

## **“Dear taxpayers, had enough nonsense, yet?”**

In the following article, we ask, “Dear taxpayers, had enough nonsense, yet?” The context was the exorbitant cost to unnecessarily fly USM administrators, including the new one, President Bennett, in their own airplane, N777AQ.

Well, the answer to that question is, **No**. Taxpayers and students haven’t yet been ripped off enough for them to call for a stop to this kind of waste. It’s odd, though, because they complain about the increases in costs of college, but they haven’t quite figured out that there is a relation between administrator and faculty waste and the increases in tuition and fees. They may catch up if the tuition and fees continue to skyrocket. Maybe.

We’ll begin running the current flights aboard N777AQ this week. As a refresher, let’s review early 2013 waste of student and taxpayer money:

### **Again! USM Is Still Squandering Millions on Airplane N777AQ, Part 13**

In Part 10, we reported that on February 4, 2013, Mississippi taxpayers and USM students paid a small fortune to fly the IHL designated “preferred candidate” Rodney Bennett to Hattiesburg for a “campus visit.” By February 4, 2013, Bennett knew he would be the next Southern Miss president.

USM’s records reported that the number of flight hours to taxi Bennett from Athens, GA to USM was 4.5. That translates a cost to students and taxpayers in the amount of **\$31,235**. That’s approximately \$31,000 more than the cost of a commercial ticket. Also, keep in mind, I’m not including the costs of automobile transportation to/from the airports, food, lodging, etc. Just the plane ride: **\$31,235!**

If that weren’t enough waste to transport Bennett back and forth from Athens, GA to Mississippi, standby for really bad news. Just a couple days later, they do it, again. And again.

In Part 11, we reported that on February 6, 2013, Mississippi taxpayers and USM students paid a small fortune to fly Temple Bennett, the IHL designated “preferred candidate” Rodney Bennett’s wife to Hattiesburg from Athens, GA. The cost? **\$22,211**. That’s approximately \$22,000 more than the cost of a commercial ticket.

Let’s keep a running total of these flights using USM’s airplane, N777AQ: **\$53,446!** That’s for just two flights taxiing the Bennetts from Athens. The really bad news is that the Bennetts’ extravagance has just begun.

And again.

In Part 12, we reported that on February 6, 2013, Mississippi taxpayers and USM students paid another small fortune to fly USM “president” Rodney Bennett from

Hattiesburg to Athens, GA, then to Oxford, MS. The cost? **\$19,435**. Keep in mind, I'm not including the costs of automobile transportation to/from the airports, food, lodging, *etc.* Just the plane ride.

Let's continue the running total: **\$72,881**.

### **And yet again!**

On February 7, 2013, Mississippi taxpayers and USM students paid another small fortune to fly USM "president" Rodney Bennett from Oxford, MS, to Hattiesburg, back to Oxford, then to Athens, GA, back to Meridian, then Gulfport and on to Hattiesburg. Bennett was accompanied by IHL members Smith and Blakeslee. The number of flight hours was 6.4. The cost of this flight service was **\$44,422**.

Let's continue the running total: **\$117,303**. Nothing these people do is dictated by any emergency to act so quickly that they need to fly from one location to another at a cost of **\$117,303**. That is, **\$117,303**, so far.

### **Dear taxpayers, had enough nonsense, yet?**

### **Stay tuned for more reports of waste.**

*To date, although the IHL visits usmnews.net regularly and only on weekdays during work- hours, never has anyone from the IHL or USM provided any corrections to our news reports despite the fact that we encourage input or corrections to our reports from all our readers. Of course, USM and the IHL have the same records and documents that they provide us in our Mississippi Open Records requests and are the sources for the costs reported in usmnew.net.*