010, according to the February AAA Consumer Pulse™ — a new quarterly survey conducted by AAA Auto Club South (Chart 1). In the next three months, half (49%) of Middle/West Tennessee residents plan to travel.

In addition, AAA Auto Club South has seen a 23 percent increase in the number of Middle/West Tennesseans traveling and a 17 percent increase in Middle/West Tennessee travel sales year-over-year from October through February 2008/2009 versus the same period in 2009/2010. Although the economy had a definite impact on travel

last year, 38 percent of Middle/West Tennesseans say the economy will not affect their travel decisions for 2010 (Chart 2).

Chart 1: Personally plan to take at least one leisure trip of 50 miles or more away from home requiring overnight accommodations during 2010, or next 3 months

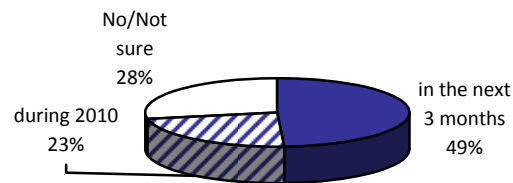
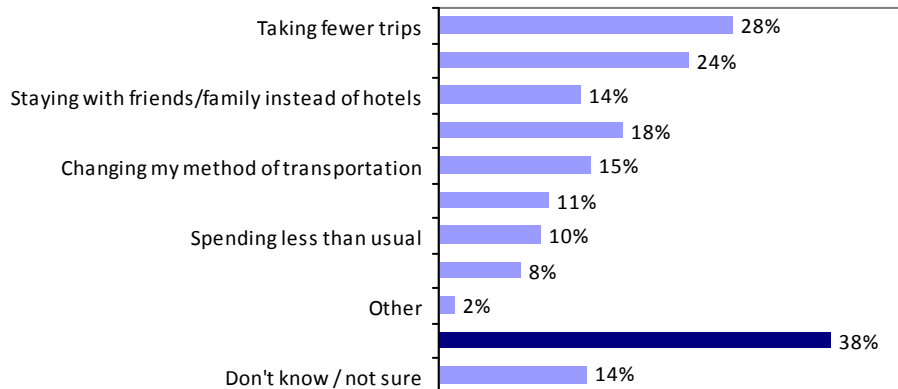


Chart 2: How has the economy affected your future vacation travel decision for 2010?

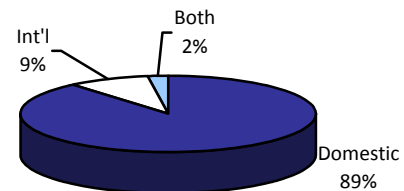
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“We started to see an increase in travel activity back in October of 2009, and since then the number of consumers acting on their desire to travel have continued to increase,” said Brent Hubele, Vice President, Travel, AAA Auto Club South. “The 2009 economy made many consumers hesitant to make travel plans and created a pent-up demand for travel; however, consumer confidence has improved and we continue to see an upward trend in travel bookings.”

More Middle/West Tennesseans plan to travel domestically versus internationally in the next three months (Chart 3), with Savannah, Ga. being the top-selected destination for Middle/West Tennessee travelers (43%). Moreover, one-third (34%) of Middle/West Tennesseans are extremely to somewhat likely to take a cruise or tour vacation of three nights or more in 2010.

Chart 3: (If plan to travel) During 2010, do you plan to travel domestically within the U.S., or do you plan to travel internationally?



Although many Middle/West Tennessee residents plan to travel, they are still looking for deals and incentives. Among those who plan to travel in the next three months, two-thirds (63%) expect to spend less than \$1,000 on leisure travel in the next three months, while 37 percent expect to spend more than \$1,000. Only 5 percent plan to use their 2009 tax refunds for a vacation.

“While a majority of Middle/West Tennessee residents plan to travel, they are still looking for the best deals to save money and there are plenty of deals out there,” added Hubele. “Last minute discounts are still available to some destinations; however, we are also noticing that more travelers are booking farther in advance of their trips to take advantage of incentives offered by some suppliers for summer and fall departures.”

Travel Savings Tips:

- **Take a Cruise or Tour:** Typically cruises and tours are a great value because they provide all-inclusive pricing that includes meals, rooms, and activities. Caribbean and Mediterranean cruise departures continue to offer some of the best value for 2010.
- **Be as flexible as possible:** Book as far in advance as possible so that you can be more flexible with your travel dates. If you must travel on specific dates there is greater possibility that you may be forced to pay higher rates for something that might cost less on an alternate date or time of the year. If planned right, off-peak season travel can be very enjoyable with fewer crowds, less hassle and greater savings.
- **Look at Currency Exchange Rates:** Travel where you can get the best currency exchange rate. Although currency exchange rates fluctuate, the U.S. dollar has remained relatively strong for the past few weeks. This means your dollar will stretch a bit more this year in the United Kingdom and Europe compared to the same period last year. Travelers looking to make the most of their money should keep an eye on global exchange rates. For more information of exchange rates, check with your local AAA travel agent.
- **Utilize Public Transportation:** Rental Cars and Taxis can often be expensive and at times difficult to utilize, especially in unfamiliar areas. Instead, invest in a great map or AAA TripTik so you can find your way around. Next, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the local subway system and bus routes. If you like to plan ahead, many cities have their bus maps online and make it easy to find your route using the start and finish addresses. Most busses and subways have day or multi-day passes that can save you even more money.
- **Travel with Less:** Most airlines now charge fees for checked baggage, as well as extra or overweight luggage. The less you bring, the less you'll spend on baggage fees. Purchase disposable items such as toiletries when you get to your destination instead of packing them in your luggage. Instead of bringing multiple pairs of shoes, wear the heaviest pair on the plane and pack another pair in your luggage. Also, if possible, rent needed items at your destination instead of shipping them before hand or checking them with the airline.

The AAA Consumer Pulse™ is an online survey among residents in Florida, Georgia, and Middle/West Tennessee. A total of 248 surveys were completed in Florida, having a maximum margin of error of +/- 6.2 percentage points.

AAA Auto Club South is the third largest affiliate of AAA, with 78 branch offices serving more than 4.1 million members in Florida, Georgia, Middle/West Tennessee, and Puerto Rico. Since its founding in 1938, AAA Auto Club South has worked to protect and advance freedom of mobility and improve travel safety.