

NOT LOGGED IN

Sign up now!

Register | Log in

THURSDAY EDITION  
July 22, 2010  
Updated continually



Baton Rouge, LA  
Partly Cloudy — 87°  
Full forecast

- HOME
- NEWS
- SPORTS
- BUSINESS
- FEATURES
- ENTERTAINMENT
- MULTIMEDIA
- INTERACT
- OBITS
- CLASSIFIEDS
- JOBS
- WHEELS
- SHOP

Today's News AP Politics Blog Acadiana Ascension Baker/Zachary Business Education Legislature Livingston/Tangi Opinion Police  
Politics West Side

2theadvocate > News

ADVERTISEMENTS

[CLICK HERE TO ADVERTISE](#)

# NEWS

## State funds lost on unused airfare

By **MICHELLE MILLHOLLON**  
Advocate Capitol News Bureau  
Published: Jul 22, 2010 - Page: 14A

Comments (0)

- Print
- Email
- Save
- Reprints
- Tweet
- Share

A new report shows that state government workers are purchasing thousands of dollars in airline tickets each year and then allowing them to expire.

LSU is the biggest culprit, according to the report released Wednesday by the state Inspector General's Office.

Across 58 state agencies, nearly \$230,000 in nonrefundable airline tickets expired between January 2006 and April 2010, the report found. If unused for the travel originally intended, the nonrefundable tickets can go toward payment of another flight during time periods specified when originally purchased.

"We can never afford to pour hundreds of thousands of dollars down the drain, which is essentially what happened when these airline tickets were allowed to expire. We simply have to be better stewards of the taxpayers' money," Inspector General Stephen Street said in a prepared statement.

Donna Torres, associate vice chancellor for accounting and financial services at LSU, said in a prepared statement that the university has the most unused tickets because of athletics, the number of sponsored agreements and LSU's size.

"Because the cost of a fully refundable ticket is so much greater than the lowest logical tickets we encourage employees to utilize the lowest logical fares," Torres stated in response to a request to LSU for an interview.

"We will pay for an unused ticket if the reason that the ticket is not used is business related or unavoidable," according to



**Capitol News Bureau**

[Louisiana Politics Blog](#)  
The latest news on the Louisiana Legislature and the governor. The Advocate Capitol News Bureau delivers timely and unique insights into the political comings and goings around the state and in the capitol.

**Louisiana Government Links**

- [Oil Spill Information emergency.louisiana.gov](#)
- [Louisiana Governor's Office](#)
- [Louisiana Lt. Governor's Office](#)
- [Louisiana Legislature](#)
- [Louisiana Attorney General](#)
- [Louisiana Secretary of State](#)
- [Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry](#)
- [Dept. of Public Safety](#)
- [Dept. of Transportation and Development](#)

**intuit.**  
**QuickBooks Online**  
The fast, easy way to do your accounting

- ✓ Easy invoicing
- ✓ Track sales & expenses
- ✓ Save time
- ✓ Work anywhere

**Try It Free**

QuickBooksOnline.com Ads by Google

**Get your ideal wheels!**

**wheels.2theadvocate.com**

Torres' statement.

LSU Associate Vice Chancellor for Communications Herb Vincent said neither taxpayer money nor tuition is used to pay for the athletic department's travel costs. He said the department operates on self-generated dollars.

Vincent said there are several reasons for tickets expiring.

He said a gymnast might get hurt and skip a trip that utilizes group tickets. That ticket cannot later be used for individual travel, Vincent said.

Vincent said the university saves hundreds of thousands of dollars by buying group tickets even if some of the tickets are not used.

Another reason for tickets expiring, he said, is when a high school recruit changes his mind about visiting the university after a ticket has been purchased.

It was only recently that airlines began allowing the university to change the name on a ticket and reuse it, Vincent said.

State workers are required to purchase airline tickets for their job through the state's travel agency. From June 2005 to June 2010, the state's travel agency was Carlson Wagonlit Travel. The state currently is contracting with Short's Travel Management.

The report identified three major problems:

- 598 nonrefundable tickets were purchased and then expired because they were not used within a year.
- The state and Carlson could not provide complete records on the expired tickets. The Inspector General's Office estimated the loss to the state for expired tickets over four years probably is closer to \$362,000 although that number is uncertain because of missing records.
- Carlson employees converted \$16,000 in state airline tickets for the use of themselves, their families and friends. The employees later were fired and reimbursed the state. The Inspector General's Office said the state should monitor unused tickets so they can be applied toward new ticket purchases and document why tickets are not being used.

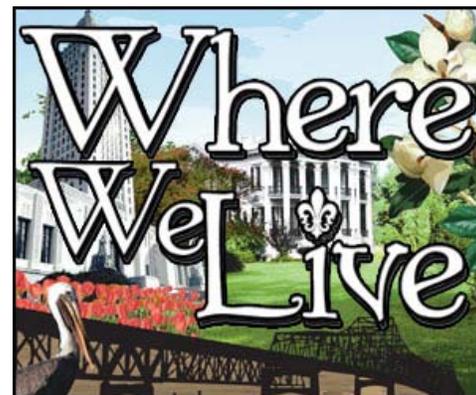
Denise Lea, assistant commissioner with the state's Office of State Purchasing, agreed with the recommendations.

In a written response, she said a new system is in place to notify travelers of tickets that are available for reuse.

Lea referred questions about the report Wednesday to a spokesman.

According to the report, some agencies allowed thousands of dollars in tickets to expire. They include:

- LSU, \$33,151.95.
- LSU Counter Terrorism, \$26,845.92
- LSU Athletics, \$21,898.84.
- LSU Health Science Center, \$11,632.55.
- Southern University, \$11,378.87.



 If you enjoy Advocate News coverage why not get it first, directly in your inbox? [Sign up today for our Business Today - Daily Digest newsletter](#) and get the news delivered to you!

 Comments (0)

SUBMIT A COMMENT

[Terms of Use](#)

[Login](#) or [register](#) to post a comment.

Most Popular

Most Emailed

Hot Topics

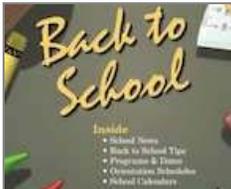
1. Thousands protest drilling moratorium at rally
2. Brewing tropical rainstorm halts work to plug well
3. Police and fire briefs for July 21, 2010
4. Jindal finds support at Lafayette rally
5. Police and fire briefs for July 22, 2010

[Go to complete list](#)

[PREV](#)

Now on 2theadvocate.com

[NEXT](#)



**Back to School - 2010**

Your source for school news, dates, schedules and calendars.



**Movie ticket giveaway**

Enter to win 2 FREE passes to see "The Expendables"!



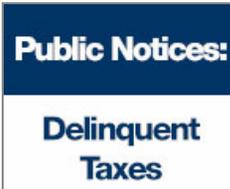
**Where We Live - 2010**

Everything you need to know about where we live...



**Before The Storm**

A hurricane preparedness guide - 2010



**The Advocate Classifieds**

A complete listing of delinquent taxes.



**Moms, Dads and Grads 2010**

Everything you need to know for celebrating!

Browse site content published on July ,

**Archives**

Only staff-produced articles and videos are archived in the [Online search](#). WBRZ videos can be found on the [Video page](#).

As a courtesy to our users, we maintain an [Online Daily Archive](#) of all site content from the past 7 days.

The Advocate also maintains a [Newspaper Archive](#).

**Site Information**

Check out our [site blog](#) for the latest news on updates and changes to 2theadvocate.com.

Curious about how the site works or what content we can provide to you? Check our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section.

Get a detailed listing of all of the site's sections with our [site map](#).

**Advertising**

Have a look at our [media kit](#) for online and offline advertising opportunities.

**Subscribe**

Subscribe to 2theadvocate.com with any of the feeds on our [Feeds page](#).

[Click here](#) to subscribe to The Advocate.

**Legal**

Copyright © 1992-2010, Louisiana Broadcasting LLC and Capital City Press LLC • 7290 Bluebonnet Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70810 • All Rights Reserved

No unauthorized use is permitted of content produced by The Advocate, WBRZ, 2theadvocate.com or any other publication or media owned by Louisiana Broadcasting LLC and Capital City Press LLC. Unauthorized use includes framing and direct posting of content on websites other than www.2theadvocate.com.

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policies](#) | [Supported browsers](#)

Have a question, comment, news tip or story idea? [Click here to give us some feedback](#).