



## News Release

Media Contact:  
**Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D.**  
**Vice President Public Affairs**  
757-233-3825  
[Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com](mailto:Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com)

### **AAA PROJECTS ONE MILLION VIRGINIANS TO TRAVEL FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY**

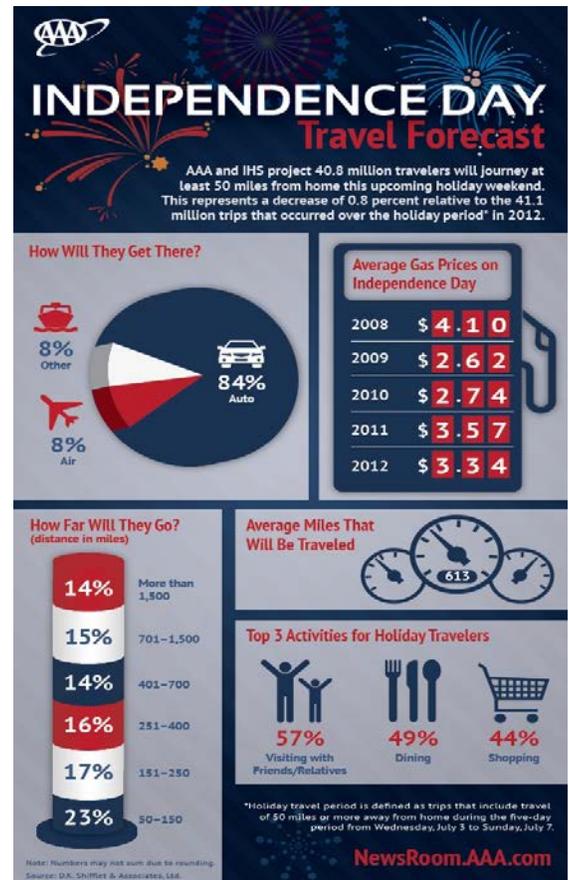
*Shorter holiday travel period expected to result in 1.4 percent fewer Virginia travelers this year*

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (June 26, 2013) – AAA projects 1.1 million Virginians will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Independence Day holiday, a slight decrease from the number people who traveled last year. The anticipated decline in holiday travel is predominantly due to a shorter holiday period. With the Fourth of July landing on a Thursday this year, the holiday period has returned to the standard five-day holiday, compared to the six-day period in 2012 when the holiday fell on a Wednesday. The Independence Day holiday travel period is defined as Wednesday, July 3rd to Sunday, July 7th.

“This year 1.1 million Virginians will celebrate the nation’s birthday with a getaway, a slight decline from last year,” said AAA Tidewater Vice President Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D. “This projection is not representative of the improving economy but rather due to the calendar effect of one fewer day in the holiday period.”

#### **Highlights from 2013 AAA Independence Day Holiday Travel Forecast for Virginia include:**

- Independence Day holiday travelers to total 1,122,639, a decrease of 1.4 percent from the 1,138,221 who traveled last year
- Eighty-Six percent of Virginia travelers (969,367) to travel by automobile, a decrease of 1.3 percent from 981,777 last year
- Holiday air travel expected to decrease slightly to 83,432 from 83,783 in 2012
- The largest share of travelers (32 percent) will depart on Wednesday, July 3
- Sunday, July 7, is the most popular date of return for holiday trips with 38 percent planning to return that day



“Independence Day is typically the busiest holiday of the summer travel season with six million more Americans traveling than Memorial Day just two months ago. The Fourth of July benefits from the fact that all schools across the nation are out of session, making it truly a time for family fun,” continued Blumling.

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### **July 3 and 7 busiest travel days**

This year 46 percent of intending travelers plan to begin their trip prior to the start of the holiday travel period (July 3-7), compared to 65 percent last year. The largest share of travelers (32 percent) on a single day will depart on July 3 and the largest share will return on July 7 (38 percent). Thirty-four percent intend to stretch their holiday vacation into the following week returning on or after Monday, July 8.

### **Automobile travel declines, remains dominant mode of transportation**

Approximately 34.4 million people (84 percent) plan to drive to their destination, a decrease of 0.7 percent from the 34.7 million who drove last year.

“AAA also reminds drivers as they head out for the holiday that it is important to keep their mind on the task of driving,” said Blumling. “Mental distractions can lead to a type of tunnel vision or inattention blindness where motorists don’t see potential hazards right in front of them.”

Gas prices may be a factor in travel decisions for Virginians this holiday. While prices are currently averaging \$3.39 up two percent compared to the same time in 2012, the elimination of the state gas tax on July 1<sup>st</sup>, may offer some relief at the pump. After July 1<sup>st</sup> with the implementation of Governor McDonnell’s transportation funding plan, Virginia retail gas prices should begin to drop as the commonwealth’s retail gas tax is replaced with a lower tax at the wholesale level. Estimates from the Virginia Petroleum, Convenience and Grocery Association (VPCGA) estimate Virginia motorists will end up paying a total of 11.7 cents in taxes and fees for a gallon of gasoline through the end of the year.

AAA’s projections are based on economic forecasting and research by IHS Global Insight. The Colorado-based business information provider teamed with AAA in 2009 to jointly analyze travel trends during the major holidays. AAA has been reporting on holiday travel trends for more than two decades. The complete AAA / IHS Global Insight Independence Day 2013 Forecast can be found [here](#).

*As part of North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit [AAA.com](http://AAA.com) and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA](https://twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA).*

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