



EBTC INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: Cross border day trips

SOURCE: Globe & Mail

American same-day travel to Canada plummeted to the lowest level on record in 2006, though visits picked up a little towards the end of last year.

Same day visits from the U.S. — Canada's biggest tourism market — rose 2.5 per cent in December from November, the second month of gains, Statistics Canada said Tuesday. Overnight trips among American travellers rose 2.9 per cent.

For last year as a whole, the picture looks dim. **The number of U.S. same-day car trips plunged 12.5 per cent to 13.7 million — the lowest level since record-keeping started in 1972, the report said.** Same-day car travel reached a high of 27.3 million trips in 1999.

Canadian hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions have been struggling to cope with waning U.S. visitors, who have stayed away amid a strong Canadian dollar, heightened customs security and a lack of marketing south of the border. New rules requiring passports for travellers flying between Canada and the U.S. are also deterring visitors.

December's numbers offered some solace. Overall travel to Canada climbed to a five-month high at the end of the year, with gains from the U.S. as well as increased travel from overseas. The move came as the Canadian dollar weakened for the third month in a row, making holidays here less expensive.

Overseas visitors are picking up much of the slack. Travel from overseas countries hit its highest monthly level in more than two years in December, with a 2.5-per-cent gain, as travel increased from the United Kingdom, Canada's most important overseas market.

In the opposite direction, travel to overseas countries by Canadian residents reached “unprecedented levels” in December, Statscan said. Last year, Canadians made a record 6.7 million trips overseas, up 8 per cent from 2005.

Annually, the number of trips by Canadians to non-U.S. destinations has risen in 14 of the last 15 years.

Canadians are also boosting travel plans to see more of their own country, according to a separate survey released Tuesday.

Eleven per cent more Canadians plan to travel domestically this year, a Hotel Association of Canada survey showed today, amid a strong labour market and buoyant consumer confidence.

“Long family vacations continue to be a thing of the past,” the survey said, while a growing number of female travellers are seeking the pleasure of spas.