



SOUND BITES

■ Last year was the safest ever for the world's airlines.

"A lot of the things we have done over the past decade are paying off," said **Eric Doten**, director of the Center for Aerospace Safety/Security Education at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Doten attributed the lowered crash rate to better training, techniques and technology, particularly the devices that warn pilots when they are too close to the ground or that a midair collision is imminent. Also more pilots worldwide are training on improved flight simulators.

– "2003 was the safest year for airplane passengers," **Miami Herald**, Jan. 3, 2004

■ "Before Sept. 11, people booked far out. Since Sept. 11, they do not," said **Darryl Jenkins**, visiting professor of airline management at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

That means that in April the airlines "may get nervous and start testing different fares to see if it will pick up," he said.

– "Airlines offering discount prices," **Chicago Tribune**, Jan. 4, 2004

■ Regional carriers have grown in importance since the attacks of Sept. 11. As the major-carrier airline traffic dropped, they looked for cheaper ways to move passengers. Boardings on regional carriers jumped 18.8 percent during 2002 alone,

according to the Regional Airline Association.

Many of the regional carriers have made good money doing this, and now the major carriers want a share, said **Alan Bender**, a professor of airline economics at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

"Clearly there was going to be a day of reckoning, when the major carriers continue to lose money and the regional partners are making money, and it's very obvious that they're making money," he said.

– "Northwest, other airlines lean on regional carriers to cut costs," **Associated Press**, Jan. 8, 2004

■ A spokeswoman for the union representing US Airways flight attendants union dismissed talk of selling parts of the airline as "a bullying tactic" to squeeze workers for more concessions.

Darryl Jenkins, a visiting professor of business at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, disagrees. He thinks managers at the Retirement Systems of Alabama, which bought 37 percent of US Airways in bankruptcy and holds voting control, want to sell the carrier and recoup at least part of its \$240-million investment.

"I do not consider this a bluff," Jenkins said. "The options are becoming less and less. This is serious now." – "Hopes for recovery dim at US Airways," **St. Petersburg Times**, Jan. 9, 2004

■ **Richard Bloom**, director of terrorism, intelligence and security studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, says it's common knowledge in security circles that the government has access to names, addresses, itineraries, and credit card information.

"I certainly don't think Northwest or any other airline that could be involved has done anything amazingly unusual," Bloom says. "I think the whole thing could have been handled better, but what you're really dealing with are people who are trying to support aviation security and keep people safe."

Bloom and others say the big problem is not so much that passenger data wound up in government hands. It's that the public needs better information about just how active those hands are.

– "Security experts: Sharing passenger data hardly unusual," **Minnesota Public Radio**, Jan. 20, 2004

■ [David] Johnson [CEO, Great Plains Airlines] said the airline intends to resume scheduled service by March. But **Darryl Jenkins**, a visiting professor of business at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said he doubts the airline can survive bankruptcy. "Anytime you shut down operations and try to start up again, I don't know that I've ever known anybody who survived doing that," he said. "I would not be betting a whole lot on

their long-term survival now."

– "Experts doubt Great Plains can survive," **Belleville (Okla.) News-Democrat**, Jan. 27, 2004

■ At the center of the storm, seemingly unperturbed, sits [David] Neeleman [JetBlue CEO]. He is a successful entrepreneur with an unshakable belief in his own abilities. "I think there are a lot of people who would love to be in my shoes," he says. That lack of humility, though, concerns even his backers. "The only thing I'm worried about [at JetBlue] is overconfidence," says

Darryl Jenkins, visiting professor of airline management at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. "I'm glad they've had these hits."

– "Is JetBlue's flight plan flawed?" **BusinessWeek**, Feb. 16, 2004

■ **Grant Brophy**, an air safety investigator and director of flight safety and security programs at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said airlines ought to adopt technologies that weigh passengers unobtrusively - for example, putting scales under pads that passengers stand on at ticket counters.

"They've just got to bite the bullet and recalculate this stuff," Brophy said. – "NTSB suggests airlines weigh passengers," **Boston Globe**, Feb. 27, 2004

■ "It's the last hurrah for the network carriers," said **Alan Bender**, an airline economist at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. If they don't succeed in fending off their competition, network carriers "will not cease to exist but they'll become secondary players in the domestic air transportation market just as Sears has been eclipsed by Wal-Mart."

Bender said markets like Jacksonville that primarily cater to business travelers are typically not the first choice for low-cost airlines to expand to because business travelers, even now, will pay

more for their tickets than leisure travelers heading to destinations like Orlando.

But he said that in recent years business travelers, too, have become sensitive to price, in the process making cities like Jacksonville attractive parts of low-fare carriers' expansion plans.

– "Low-fare airlines pull out stops to grab passengers," **Florida Times-Union**, March 1, 2004

■ Reid's selection should help convince investors that Virgin USA is a real deal, said **Darryl Jenkins**, visiting professor of airline manage-

ment at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

"This is serious," he said. "The fact they've got someone of Fred Reid's stature will help them find a good U.S. partner."

– "Delta president to pilot new line," **St. Petersburg Times**, March 13, 2004

■ **Alan Bender**, an aviation professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said the traditional airlines will still offer something the low-cost carriers often do not: connecting flights to any commercial airport, first-class service and

frequent flier miles.

"This doesn't mean the high-cost carriers are down and out," Bender said. "The survey seems to count out the fact that a large percentage of business people need ubiquitous service at any time of day."

He also said American travelers are addicted to frequent flier miles. "Business travelers will avoid low-cost carriers because they're not going to get miles that will take them to Hawaii," he said.

– "JetBlue ranked No. 1 airline, report says," **Detroit Free Press**, April 5, 2004

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