

AAA projects the number of Americans traveling on vacation this Memorial Day holiday weekend will increase 5.4 percent from 2009 with approximately 32.1 million travelers taking a trip away from home. Last year, 30.5 million Americans traveled during the same period.

Nearly 28 million people, or 87 percent of all travelers, are expected to travel by motor vehicle. More than 2.1 million, or seven percent of all travelers, plan to fly to their destination. An estimated two million or six percent of all travelers, will use other modes of transportation including, rail, bus and watercraft.

“With the current economic environment stronger than one year ago, more people will be encouraged to travel this Memorial Day holiday weekend,” said Rose White, public affairs director of AAA Nebraska. “AAA and many of our travel industry partners are experiencing improved business conditions this spring.”

The average distance traveled by Americans this Memorial Day holiday weekend is forecast to be approximately the same as one year ago; 626 miles vs. 620 in 2009, AAA reported. Median spending is estimated to be \$809 this Memorial Day.

Those traveling this holiday by car will need to budget more for fuel costs. AAA’s Fuel Gauge Report shows that unleaded gasoline currently averages, \$2.84 a gallon, which is fifty cents a gallon higher than prices reported a year ago.

According to AAA’s Leisure Travel Index, air fares over the Memorial Day holiday weekend are expected to remain unchanged from last year as air passengers will pay a lowest average fare of \$176 per roundtrip ticket.

Weekend daily car rental rates will drop 15 percent from an average of \$43.30 in 2009 to \$36.65.

Hotel rates for AAA Three Diamond lodgings are expected to remain a bargain, but will decline

only one percent from one year ago with travelers spending an average of \$141.60 per night compared to \$142.45 last year.

AAA's projections are based on economic forecasting and research by IHS Global Insight. The Boston-based economic research and consulting firm teamed with AAA in 2009 to jointly analyze travel trends during the major holidays. The complete AAA/IHS Global Insight 2010 Memorial Day holiday forecast can be found at AAA.com.news.