

Increase in travelers expected during Thanksgiving weekend

AAA projects 43.6 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, an increase of 0.7 percent from the 43.3 million people who traveled last year. This increase marks the fourth consecutive year of growing holiday travelers.

The Thanksgiving holiday travel period is defined as Nov. 21-25.

Ninety percent of those travelers, or 39.1 million, will travel by automobile, an increase of 0.6 percent

AAA estimates the national average price of gasoline will drop to between \$3.25-3.40 a gallon by the holiday, similar to last year's average of \$3.32, which was the most expensive average ever on Thanksgiving. Despite the historically high prices paid by motorists this year, the national average has declined by nearly 40 cents a gallon since early October and should continue to drop through the end of the year, according to AAA. The national average price of gas for Thanksgiving from 2007-11 was \$2.75 a gallon.

AAA asked intended travelers which days they would depart for and return from Thanksgiving travel. Among those surveyed, the majority of travelers plan to leave the Wednesday before the holiday (45 percent) and return the following Sunday (36 percent), with another 25 percent expecting to return Nov. 26.