



ASBTA

100 Browncliff CT
Lewisville, TX 75077
Phone 469-648-0190
Website: ASBTA.com
E-mail: info@ASBTA.com

AMERICAN SMALL BUSINESS TRAVELERS ALLIANCE

AMERICAN SMALL BUSINESS TRAVELERS ALLIANCE

ASBTANEWS...

For Information: Ron Sharp, 469-648-0190 (Ron.sharp@asbta.com)

January 23, 2007

Airline Industry Turnaround May Benefit Small Business Travelers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DALLAS, TX – While airline ticket prices have risen slightly in recent months, they remain well below rates from several years ago, according to the American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA), a national alliance that provides valuable services and functions focused specifically on the travel needs and interests of small business owners.

“As the airline industry begins to stabilize, there is a greater appetite by the airlines to focus on improving the airline experience and its product offerings,” said Chet Gray, ASBTA Vice President. “At the same time, the competition in the industry, especially in a healthy environment, will continue to keep prices in check.

Gray pointed to American Airlines investment in its new Business Class Seats and other cabin upgrades as one example of the investment being made by airlines in recent months. Likewise, the competition between Southwest Airlines and American Airlines has benefited the DFW market and many other metropolitan areas with competitive pricing and special promotional offers by the two airlines.

“In tough times, it is extremely difficult to invest millions to upgrade airplanes and airport facilities,” Gray said. “We see this as a positive sign for business travelers as the airlines begin to again make serving the needs of customers, not the avoidance of bankruptcy, the top priority.

This is the first year since 2000 that airlines are expected to be profitable industry-wide. Just this past week, both Southwest Airlines and American Airlines announced fourth quarter profits and profitability for the past year. More positive results are expected to follow. Southwest Airlines is currently the only airline to successfully drive a profit each year, while American Airlines posted its first annual profit in six years.

“This is a topsy-turvy industry, but critically important to small and medium businesses that rely heavily on airline transportation,” Gray said. “As the airline industry turns the corner, we believe the customers could be the real winners in the end.”

Gray predicts tickets prices will continue to rise modestly, but will not return to the previous high levels of the past. In addition, some airlines are expected to begin ordering new planes that will provide an even greater level of comfort and convenience to travelers.

“It’s a win-win,” said Gray. “The better the airlines continue to do, the better it will ultimately be for the travel industry and for small business travelers.”

#

About ASBTA and SMBTA:

ASBTA is a national organization dedicated to serving and educating small business travelers by providing information regarding travel and mobile technology. The Small and Medium Technology Alliance (SMBTA) is part of ASBTA focused on helping businesses better utilize technology. If you're a small business owner and want to learn more or become a member for free, visit our sites – www.asbta.com and www.smbta.com. Members of the media can receive a free copy of survey results by contacting ASBTA by phone at 469-648-0190 or email at surveys@asbta.com.