

**QUESTION: WHOSE PLANE IS THIS?**

**And here we go again. Why doesn't the IHL pay for N777AQ?  
IHL members seem to use it more than anyone else.**

**To New Orleans (KNEW)**

We now have the Pilots' Trip Log, which USM legal counsel provided only after we pointed out specific instances where USM administrators failed to provide a complete response to our original Mississippi Open Records Act re Dr. Saunders' leased/purchased airplane, N777AQ. However, the additional information raises more questions than it answers.

On December 18, 2009, an Intradepartmental Invoice shows a 2.3 hour round trip to an IHL meeting in Cleveland, MS. However, a USM Pilots' Trip Log showing two pilots, Messrs. Gilley and Price, represents that airplane N777AQ flew to Cleveland, MS in .8 hours. According to the Pilots' Trip Log, from Cleveland, MS the plane traveled to New Orleans (KNEW, Lakefront Airport, NOLA) in a 1.1 hour flight. The plane then returned to Hattiesburg in .4 hour.

According to the Pilots' Trip Log, the passengers were Dr. Saunders, Doug Rouse—IHL member, Robin Robinson—IHL member, Ed Blakeslee—IHL member, and Aubrey Lucas. Curiously, the return flight to Hattiesburg, MS from New Orleans, LA did not include Dr. Saunders or Doug Rouse—IHL member.

Compare the Pilots Trip Log with the Intradepartmental Invoice:

King Air N777AQ Trip Log

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Destination(s)</u>	<u>Passenger Name(s)</u>
12-9-09	Hattiesburg, MS <del>New Orleans</del> (Gulfport)	

Ldgs <u>1</u>	Cycles <u>1</u>	Pilots <u>Dunmighan</u>	Bus. <u>    </u>	Trng <u>    </u>	Maintenance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hobbs Mtr	In <u>1689.6</u>	Out <u>1689.6</u>	= <u>0.0</u>	hrs total	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination(s)</u>	<u>Passenger Names</u>
12-10-09	Chickadee, MS	M. Saunders, D. House, Ed Blakeslee, Robin Robinson A. Lucas

Ldgs <u>1</u>	Cycles <u>1</u>	Pilots <u>Gilley / Price</u>	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trng <u>    </u>	Maintenance <u>    </u>
Hobbs Mtr	In <u>1670.4</u>	Out <u>1684.6</u>	= <u>14.2</u>	hrs total	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination(s)</u>	<u>Passenger Names</u>
12-11-09	New Orleans (KJFw)	M. Saunders, D. House, Ed Blakeslee, Robin Robinson A. Lucas

Ldgs <u>1</u>	Cycles <u>1</u>	Pilots <u>Gilley / Price</u>	Bus. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trng <u>    </u>	Maintenance <u>    </u>
Hobbs Mtr	In <u>1691.5</u>	Out <u>1690.4</u>	= <u>1.1</u>	hrs total	

King Air N777AQ Trip Log

Date(s)                      Destination(s)                      Passenger Name(s)

12-18-09    Lafayette, MS KHGG    Helen Johnson, Ed Blakeslee, Andy Lucas

Ldgs 1    Cycles 1    Pilots Gilley / Price    Bus. ☒    Trng \_\_\_\_\_    Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbs Mtr    In 1691.9    Out 1691.5    = 0.4 hrs total

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Date                      Destination(s)                      Passenger Names

1-13-2010    Meridian, MS    \_\_\_\_\_

Ldgs 1    Cycles 1    Pilots \_\_\_\_\_    Bus. \_\_\_\_\_    Trng \_\_\_\_\_    Maintenance ☒

Hobbs Mtr    In 1692.2    Out 1691.9    = .3 hrs total

2-15-2010    TAT 9107.8    Land 8282    L/H Engine TSC 5537 C/C 514    R/H Engine TSC 5437 C/C 514

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Date                      Destination(s)                      Passenger Names

22-10-2009    Hattiesburg, MS KHGG    None

Ldgs 1    Cycles 1    Pilots Kilgore    Bus. \_\_\_\_\_    Trng \_\_\_\_\_    Maintenance ☒

Hobbs Mtr    In 1692.6    Out 1692.2    = 0.4 hrs total

Original ☐  
 Department Copy ☐  
 (Open to File)

CHARGE: President's Office  
(STUFFED CASE)

5001      266-0001  
612      ROME 4/20/68

CREDIT:	
Airplane Operations	
(estimated cost)	
5000	289,4120
500	42,000,000

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES OF SERVICE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	8.3 Hour Round Trip to Cleveland, MS for Dr. Saunders, Dr. Aubrey Lucas, Dr. Doug Rowe, Ed Winklesie, and Robin Robinson  (1/3 cost of trip, \$66, Board Office to pay remaining 2/3)         Trip December 18, 2009	\$39.00	\$39.00
		TOTAL -->	\$39.00

SPR APPROVAL, IF REQUIRED \_\_\_\_\_

PROVOST  
APPROVAL  
IF REQUIRED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPT	PROGRAM	PROJECT/GRANT	AMOUNT
BUDGET STIMULUS TO COASGE FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	834021	10H10	100001	06000		\$20.00
AUTHORITY DEPARTMENT 0000-TIME 3276						
BUDGET STIMULUS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	834021	10H10	100011	06000		\$20.00
AUTHORITY DEPARTMENT 0000-TIME 3276						

JOURNAL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOURNAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
118 College Dr. #5053  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
Telephone: (601) 266-4131 Fax: (601) 266-5182  
FED ID#: 04-6-000-018

Invoice No.: 001-101

**INVOICE**

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning 3525 Ridgewood Road Jackson, MS 39211 Attn: Bridget Breitbaud		Date: 1/5/2010 Terms: Due on Receipt
1.00	1/2 cost for use of University airplane 12/18/2009 to Cleveland, MS  Passengers: Dr. Martha Saunders, Dr. Aubrey Lucas, Dr. Doug Rouse, Ed Blakelee, Robin Robinson	\$620.00
SubTotal		
TOTAL		\$620.00

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE ANY  
QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS INVOICE. THANK YOU!

Please Remit Payment To:  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Box 5053  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
Attn: Mike Hendon

This trip raises a number of questions.

- (1) Why does the Intradepartmental Invoice show only a trip to Cleveland, MS and say nothing about going to New Orleans?
- (2) Why does the Intradepartmental Invoice show that half the total trip was billed to the IHL?
- (3) Of the many flights taken by IHL members, why is this the only flight for which a portion was invoiced to the IHL?
- (4) Did the IHL pay the bill for half the total trip? (When the IHL responded to our records request there was no indication that the IHL had ever paid the bill. In a follow-up request addressed to the IHL, their attorney denied the existence of any documents other than the lease agreement and the board's approval of the lease.)

(5) Why did Dr. Saunders and Doug Rouse stay in New Orleans?  
and

(6) What costs did USM incur in conjunction with Dr. Saunders and Dr. Rouse's stays in New Orleans?

We can speculate concerning the answers. However, we do know that on December 19, 2009, the [Golden Eagles were playing the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl](#) at the Louisiana Superdome. In fact, on December 18, 2009, the Eagles were going through [their final New Orleans Bowl practice](#). Since there is no record of a flight back from New Orleans, perhaps Drs. Saunders and Rouse deigned to return to Hattiesburg by car after the ballgame.

In any event, the passengers included three (3) IHL members. However, USM students, faculty and taxpayers pay for the plane, not the IHL (or at least all of it except for \$920.00, assuming that the invoice was paid.)

For purposes of our analysis, let's assume that the trip to Cleveland, MS was justified and deduct the .8 hour charged to that flight. The Pilot Trip Log reported the New Orleans flight took 1.5 hours. Therefore, the cost to students, faculty, and taxpayers was  $1.5 \times \$6,187.67 = \$9,281.51$ .

**(Remember, [usmnews.net's](#) computation of cost does not include or amortize the \$907,053.85 balloon payment due on the 60th month. If that amount is included, the cost is substantially higher than \$6,187.67 per flight hour.)**

Just what does **\$9,281.51** mean to President Saunders? Ask her. Remember, it's not her money she's spending. It's taxpayers' and students' cash. What does **\$9,281.51** mean to a student, many of whom are holding down jobs and borrowing money to attend USM? What does **\$9,281.51** mean to faculty member – particularly one who has recently been handed a terminal contract?

IHL members seem to fly airplane N777AQ more than anyone else. Why should USM students and faculty pay for it?

### **Context**

If you are a new reader of this series, catch up by reviewing [A Brief History of Saunders' "Lease" of airplane N777AQ During a Recession, Part 1](#). That report provides background information concerning the actual costs for the first 17 months of an airplane N777AQ leased by President Saunders for

a 60-month period. For example, USM documents report total actual cost of **\$591,231.71** during the first 17 months of airplane N777AQ operations.

Interdepartmental Invoices for 30 flights were provided in an initial response from USM to a MORA request concerning the airplane President Saunders leases and pays for with Mississippi taxpayer and student dollars. Although the MORA request was for all records related to the plane, USM's response was incomplete. When legal counsel followed up concerning the inadequate response, the University produced more documents. [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net) reporters are currently reviewing the additional documents and there are reasons to believe the response was again incomplete.

### **WHO'S MONITORING THESE "PUBLIC SERVANTS"?**

The incomplete response to our MORA request, as exemplified above, signals irresponsible accountability and questionable use of taxpayer, student, and faculty resources.

Is anyone holding USM and IHL administrators accountable? IHL members blessed the lease/purchase of the plane. Why not? IHL members are enjoying the use of the plane **at no cost**. So, do not expect the IHL to do its oversight responsibility and hold President Saunders accountable for this extravagant expenditure of USM student and faculty resources. **And, she's giving it away at the same time she's terminating USM academic programs and faculty.** Unless USM faculty and students take charge of their destiny, President Saunders will continue to implement her own vision which, increasingly does not include them.

Stay tuned to [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net) for cost analyses of the remaining flights aboard President Saunders' plane.