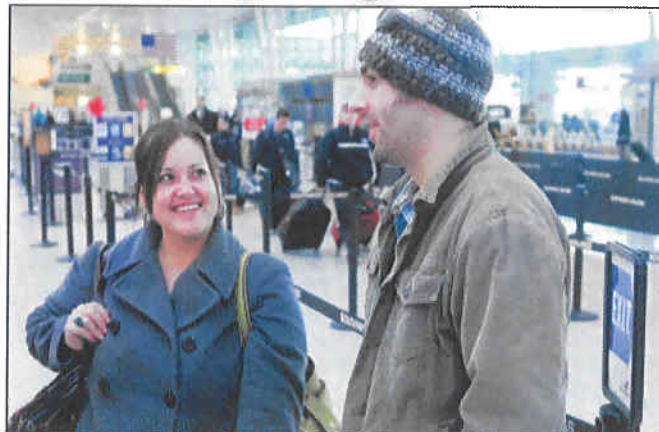




There's no escaping snow's big cost

Travel agents hear: 'I want to get away now'



Adrienne and Garrett Benner of Jarrettsville hopped a flight to Florida.

GARY HABER | STAFF
ghaber@bizjournals.com

On yet another day when the sooty mounds of snow blanketing Baltimore refused to yield and temperatures again hung grimly in the 30s, Adrienne and Garrett Benner were at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, happily checking in for their flight to Florida.

Five days of vacation, including a visit to SeaWorld in Orlando, was waiting on the other end of a Southwest Airlines flight for the husband and wife from Jarrettsville. Even a Florida cold snap that pushed temperatures into the mid 50s couldn't dampen the couple's enthusiasm.

"I'll take 55 [degrees] over 15 or 20 any day," said Adrienne, 29, a project manager for a sales company in Laurel and a personal assistant to a disc jockey at a Baltimore radio station.

Travel agents and airline Web sites say they are seeing a spike in bookings from snow-weary folks from Greater Baltimore looking for a respite from what's already been the snowiest winter in the region's history.

Expedia, an online travel Web site, said bookings to warm weather destinations from BWI are up significantly from Nov. 1 to Feb. 14, compared with the same period last year. That includes a 124 percent jump in flights to Montego Bay, Ja-

MORE INSIDE

- Insurance claims pile up.Page 9
- Museums roll out deals.Page 10
- No plans to tee off soon.Page 11
- Snow delays projects.Page 12
- No windfall for landscapers.Page 12
- Surveying the damage.Page 14
- Make contingency plans.Page 24

maica, an 88 percent rise in bookings to Los Angeles, and a 67 percent increase in trips to Cancun.

Florida is another popular destination with bookings to Miami and West Palm Beach up 65 percent and 47 percent, re-

spectively.

While Expedia attributes some of the increase to travelers feeling more secure about the economy since last year, it says the three major snow storms since December have also pushed Baltimoreans to want to head somewhere warm.

The snow-trodden are deluging travel agents like Susan Bittner, manager of Going Places in Eastpoint Mall.

"I don't know whether it's because of the snow or the cold weather in general, but we've been busy," Bittner said.

Some customers don't even have a destination in mind.

Please see **TRAVEL**, Page 13

Hospitals look for way to recoup millions lost

SCOTT GRAHAM | STAFF
csgraham@bizjournals.com

Maryland's hospitals want their own dough for snow, but don't know where they're going to get it or how much they'll ask for yet.

The Maryland Hospital Association has asked the state's hospitals to determine how much the back-to-back storms that dumped about 50 inches of snow on the Baltimore area cost them in paid staff overtime, snow removal and other related expenses. The MHA plans to use that information to appeal to federal or state lawmakers — or both — and regulators in an attempt to recoup some of the cost, which industry insiders say could reach into the tens of millions of dollars.

While most hospitals in the state are still adding up the cost, MHA leaders are considering the availability of federal disaster relief funds and changes to the state's hospital rates structure as sources of financial compensation, said Jim Reiter, the MHA's spokesman.

Typically, a hospital in Maryland operates on a profit margin close to 2 percent. But the lingering effects of the recession, cost of another 2-foot snowstorm last December and this month's storms have some hospitals licking their wounds midway through their fiscal 2010.

Please see **HOSPITALS**, Page 13

O'Malley, business at standstill in unemployment insurance debate

SCOTT DANCE | STAFF
sdance@bizjournals.com

Maryland businesses have left Gov. Martin O'Malley with two options: accept the stinging loss of one of his top legislative priorities, or make a bold power play to essentially tell business groups, "Thanks for playing."

That's because business groups made a gutsy political



O'Malley

move of their own Feb. 17 by rejecting O'Malley's proposals to overhaul the state's unemployment insurance system and lower their taxes. Business has securely held the upper hand in negotiations over the bill.

The unwavering business opposition is poised to derail efforts by O'Malley and the General Assembly to offer them relief. That would leave them without valuable

campaign fodder as they prepare to run for re-election, unless they choose to pass the bill regardless of business opposition or to craft a new plan in the legislative session's remaining seven weeks.

"Clearly the governor wanted to address the issue that businesspeople were appalled by the increase in their unemployment insurance premiums," said Maryland Chamber of Commerce CEO Kathleen T. Snyder, referring to a hike that hits businesses starting this year but would be softened in O'Malley's bill. "While we understand that, we didn't ask for these bills."

That position has frustrated lawmakers

who have worked to build consensus on the issue and plan to continue pushing for a resolution, potentially with or without the business community's support.

"I was quite shocked to hear they weren't in support of the whole thing; I'm confused with it," Sen. Thomas "Mac" Middleton, D-Charles, said Feb. 18. "Are they really, truly representing the average business person out there that's struggling?"

O'Malley trumpeted the plans to businesses in the fall, like a white knight

Please see **UNEMPLOYMENT**, Page 8

Business Leads 32
Networking & Events ... 30
Lists 20, 22
Out & About 28
Smart Strategies 25
Viewpoint 39



YOUR STIMULUS RESOURCE

- Projects and awards. PAGE 14
- Find more stimulus information at www.baltimorebusinessjournal.com/stimulus



TAXI TIME

BWI seeks taxi operator. PAGE 9





Barry Greenberg, new managing partner of Rosenberg, Martin & Greenberg, talks with the Baltimore firm's Caroline Hecker.

Managing partners 'always on call'

He's part negotiator, part peace-maker. He has one hand on his firm's tiller while steering toward its future with the other.

And in this post-recession economy, he's a technophile more worried about the quality — rather than the quantity — of his firm's clients.

He may still dress for work in a suit and tie, but today a law firm's managing partner acts more like a fireman.

"You're always on call," said Steve Thomas, who has been managing partner of Thomas & Libowitz in Baltimore since the mid-1980s. "When an issue comes up, you need to be there."

There are plenty of fires to put out at law firms these days, and at most firms the managing partner is holding the hose. Like most businesses, the recession

Recession requires legal CEOs to have expanded responsibilities

ADAM STONE | CONTRIBUTOR

rocked the industry, causing lost business for many firms and forcing some to cut back staff and make other money-saving measures.

With a greater focus on the bottom line, today's managing partner is juggling the needs of his staff with those of a lean budget.

He's helping his firm to recruit and select business worth pursuing, while encouraging other partners and associ-

ates to get out of the office more when drumming up new clients.

Meanwhile, managing partners at law firms throughout Greater Baltimore are relied on for their strategic vision, ability to bridge generational gaps and willingness to communicate with all staff members. While the job duties may have changed in recent years, the goal still is the same — serve the client and bring money into the firm.

"The role of the managing partner is to work with all the partners to reach consensus over the fact that there may be some short-term pain, short-term expenses that impact all of us financially, in exchange for a long-term reward," said Barry Greenberg, who became managing partner at Rosenberg, Martin & Greenberg in Baltimore on Jan. 1.

Greenberg is one of at least two new managing partners at Baltimore-area law firms in the past year. At Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, Martin Fletcher replaced Al Mezzanotte as the firm's managing partner last fall. Mezzanotte stayed on to practice at the firm.

But the firm also took the opportunity to reorganize top management. Whiteford Taylor also folded its three-member

Please see **MANAGE**, Page 18

THIS WEEK'S LISTS

Check out the 50 largest law firms in the Baltimore area as ranked by the number of attorneys.

Largest law firms in the Baltimore area		Largest law firms in the Baltimore area	
Rank	Firm Name	Rank	Firm Name
1	Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP	26	...
2	...	27	...
3	...	28	...
4	...	29	...
5	...	30	...
6	...	31	...
7	...	32	...
8	...	33	...
9	...	34	...
10	...	35	...
11	...	36	...
12	...	37	...
13	...	38	...
14	...	39	...
15	...	40	...
16	...	41	...
17	...	42	...
18	...	43	...
19	...	44	...
20	...	45	...
21	...	46	...
22	...	47	...
23	...	48	...
24	...	49	...
25	...	50	...

Fiona W. Ong

page 19

