

Sunday, July 11, 2010

Great news for Miami travelers as rental car center finally opens

Any business traveler will tell you that air travel and all that is associated with it is far from glamorous. In fact, business travel is stressful, exhausting, frustrating and overrated. With that being said, there is some good news for folks who fly to Miami and need to rent a car. A brand spanking new consolidated rental car garage that will be the new home for 16 rental car companies and up to 6,500 cars is scheduled to open on Tuesday just east of the airport.

Up until now each rental car company operated their own buses to pick up and drop off customers at the Miami International Airport. The rental facilities were located varying distances from the terminal and to be honest, many were located in less than desirable neighborhoods. The new consolidated facility eliminates that concern, and also will eliminate a huge amount of traffic in the airport proper. The airport will now provide a fleet of buses that will transport customers of all 16 companies to the rental facility, so you'll no longer have to be on the lookout for the specific bus of your rental car company.

More and more airports have gone to a single rental car facility in recent years, including Atlanta, San Francisco, Baltimore/Washington, Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, New York-JFK, and Minneapolis/St. Paul relocated its facility to multiple levels of the east parking garage when it was expanded several years ago. The MSP facility is quite unique and functional. It includes a one-stop light-rail ride that operates under the massive airport parking garage. Travelers then ride escalators or elevators two or three levels up to find their rental car company.

As a frequent business traveler I confirm that I sometimes fly to a less congested airport so that I can just walk to my rental car instead of having to take a bus or train to a rental facility. There aren't many larger airports that still have rental cars just a short walk away, but those that do are really convenient. Examples of airports with quick and simple airport car rental just steps away from baggage claim include Austin, Buffalo, Louisville, Chicago-Midway, Nashville, Portland (OR), Oakland and Orlando.

The new \$480 million rental car facility at Miami is part of a much larger construction project by the Florida Department of Transportation that will also house metro rail, buses, Amtrak and possibly high-speed rail in the future. A rental car facility charge of \$4.60 per day will be tacked onto all rentals to help pay for the facility. The fee had been \$3.25 during the construction phase.