



News Release

Media Contact:
Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D.
Vice President Public Affairs
757-233-3825
Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com

34.1 MILLION TO TRAVEL FOR LABOR DAY SAYS AAA, HIGH SINCE RECESSION DRIVEN DECLINE

4.2 percent more Americans plan to travel during final summer holiday

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA., (August 20, 2013) – AAA Travel projects 34.1 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the upcoming Labor Day holiday, a 4.2 percent increase from the 32.7 million people who traveled last year. The anticipated increase in holiday travel is predominantly due to increased consumer spending and the improving housing market. The total number of 2013 Labor Day holiday travelers is expected to reach a new post-recession high. **Across Virginia, 946,542 people are expected to travel over the long holiday weekend. This is a 2.1% increase over last year and a 9.2% increase since 2009.** The Labor Day holiday travel period is defined as Thursday, August 29 to Monday, September 2.

“AAA is forecasting a lift in Labor Day travel this year due to the increasingly positive economic outlook and optimism in the housing market,” said Georjeane Blumling spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “For many Americans, their home is also their biggest asset, as home prices improve in many parts of the country more families are feeling comfortable about traveling this Labor Day holiday.”

Highlights from 2013 AAA Labor Day Holiday Travel Forecast include:

- Labor Day holiday travelers to total 34.1 million, an increase of 4.2 percent from the 32.7 million who traveled last year
- Eighty-five percent of travelers (29.2 million) to travel by automobile, an increase of 4.3 percent from 28 million last year
- Holiday air travel expected to increase nearly three percent to 2.61 million.
- The largest share of travelers (46 percent) will depart on Friday, August 30
- Monday, September 2, is the most popular date of return for holiday trips with 43 percent planning to return that day
- The average traveler is expected to travel a round-trip distance of 594 miles and spend \$804

“As schools across the nation usher in their next session of students, the Labor Day holiday provides families with the opportunity for one final extended summer weekend getaway,” continued Blumling. “AAA reminds drivers as they head out for the holiday and the school year is beginning that safety should remain top of mind. It is important to remain distraction-free and keep their mind on the task of driving.”

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Automobile travel remains dominant mode of transportation

Approximately 29.2 million people (85 percent) plan to drive to their destination, an increase of 4.3 percent from the 28 million who drove last year. **In Virginia, as expected the dominate mode of travel will be by automobile with 824,617 taking to the road, marking a modest 2.3% increase from last year.**

Gas prices are unlikely to be a major factor for people in determining whether they will travel this Labor Day. As of mid-August, prices were on average down 2.7 percent per gallon compared to the same time year. The average price for gas on Labor Day 2012 was \$3.83 per gallon, the most expensive average ever on record for the holiday. The current national average price for a gallon of regular gas is \$3.54, 18 cents lower than last year. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, current average prices are \$3.36 which are 22 cents lower than 2012.

AAA forecasts gas prices to remain less expensive than last year based on current trends through the middle of August, but there remains the potential for late-summer hurricanes and refinery problems that could send prices higher.

However, gas prices remain at a level most Americans consider too high. Half of U.S. adults consider gas prices to be “too high” when it reaches \$3.44 per gallon. Forty-six percent of adults believe gas is too high when it reaches \$3.00 per gallon; 61 percent when it reaches \$3.50 per gallon; and 90 percent when it reaches \$4.00 per gallon.

August 30 busiest travel day as travelers take full advantage of extended weekend

The largest share of travelers (46 percent) on a single day will depart on August 30 and the largest share will return on Monday (43 percent). Eighty-five percent intend to return from their Labor Day trip on Monday, Tuesday, or later.

Air travel to increase slightly

More than 2.61 million leisure travelers (eight percent) will arrive at their destination by air, a slight increase (2.8 percent) from last year’s 2.54 million air travelers. The remaining seven percent of holiday travelers are expected to travel by other modes, including rail, bus and watercraft.

Average travel distance decreases, spending up slightly

According to the survey of intending travelers, the average distance traveled by Americans during the Labor Day holiday weekend is expected to be 594 miles, which is 32 miles less than last year’s average of 626 miles.

Median spending during the Labor Day holiday weekend is expected to grow to \$804, compared to \$749 last year. Travelers expect to spend 24 percent of their budget on transportation and lodging and 21 percent on food and beverages.

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During the holiday weekend the most popular activities will be dining (57 percent), visiting with friends/family (46 percent) and shopping (43 percent).

Car rental rates and airfares rise, hotel rates see slight increase for mid-range hotels

According to AAA's Leisure Travel Index, weekend daily car rental rates will average \$51, 32 percent more than last year's average of \$39. Airfares increased four percent year-over-year, with an average lowest round-trip rate of \$214 for the top 40 U.S. air routes compared to \$205 last year. Hotel rates for AAA Three Diamond lodgings are expected to increase four percent from one year ago with travelers spending an average \$161 per night compared to \$154 last year. The average hotel rate for AAA Two Diamond hotels are expected to drop two percent with an average cost of \$115 per night.

AAA offers digital travel planning resources

AAA's digital tools for travel planning 'on the go' include eTourBook guides for tablets and smartphones, available free to members at AAA.com/ebooks. Choose from 101 top North American destinations including city titles, like the award-winning Las Vegas, regions, like Wine Country, and National Parks.

The free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android uses GPS navigation to help travelers map a route, find current gas prices and discounts, book a hotel, and access AAA roadside assistance. Members using the iPad version can access interactive Top Destinations travel guides for popular cities. Travelers can learn more at AAA.com/mobile.

On AAA.com, travelers can find thousands of AAA Approved and Diamond Rated hotels and restaurants using AAA's TripTik Travel Planner or the searchable Travel Guides at AAA.com/Travel. Every AAA Approved establishment offers the assurance of acceptable cleanliness, comfort and hospitality, and ratings of One to Five Diamonds help travelers find the right match for amenities and services.

AAA's projections are based on economic forecasting and research by IHS Global Insight. The Colorado-based business information provider 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 Labor Day 2013 Forecast can be found [here](#).

As part of North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA](https://twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA).

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