



Travel Industry Update

September 18, 2020

American Airlines CEO says hundreds of thousands will lose their jobs without additional emergency aid to industry

- "Hundreds of thousands of people will be out of work, and service to small communities will be discontinued," if a new round of emergency airline funding is not approved, American Airlines Chief Executive Doug Parker said on NBC's "TODAY" show Friday morning.
- Moreover, the critical national infrastructure that the airline industry provides, that will be key to the nation's economic recovery, could be severely affected by the sweeping industry cuts, he said.
- "We want to make sure that when the economy recovers, we are here," Parker said.
- Parker's comments come after emergency talks at the White House on Thursday, when executives from the major U.S. airlines met with White House chief of staff Mark Meadows in a last-minute plea for additional funding in order to avoid tens of thousands of layoffs across the entire airline sector.
- "We airline CEOs are here on behalf of the people that work for us, keeping our country moving when our country is largely paralyzed," Parker told reporters outside the White House after the meeting. "Without action, they're going to be furloughed on Oct. 1 and it's not fair. It's not fair to them, it's not fair to our country."
- Airline executives urged lawmakers Thursday to move ahead with a \$1.5 trillion aid package proposed by a congressional group. However, since the airline industry has already received \$25 billion as part of an emergency Payroll Support Program, some lawmakers say it would not be fair to continue to bail out one particular industry at the cost of so many others that are also experiencing financial strain.
- "The needs have only grown. Some of the needs for the small businesses, needs for restaurants, needs for transportation and the rest," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday.
- "If House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was willing to move a bill to keep people from being laid off in the airline industry that is standalone, the president would certainly support it," Meadows said Thursday.

United Airlines to apply antimicrobial spray to aircraft interiors via robot

- On Wednesday, the carrier announced that it would be coating the surfaces of its aircraft with an EPA-registered antimicrobial coating, to be applied in a "super fine mist" by a robotic device called a "NovaRover."
- "This long-lasting, antimicrobial spray adds an extra level of protection on our aircraft to help better protect our employees and customers," said Toby Enqvist, United's chief customer officer, in a press release issued this week. "As part of our layered approach to safety, antimicrobials are an effective complement to our hospital-grade HEPA air filtration system, mandatory mask policy for customers and daily electrostatic spraying."

We've overhauled our policies and procedures and continue to implement new, innovative solutions that deliver a safer onboard experience."

- The new antimicrobial coating, known as the Zoono Microbe Shield, was developed by a New Zealand company called Zoono Group Limited. According to United's press release, a chemical used in the coating forms a protective layer (likened to "microscopic pins") once it dries to surfaces, and this layer is able to rupture the cell walls of microbes.
- The coating will be applied by the NovaRovers after deep cleanings, and then weekly thereafter with electrostatic sprayers. Electrostatic disinfectant will continue to be applied "before almost every departure."
- United has already begun to use its antimicrobial coating on more than 30 aircraft at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, with plans to expand the program to its entire mainline and express fleets before the end of 2020, at the approximately 200 airports where United operates.



More than 1,500 spared from involuntary furloughs at Hawaiian Airlines

- Hawaiian Airlines sent an amendment to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations on Sept. 16 informing that it was able to reduce the number of involuntary furloughs from 2,037 to 466 union employees.
- The action comes after voluntary furloughs closed, which allowed the dramatic decrease. The company said in the letter that the union and its members supported the move.

Air Canada Is Selling Passes for Unlimited Flights Within Canada

- Air Canada is now offering passes for unlimited flights within Canada for a monthly fee. If you're an intrepid traveler and live in Canada, this is your shot to finally take as much vacation time as you want.
- While flying will be "free" with the Infinite Pass, there is still a substantial monthly fee.
- There are three tiers to this offer. The standard tier rate for the pass is \$2,260 CAD (about \$1,710 USD) per month, the Flex tier costs \$2,825 CAD (about \$2,137 USD) per month, and the Latitude tier costs \$5,650 CAD (\$4,275 USD) per month. The Latitude pass also comes with considerable perks, like the option to upgrade to business class. All these plans are available for one, two, or three months from date of purchase.
- In addition to potential upgrades (if you have the highest tier plan), all plans are flexible, meaning you can change or cancel your flight plans up to an hour before departure. All flights can also contribute to your Altitude Qualifying Miles through Air Canada.
- There is one drawback, however. Not everyone can apply for the pass. This promotion is only available for Canadian residents who are also Aeroplan members.
- But if you want to cash in on the deal, you'll have to act fast. Air Canada is only offering these monthly plans from Sept. 16 to Sept. 23.

Ryanair cuts capacity again after 'government mismanagement of COVID travel policies'

- Ryanair has blamed European governments for "continuous changes" in travel restrictions, as it announces a 20% cut in October capacity.
- It follows a another 20% cut announced last month, meaning the airline expects October capacity to fall from 50% to 40% of the levels seen at the same time last year, before the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.
- But it also said it expected flights to be more than 70% full under the reduced schedule.
- Ryanair blamed "damage caused to forward bookings by continuous changes in EU government travel restrictions and policies, many of which are introduced at short notice, which undermine consumers' willingness to make forward bookings".
- The Irish airline, singled out Ireland, blaming the government for maintaining "excessive and defective travel restrictions".

Hotels and Event Venues Get Schooled

- With most face-to-face meetings on hold, hotels and event venues have been getting creative in finding ways to use their meeting space. As schools go back in session this month, many of them virtually, meeting space is being repositioned as a place where schoolchildren — and their parents — can work safely and productively.

- In Chicago, the meeting and event venue Catalyst Ranch is offering space for “micro-schooling pods,” small groups of students and parents who come together to create safe learning experiences. “I think we are really in a unique and special position in that the service and venue we offer is truly singular,” said Bryan Bosque, digital marketing and social media manager for Catalyst Ranch, which is known for its colorful and interactive spaces. “The aesthetic here ... it’s stimulation and color and offers ways to get creative juices flowing.” These are qualities, he said, that lend themselves not just to meeting attendees, but also working adults and students alike who have been largely isolated for the past six months.
- Catalyst Ranch, whose staff is following CDC protocols for sanitation, is offering spaces for tutors and students to gather safely to regain some of the social interaction students are missing out on with remote learning. Every space in Catalyst Ranch features instructions on how to sit in a socially distanced way, with hybrid capabilities available if necessary — something small, in-person meetings have been taking advantage of during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In San Francisco, the Intercontinental Hotel San Francisco also offers socially distanced, certifiably sanitary space for in-person group learning with classmates and instructors. Amenities include WiFi and whiteboards, breakfast, lunch, and snacks to-go, as well as access to an outside terrace — and the hotel is close to a local park. What may be most appealing to parents: The package includes complimentary workspace plus WiFi, access to the hotel’s business center, a coffeemaker, and free parking for the teacher and one parent.
- The Amara Resort and Spa, in Sedona, Arizona, for example, offers a 750-square-foot space as a private classroom or office, with classroom seating, whiteboards, and shelves stocked with school supplies. Guests have access to an on-call executive assistant or teacher’s aide to help set up audio and video connections — on-site tutors or nannies can be reserved in advance for an hourly fee.

Disney: One water park will reopen in March 2021; passholder refunds on way

- Walt Disney World is planning to reopen one of its closed water parks next spring, according to the resort’s website. Both Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon have been closed since mid-March in reaction to the coronavirus pandemic, despite Disney World’s theme parks becoming available again, at a reduced capacity, in July.
- The site does not specify which of its water parks is set for a spring reopening in 2021 or when its other water attraction will rejoin Disney World’s lineup.
- “Pending government approvals, we currently plan to reopen one of the two Disney water parks on March 7, 2021,” the site says.
- And that date could change, Disney notes.

Hawaii to let travelers who test negative for COVID to bypass quarantine starting Oct. 15

- Hawaii Gov. David Ige said Wednesday that starting Oct. 15, travelers arriving from out of state may bypass a 14-day quarantine requirement if they test negative for COVID-19.
- Travelers will have to take the test within 72 hours before their flight arrives in the islands. Ige said drugstore operator CVS and health care provider Kaiser Permanente will conduct the tests as part of an agreement with the state.

Report: Canada to keep border with U.S. closed until Oct. 21

- The U.S.-Canada border will remain closed to non-essential travel for another month, CBC News reports.
- The current extension of the border crossing restrictions is set to expire Sept. 21, 2020. That will be extended until at least Oct. 21, according to the report. An official announcement is expected before the Sept. 21 expiration.

Border Restrictions Between US-Mexico Extended Until October

- The U.S.-Mexico border will not reopen on September 21 as planned, and will remain partially closed until mid-October, the Mexican government confirmed on Thursday.
- The Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) disclosed through its official Twitter account that the partial closure of the U.S.-Mexico border will remain in effect.

EU travel industry steps up quarantine pushback

- Leaders of Europe's coronavirus-stricken travel and tourism industries have appealed to the EU's chief executive to press governments to end quarantine requirements and instead embrace coordinated restrictions and testing.
- "This chaotic situation requires your immediate personal involvement," a broad ad-hoc group of more than 20 industry groups including airline body IATA told European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.
- The appeal came as data from airports' group ACI Europe, one of the signatories to the Sept. 17 letter, pointed to a "double-dip" air traffic slump, with passenger numbers down 73% in the first two weeks of September, after a 65% decline in August.
- The EU executive this month proposed a common "traffic light" system designed to coordinate travel restrictions among EU states and replace the patchwork of rules and quarantine regimes blamed for the renewed collapse in travel.
- "Failure to fully implement the Commission's proposal would kill any chances of a potential recovery," the travel industry bodies wrote to von der Leyen.

Attending a German Trade Show Deemed Essential Travel

- The German government has taken the lead in demonstrating the importance of trade shows in resurrecting their economy in a COVID-19 world. Germany's Ministry of the Interior has categorized entering the country to attend a trade show to be "essential travel."
- "UFI applauds this decision by the German government and the work of everyone involved in this and sees this as a blueprint for other countries to follow," Kai Hattendorf, managing director and CEO, UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, said.
- This means that trade show attendees from all countries can enter Germany to attend a show, subject to them having valid visas where needed. On entering Germany, exhibitors need to present proof of participation at the show; attendees need to present a show ticket and at least proof of one scheduled meeting at the show.
- After being cleared to enter, all travelers are legally obliged to follow the quarantine regulations of the specific German state in which they are staying.

- This is a vital step towards recovery. “Such a decision sends a signal to international exhibitors and attendees far and near that there is a way to come to a show,” Hattendorf adds.