

SPRINGING COSTS

Procrastination doesn't pay for students who want to get away

BY CALLIE MILLER
OKLAHOMA DAILY (U. OKLAHOMA)

NORMAN, OKLA. — Students who have yet to make spring break vacation plans might encounter more problems as spring break approaches. Many flights are full, and good deals and cheaper rates have already passed by, said Kelly Healy, STA Travel manager.

"It's been so busy for spring break," Healy said. She said business has been non-stop and STA, located in Oklahoma Memorial Union, gets at least 50 customers a day.

Healy said spring break, summer, Thanksgiving and Christmas are the busiest times for STA compared to slow months like August

and September when students are in school.

"The main problems are that people are waiting to the last minute," Healy said. She said there is still hope for a trip, but students must have a flexible budget.

Healy said Las Vegas might be a good option for procrastinators because there are still hotel rooms and flights available at good rates.

Many students who have booked trips through STA plan to go somewhere warm, Healy said. She said STA has booked at least 200 students for spring break, and at least half of those students have made plans to vacation in warm-weather areas.

"People are going to Cancun, of course," Healy said. "Cancun usually books up the quickest."

Mona Springfield, manager of Journey House Travel Inc. in Norman, said many students have come in to book trips, but once they find out how much a trip costs they back out.

Springfield said \$100-per-person per day is a decent guide on how much students should expect to spend for a spring break trip.

"I wanted to go to the beach," said Kellie Jones, pre-nursing sophomore. "I checked travel prices the other day, but I can't afford it because I'm a poor college student. I should have started planning sooner."

Jones said she didn't get a trip planned, but she is going to Galveston, Texas, with her family instead.

Other popular spring break des-

tinations include New York, Los Angeles, South Padre Island, Texas, Las Vegas and Europe, Healy said.

Marissa Sublett, University College freshman, said she was planning to go to Puerto Vallarta or Acapulco, Mexico, but her group's plans fell through because there were only three girls, instead of four, so hotel prices were too expensive.

"With three to a room, costs went up from like \$674 [for four people] to like \$800 [for three people]," Sublett said.

Healy said students began planning trips as early as November.

Some of those students who planned early got to take advantage of special early-booking offers, but those students who still want to plan a trip should be ready

for higher prices.

"There are advantages to booking in advance like right at the new year," Springfield said. She said students booking now are having to pay premium prices.

Availability is a big factor in determining price. Many of the hotels are booked already, and those that are not are more expensive.

"If there were any good quality hotels, they were sky high in price because we were so late," Sublett said. She said they even started planning their trip the first or second week of the semester.

Sublett said she needs to start planning next year's spring break trip this summer.

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