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Memo Pad

By: Joe Sharkey

NEW ROUND OF FARE INCREASES

After Southwest Airlines said late last week that it was raising round-trip fares by up to \$20, the network carriers quickly joined in with their own across-the-board fare increases. By the weekend, all six network carriers — American, United, Delta, US Airways, Continental and Northwest — had raised round-trip fares by up to \$40 on most routes. It was the 14th fare increase this year by the major carriers, according to Rick Seaney of FareCompare.com.

AIR TAXI SERVICE

Linear Air, which provides air taxi service, is opening a hub at the Westchester County Airport near New York City. Service at the airport, which is in White Plains, starts July 1, using an Eclipse 500 jet. Unlike DayJet, which flies Eclipse 500s with individual seats sold on demand in Florida and adjacent states, Linear sells the entire plane, configured with three seats, on demand. Linear Air, based in Concord, Mass., has a fleet of four Eclipse 500s and five 8-passenger Cessna Grand Caravan turboprops, and offers service between regional airports in the Northeast, mid-Atlantic and eastern Canada.

HOLIDAY TRAVEL DOWN

Fewer people will travel over the July 4 holiday this year than last, AAA says. The automobile club estimates that 40.45 million Americans will take trips of more than 50 miles from home, down 1.3 percent from last year. Of those who do travel, about 34.2 million will go by car, a 1.2 percent decrease over last year. Gasoline prices are averaging about \$1.09 more a gallon this year than during last year's July 4 holiday, AAA noted. Some 4.5 million Americans will fly, a 2.3 percent decrease over last year.

IT ADDS UP

With the air travel system in "deep decline," said Roger Dow, president of the Travel Industry Association, the industry lost about \$26 billion in the 12-month period ending in May. A recent survey by the travel industry trade group showed that travelers avoided 41 million trips in that period because of "deep frustration" with air travel, Mr. Dow said in testimony in Congress last week. Among the estimated lost revenue in the travel industry was \$9.6 billion for airlines, \$5.6 billion for hotels and \$3.1 billion for restaurants, he said.

ET CETERA

Intercontinental Hotels says the number of its Crowne Plaza hotels worldwide rose sharply since the end of 2000, to 308, from 149. ... Horizon Air says it will start flying nonstop between Los Angeles and Prescott, Ariz., on Sept. 8. "Say goodbye to the long drive and missed connections at another airport," said Dan Russo, Horizon's marketing director. ... US Airways and Air China have a new code-share partnership affecting Air China service to Beijing from Los Angeles, San Francisco and Kennedy Airport in New York.