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## STANMORE BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS UPDATE

### 25 AUGUST 2010

Please share this information with your colleagues; we hope you find it useful. If you would prefer not to receive any further updates, just send a message to [info@stanmoretravel.co.uk](mailto:info@stanmoretravel.co.uk) with "remove" as the subject.

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#### AMERICA TO CHARGE FOR TOURIST ENTRY

European "visa free" travellers to the USA will have to pay \$14 from next month for online pre-screening.

Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) has been compulsory for UK tourists and other European visitors since January 2009. Currently ESTA applications are free, but from 8<sup>th</sup> September, the US authorities will introduce a charge of \$14, or around £9 based on the current exchange rates.

Sanctioned by the ironically titled Travel Promotion Act, (TPA) passed by the U.S. Senate last year... the fees collected will provide funds to "strengthen the image of the U.S. abroad" and promote tourism in overseas markets – in a bid to reverse a recent decline in visitor numbers.

ESTAs are valid for 2 years, or until the expiry of your passport. So if there's even the chance of your crossing The Pond in the distant future, apply for an ESTA before September 8<sup>th</sup> and avoid the charge. To apply click on the following link:

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/esta.html? flowExecutionKey= cC6FEAE1A-2AAA-809D-A275-A17FE3C254FE k71E7289A-F9B7-9855-8168-F75D869C46A8>

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#### BMI TO JOIN STAR ALLIANCE CORPORATE REWARD SCHEME

On 1st September 2010 bmi will be joining the Star Alliance corporate loyalty programme, Star Alliance Company Plus (SACP), and their own Company Rewards scheme will close.

We understand that bmi are taking the opportunity to have a clear-out and will not automatically move account balances across from Company Rewards to SACP. It is important, therefore, that all organisations with a bmi Company Rewards membership positively re-enrol in SACP otherwise any points on their Company Rewards accounts will expire on the 1 September 2010.

It's not too late! Whether you need to set up a new membership or already have an SACP account, you have until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010 to register your organisation and ensure that your Company Rewards points are transferred.

Bmi tell us they have been in contact with all Company Rewards account administrators regarding the closure of the scheme and our Business Travel Team have trawled through our own client database to identify those of you who need to take action... however, if you think you might be in danger of missing this particular boat, contact Natalie Dengler

on 020 8731 1333 for more information or click on the following link to check your own membership status with both schemes:

<https://www.partnerplusbenefit.com/application/module/common/migration.do?urlParamLanguage=en&urlParamCountry=GB&urlParamAdCode=BMI2010UK>

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## LAN TO ACQUIRE TAM

LAN Chile has announced plans to buy Brazilian carrier TAM for \$3.7 billion. If regulatory approval is received, the new group will be called (pause for fanfare of trumpets)... LATAM Airlines Group. Both airlines would continue to operate under their existing brands.

"This will position us to compete with the foreign carriers that continue to increase services to our region while creating new jobs in our home countries," said TAM CEO Marco Bologna

The combined airline group would provide passenger services to more than 115 destinations in 23 countries, with plans to add new destinations "that neither company could have supported on its own"

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