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BUSINESS

jetBlue skies over Charlotte



PHOTO: JETBLUE

JetBlue, which starts flying out of Charlotte/Douglas International Airport July 12, will use the state of the art Embraer 190, a 100-passenger jet. The Charlotte flights will go to New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, giving Charlotte passengers a low-cost alternative.

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Air travel between Charlotte and New York will become much cheaper next month.

JetBlue's service includes four daily round trip flights to John F. Kennedy International Airport starting July 12.

"It provides our new cities access to our entire route system via JFK," said jetBlue Airways spokesman Brian Baldwin.

The flight system includes 36 routes between major cities and popular Caribbean destinations. New markets like Charlotte are chosen based on jetBlue's belief that it can stimulate new traffic in the area.

"Where can we start service that typically tends to have higher prices

and be under served" Baldwin said. "By offering low fares we can really stimulate demand."

Mid-sized markets that figure into jetBlue route system are being added now, and explains part of the reason for the Charlotte launch.

"Charlotte, as the nation's second largest banking region... [has] natural ties to New York, but until now, the people of North Carolina have overpaid for sub-standard service," said jetBlue CEO David Neelaman.

Introductory one-way fares start at \$69; regular fares will be between \$89-\$199 one-way, a round trip ticket is never required. In addition to low fares, the addition of jetBlue as a flight option in Charlotte also brings with it what has been referred to as "The jetBlue effect."

"What often happens, when you have a new service that starts... that offers flights that are lower than what has been offered in the past, there is a competitive element that takes place there, and other airlines respond to that," said Baldwin. "Our goal is not to take customers from other airlines," said Baldwin. "Our prices are generally lower, when we go to new markets... so that causes other airlines to lower their prices as well."

Along with new routes and low fares, jetBlue is the first airline to fly, the Embraer 190, a state of the art 100-seat jet.

"It's a far cry from a regional jet," said Baldwin, "and our customers so far, have given it rave reviews. It makes service to Charlotte really work for us."

Critics: Columbia outreach a failure

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Critics say a program designed to increase the number of businesses doing construction work for the city is an expensive failure.

Two elected officials say there is little evidence the Subcontracting Outreach Program is accomplishing its goals.

Councilman Daniel Rickenmann cited one recent case in which only one contractor followed the program's guidelines, causing the cost of a sewer project increase about \$150,000 - or an 50 percent of the estimated cost.

Rickenmann, along with newly elected council member Kirkman Finlay, also says he is not convinced the program is creating new opportunities for businesses that typically don't win contracts, such as those owned by women and minorities.

"With this program, we spend money, but there's no guarantee that we receive the desired results of reaching out to the small-business community," Finlay said. "It's a set of steps that can be checked off (by contractors) but does not push for small-business involvement."

Finlay and Rickenmann say a recent contract put out to bid to install a larger sewer line along a road near the University of South Carolina football stadium should be rebid because the two lowest bidders failed to follow guidelines of the outreach program.

City manager Charles Austin said the city is negotiating for a lower price with the winning contractor.

The program requires general contractors who bid on city construction projects worth \$200,000 or more to document their efforts to share some of the money by subcontracting out at least 20 percent of the work.

After a project is done, contractors have to tell which subcontractors were used and how much each was paid.

A review of recent filings by The (Columbia) State newspaper showed that many - but not all - contractors were hitting the 20 percent requirement. The program can no longer specify that the subcontracting work go to women- and minority-owned businesses.

"We're saying to contractors, 'Don't go use the same subcontractors that you use all the time. Consider using other businesses, as well,'" Councilman EW Cromartie said. "Cities are obligated to try and spread the wealth."



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

Calvin Murphy is president of the North Carolina Bar Association.

Legal eagle spreads wings

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Calvin Murphy always knew he wanted to help people, but it was when he was 14 that he realized that he wanted to be a lawyer.

The principal lawyer at Murphy & Chapman, Murphy attended all-black J.H. Gunn School. In 1962, while working on a research project, the teenage Murphy sat in the all-white Mecklenburg County's Sheriff's office and watched a well-dressed black man come in and be treated with respect. He was a lawyer.

"I'm an impressionable black male in Charlotte, and I asked the deputies who the man was," Murphy said. "It was like Superman had just passed." The encounter left an unforgettable mark on Murphy, as he decided that day that whatever Bell did to get that kind of treatment from the Sheriff was what he wanted to do.

Though primarily a trial lawyer, Murphy was named 2006 "NC Super Lawyer" by Law & Politics

and served as N.C. State Bar Association president. The position was not one he initially planned for himself but that he did eventually want. Murphy served nine years as State Bar Counselor and questioned leadership why there had been no person of color as president.

"If you're going to do a job, you need to do it to the best of your abilities," said Murphy. "Always subscribe to the standards I set for myself, rather than the ones someone else set for me. If you set your standards high enough and measure your behavior by those standards, you'll never disappoint yourself."

After graduating Davidson College, Murphy graduated N.C. Central School of Law in 1977. He worked as a district attorney, before forming his firm in 1982. Through it all he has applied his philosophy to all things, which may be part of the reason that in 2005 the board asked him to serve as president. North Carolina Lawyers Weekly described Murphy as someone who "helped

steer the State Bar through an intense period of public scrutiny and negative publicity."

A soft-spoken and contemplative man, Murphy does not fit the image most people have of criminal defense lawyers.

"Generally the public does not really understand what lawyers do," said Murphy. "For most people there familiarity comes from TV or their lawyer or what they [see] in the media. What they don't see about lawyers is what they do in the community."

Murphy explained that most lawyers are leaders in their churches, leaders in politics, they're leaders in business, and they are people who help people.

"A good lawyer always knows where to go to get answers," said Murphy. "You don't have to know the answers, but you know how to go get them. Lawyers are trained in how to evaluate facts and how to apply the law to those facts in a way that benefits a client. If you are on the other side of a lawyer you are going disagree with whatever that lawyer is doing."

Small business owners upbeat

By Joyce M. Rosenberg

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - While small business owners across the country are fretting as they see inflation, gas prices and interest rates rising, many others are optimistic about the coming months.

Some of these owners are in industries that actually benefit when costs are rising, or they own companies that are structured in ways that insulate them from some of the economy's vagaries. Many just have the upbeat attitude of the entrepreneur - they'll find a way to make things work no matter how difficult the business climate gets.

"I feel like I'll figure out some way to do better than the competition and I'll survive - and if some of the competition doesn't, I'll pick up some of their business," said Donn Flipse, CEO of Field of Flowers, a chain of three floral superstores in Davie, Coral Springs and Boca Raton, Fla.

Like many other owners whose businesses are dependent on delivery vans and trucks, Flipse is considering raising his delivery charges, and he's ordered trucks that run on diesel because they'll get better mileage than gas-powered vehicles. After 16 years in business, he's learned how to cope with change - he started his company during the first Gulf War, when oil prices were at a then-unheard-of \$40 a barrel.

U.S. cars get high marks

By Sarah Karush

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT - U.S. automakers are producing more hits with cars, but are facing steeper competition in trucks, an area they once dominated, according to a vehicle quality study.

The domestic Big Three had the top-scoring vehicles in five out of 10 car categories in the annual vehicle quality study by Strategic Vision Inc., a San Diego-based market research firm and consultant to automakers. A notable winner was the Ford Fusion, which prevailed in the medium car category.

In trucks, Japanese companies took six out of 10 categories. The winners included the Honda Odyssey for minivan and the Nissan Armada for large SUV.

Detroit is "playing catch-up, but the competition is moving ahead at the same time," said Daniel Gorrell, vice president of Strategic Vision. "The imports are really developing a strong foothold in the truck market."

The study, which factors in emotional reactions to vehicles, as well as defects and design issues, found BMW to be the top brand, followed closely by Lexus.

BMW's ranking contrasted sharply to a better-known quality report by J.D. Power and Associates. That study, released earlier this month, found a high number of complaints about BMW for design, particularly its iDrive system, which operates many different controls through a single knob.

Tips for negotiating workplace conflict

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Conflict happens

Disputes can arise between employees, between business partners, between a company and a client. And if such issues are not settled, bad things can happen. Good people quit.

Profitable relationships dissolve. Great companies go under. This has always been true, of course. But according to renowned mediator Jeffrey Kravis, in a global economy the implications of conflict are more profound than ever before.

"In a world where relationships matter more than ever, mediation skills matter more than ever," says Kravis, author of "Improvational Negotiation: A Mediator's Stories of Conflict about Love, Money, Anger - and the Strategies That

Resolved Them." "Companies can locate anywhere. People can work anywhere. Clients can stay with you or go with a competitor halfway around the globe. So whether you manage employees or clients or both, it's critical to learn the art of bringing harmony out of conflict."

What, exactly, is negotiation? Kravis says it's reframing a situation in order to get people to shift their positions in a way that makes a resolution possible.

You needn't become a certified mediator in order to settle a dispute at work or home. You just need to understand some basics about human behavior, practice the fine art of paying attention, and offer yourself up as a neutral party who just wants to resolve the problem.

Here are tricks of the trade Kravis

suggests:

- Let people tell their story. When a person is deeply upset about something, he really needs to get his story out.

- If someone refuses to budge, take the spotlight off her. Isolation tends to create movement.

- When someone seems "locked up," dig for the emotion behind the stone face.

- When people are picking fly-specks out of pepper, come in with a reality check.

- Identify the true impediment. In every conflict, ask yourself: What is the true motivating factor here?

- Think creatively about ways people can cooperate rather than clash. In every negotiation, there is a tension between the desire to compete and the desire to cooperate.