

# AAA forecasts more travelers on Memorial Day weekend

AAA Travel projects 36.1 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Memorial Day holiday weekend, a 1.5 percent increase from the 35.5 million people who traveled last year.

More than eight in 10 travelers will be driving to their destinations.

The Memorial Day holiday travel period is defined as May 22-26.

“As we enter into the summer travel season with warmer temperatures and tulips in bloom, thoughts of historic cold are still fresh in the minds of Americans in many parts of the country,” Marshall L. Doney, AAA chief operating officer said in a press release. “The winter blues appear to have given Americans the travel bug and a case of cruise cabin fever as travel for the holiday is expected to hit a new post-recession high.”

In addition to seasonal rising temperatures, improvements in several key economic factors are driving the expectation for more holiday travelers this year. “As the economy continues to improve at a slow and steady pace consumer spending, disposable income, consumer confidence and the employment outlook are trending up which is welcomed news for the travel industry,” continued Doney.

AAA expects most drivers will pay lower gas prices by Memorial Day weekend due to rising supplies. AAA expects holiday gas prices to be relatively similar or even slightly less than last year’s national Memorial Day average of \$3.63 per gallon.

According to AAA’s Leisure Travel Index, hotel rates for AAA

three diamond lodgings are expected to increase 2 percent from one year ago with travelers spending an average of \$169 per night compared to \$166 last year. The average hotel rate for AAA two diamond hotels has risen 3 percent, with an average cost of \$124 per night.