

LAKE OF THE OZARKS

BUSINESS JOURNAL



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Armchair Pilot

By Nancy Zoellner-Hogland

Those planning to travel on Southwest Airlines in coming months may want to “spruce up” before heading to the airport – unless they don’t care about looking their best on TV. TLC is filing a new reality 13-week series that takes viewers behind the scenes at the airline, revealing what it’s like to deal with travel frustrations and sometimes unhappy, unruly passengers. Production began in December at the Baltimore Washington International Airport but more airports will be added in coming weeks. TLC has yet to announce when the show will be aired.

Renovations to Concourse A at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport were completed last month. The improvements, part of the \$70 million Airport Experience program, include redesigned restrooms near Gate A2, new tile in the central corridor and new signage. That gate serves Delta, United and U.S. Airways. Gates B and D, which serve American, Frontier and Cape Air airlines, also opened with new terrazzo flooring and an expanded post security area.

Android users should have an easier time finding their way around Lambert St. Louis and Kansas City International Airports. Last month, the airports partnered with Google to create maps of their terminals and concourses that are available on the smartphones. The Google Map allows users to zoom in on the airport they are in and find ticket counters, escalators, airline gates, restaurants, restaurants and ATMs. The program also allows users to pinpoint their location on the map, which automatically updates and displays the floor plan the user is on. Lambert and Kansas City airport were two of 18 to launch the new service.

The application is not yet available for iPhone users.

Android users might want to tap into those Google Maps to help them avoid certain areas of Lambert Airport. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Office of Occupational Safety and Health requested the airport test air quality after several TSA workers got sick. The workers reported eye irritations, throat problems, nose bleeds and other upper respiratory issues. Problems allegedly are worst near the B and D security checkpoints where debris and dust from construction is said to settle. Airport officials say once they get the results of the air quality tests, they’ll determine what action if any needs to be taken. In the meantime, many TSA workers have started wearing masks.

Another newly introduced application will allow customers to track their checked luggage on their smart phones and mobile devices. Fliers can enter the number of their bag tag receipts – iPhone users can simply scan the barcode – and then watch their bags’ journeys from departure to arrival – including location of the carousel where they await pick-up. Delta introduced the Fly Delta mobile app, available for Android, Windows and iPhone devices, at Thanksgiving. They said they hope to also have a Blackberry version available early this year. Earlier this year, Delta launched an online baggage tracking system.

Although passengers on American Airlines will still be required to shut off all electronic devices during take-off and landing, pilots in the cockpit won’t be following suit. In December, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) gave permission for AA pilots to use iPads in the cockpit instead of the traditional paper flight

manuals – and they’re allowed to keep them on at all times. AA pilots tested the iPads on a trial basis, and, according to the FAA, found they created no problems. AA is the first airline in the world allowed to use the computers during all phases of flight.

Travelers trying to save money by stuffing their carry-on to avoid check bag fees may find themselves paying more anyway. Some airlines have adopted weight limits for carry-on bags while others have adopted or stepped up enforcement of weight-limit regulations. Some feel the restrictions were adopted because passengers have increasingly brought larger – and heavier – bags on board, taking up more space in overhead compartments and often times requiring assistance to get the bags in and out of the bulkheads.

Snowbirds planning to fly south for the winter might be happy to hear that Frontier Airlines will be adding a seasonal flight between Kansas City International Airport and Tampa, Fla., starting Feb. 15. Flights will operate on Tuesdays or Wednesdays and Saturdays through April 14. Introductory fares will start at \$99 each way and are available on the airline’s website.

A scam involving fraudulent email messages to airline customers continues. The phishing emails, designed to dupe customers into revealing information about their bank or credit account numbers and passwords, notify travelers about changes in their travel itineraries or charges they never made. American Airlines is the latest to warn its customers to be on the lookout for the phony messages. Last month, Delta customers reported receiving the emails.

Roads to prosperity

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Miller and Morgan counties and every incorporated city in the Lake area and then comparing those revenues to other municipalities throughout Missouri. Based on those figures, Duenke said the Lake area has an “effective popu-

lation,” a built-in consumer base, of about 55,000 which is similar in size to cities like Blue Springs, Webster Groves or Wentzville.

“Now when we approach potential developers we can show them concrete numbers that should convince them

that a successful development in this area is more than feasible,” he said. “The traffic patterns have to settle in a little bit, but we think the new Expressway will have a very positive effect on marketing the entire Lake area.”

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