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## **AAA says Americans will Drive More and Fly Less this Labor Day weekend**

*Overall travel declines for the first time this year for a major travel holiday*

ALBANY, NY., (August 24, 2011) – While the total number of travelers is down slightly from last year, AAA projects that more people will hit the roads this year compared to last year.

### **Local Travel Plans**

AAA Hudson Valley reports that demand for TripTik custom driving directions remains strong from AAA members in the Capital Region.

“Although requests were down slightly from 2010, we still had a very busy few weeks leading up to the holiday weekend. The top five TripTik destinations are Ocean City, MD, Myrtle Beach, SC, Williamsburg, VA, Virginia Beach, VA and Baltimore, MD. There is also increased interest in other closer destinations such as Cape Cod, MA and Maine,” said Nancy Shanley AAA Hudson Valley Marketing and Public Relations Manager.

In addition to road trip plans, air travel also remains strong among local travelers despite an increase in average airfare. AAA Hudson Valley’s worldwide Travel Agents said that customers are taking advantage of deals such as Disney’s Free Dining offer and great cruise packages this time of year. It’s also prime time for European travel, with consistent interest in Italy.

AAA also reports that if recent declines in gasoline prices continue through Labor Day, there could be an increase in last-minute holiday weekend travel. The current average price for regular unleaded gasoline in the Albany area is approximately \$3.75 per gallon, about 10 cents lower than one month ago and approximately one dollar higher than one year ago.

Shanley recommends that travelers taking to the road take a few minutes to ensure their cars are in good working order to help ensure a safe drive. “We encourage drivers to check tire inflation and tread, fluids, and wiper blades. Also, don’t forget to check the condition of the spare in your trunk,” Shanley said.

Drivers who find their cars need repairs can use the AAA Approved Auto Repair program, a free public service for all consumers that helps identify trustworthy, quality auto repair facilities. To become an approved repair shop, facilities must meet and maintain tough professional standards for customer service, equipment, training and cleanliness. Repair shop customers are surveyed and each shop must maintain a 90 percent or higher customer satisfaction index score in multiple areas.

All AAA Approved Auto Repair shops will provide a free automotive inspection to AAA members with any paid service. Additionally, many Approved Auto Repair shops participate in the AAA Show Your Card & Save program, offering discounts on auto repair services to members. Local Approved Auto Repair shops can be found online at [AAA.com/AAR](http://AAA.com/AAR).

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## **Regional Estimates**

AAA estimates that travel originating from the Middle Atlantic region (NY, NJ and PA) is expected to decrease 2.3 percent relative to Labor Day last year. 2.3 million travelers from this region are estimated to take trips of 50 miles or more away from home this Labor Day weekend. The average roundtrip distance for these estimated trips is 404 miles.

## **National Projections**

Across the nation, AAA forecasts 31.5 million Americans will travel 50 miles or more from home during the Labor Day holiday weekend, a 2.4 percent decrease from the 32.3 million people who traveled one year ago. The Labor Day holiday travel period is defined as Thursday, September 1 to Monday, September 5.

### **Automobile travel up slightly, share of total holiday travelers increases**

Approximately 27.3 million people (87 percent of holiday travelers) plan to take to the nation's roadways this Labor Day holiday weekend. This is a slight increase of 0.5 percent from the 27.2 million Labor Day 2010 auto travelers, and a three percent increase in the share of total holiday travelers from last year's 84 percent. Automobile travel remains the dominant mode of holiday transportation.

AAA's national projections are based on economic forecasting and research by IHS Global Insight. The Boston-based economic research and consulting firm teamed with AAA in 2009 to jointly analyze travel trends during the major holidays. AAA has been reporting on holiday travel trends for more than two decades. The complete AAA / IHS Global Insight 2011 Labor Day Holiday Travel Forecast can be found at [AAA.com/news](http://AAA.com/news).

## **About AAA**

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, the American Automobile Association (AAA) provides its more than 51 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automobile-related services. The not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA is a leader and advocate for the safety and security of travelers. AAA Hudson Valley, formed over 100 years ago, proudly serves the Capital and Hudson Valley Regions and has offices in Albany, Latham, Troy and Hudson. For more information on AAA Hudson Valley's products and services visit [www.AAA.com](http://www.AAA.com)

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