

Dear USMNEWS.net

Dear USM News,

Like your last reader did with the first analysis of USM President Martha Saunders' plane, I pulled [your last reader's analysis](#) and ran with it. Really, all I had to do was add the final March 31st return to Hattiesburg from Manassas to complete that reader's analysis of the plane's use during February and March of this year. That table appears again here. Note that the cost overrun falls from \$60,941 to \$60,711 when the last flight from Manassas to Hattiesburg is added. That reduces also the % cost overrun from 2,959.7% to 2,652.3%, which is also not as bad (he he he he).

Table 1
The Cost of Executive Travel at USM: What Is vs. What Could Be

Dates of Travel	Journey Description	Planegate	Car/Plane
31-Mar-2009	One Way: Manassas, VA & Hattiesburg	\$ 3,937.50	\$230.00
30-Mar-2009	One Way: Madison & Manassas, VA	\$ 3,937.50	\$277.00
30-Mar-2009	One Way: Hattiesburg & Madison	\$ 3,937.50	\$ 57.09
27-Mar-2009	Roundtrip: Hattiesburg & LaPlace, LA	\$ 3,937.50	\$150.04
21-Mar-2009	Roundtrip: Hattiesburg & LaPlace, LA	\$ 3,937.50	\$150.04
4-Mar-2009	One Way: Manassas & Hattiesburg	\$ 3,937.50	\$230.00
2-Mar-2009	One Way: Knoxville, TN & Manassas, VA	\$ 3,937.50	\$481.00
2-Mar-2009	One Way: Hattiesburg & Knoxville, TN	\$ 3,937.50	\$265.00
5-Feb-2009	Roundtrip: Hattiesburg & Jackson	\$10,500	\$ 99.55
11-Feb-2009	Roundtrip: Hattiesburg & Columbus	\$10,500	\$199.43
27-Feb-2009	Roundtrip: Hattiesburg & LaPlace, LA	<u>\$10,500</u>	<u>\$150.04</u>
		\$63,000	\$2,289.19

Notes: The "Planegate" amounts are found by dividing \$31,500 (monthly plane lease) by the number of trips taken during the month. The "By Car" amounts are found by multiplying round-trip distances (mapquest.com) by car times \$0.55 (the federal mileage reimbursement rate). The third trips to LaPlace, LA actually involved Hattiesburg and "St. John the Baptist Parish" in Louisiana. That parish's largest city is LaPlace (50% of the Parish's population). The flights were priced using priceline.com, with reservations in coach made one week out from the date of this analysis.

I think both readers miss three key elements in their analyses. There are really more but I will concentrate on three. These are bulleted below:

- Fuel Costs
- Liability Insurance
- Pilot's Accommodations

These should have been obvious. There is no telling how much \$ is being spent fueling Saunders' airplane to make these trips. Secondly, the liability insurance on this plane, which is carried by Saunders & USM and not the USM Foundation, must

be astronomical. Last, the recent trip to Manassas highlights the fact that the pilot has to be put up in a hotel on trips that last more than a day. By my estimation looking at Table 1, the pilot has already spent three nights in a hotel (let's say at \$200 per night) in just the first two months (February and March 2009) alone.

It is clear to me that Saunders is running over MS taxpayers and the USM faculty. Only one sociology/anthropology prof spoke out, and she now appears to be huddled in the corner, afraid to speak out against the Saunders administration. USM provost [Robert] Lyman is also a cover in this episode, pretending not to know anything of substance about the plane lease when addressing the faculty senate.

<name withheld>