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Jimm Budd, who has lived in Mexico City since 1958, now writes a travel column for the newspaper *Reforma*



Ecology matters

Environment plays an important part in whether American baby boomers will opt to buy a retirement home in Mexico, according to a study issued by the International Community Foundation, as reported in the newspaper *Reforma*. Environmental matters are being much discussed these days in light of stricter regulations protecting mangroves along the coasts. Mangroves are considered a defense against flooding and hurricane damage, but developers argue that the new regulations may cost the country hundreds of millions of dollars in investment. The Community Foundation, for its part, says that concern about over-building, inadequate trash collection and pollution prevention may discourage potential buyers from acquiring real estate in Mexico.

More flights

Mazatlan may have lost cruise ship visits, but American Airlines' American Eagle has announced it will start flying to the Pacific port in June from Dallas. AA also plans a route to Morelia. Using smaller aircraft, American serves several destinations in Mexico from DFW as does Continental from Houston and Delta from Atlanta. Spirit has applied to commence service from Fresno. Low-fare Mexican carrier Volaris has been expanding its U.S. route structure, too, and now serves Fresno, Oakland, Las Vegas and Chicago (Midway). No word yet in whether Mexicana Airlines will ever return to the skies.

Investment up

Private investment in the tourism sector during 2010 amounted to 3.5 billion dollars, an increase of more than 19 percent over the previous year. Of this, 1.6 billion went into hospitality and the rest into real estate development. According to the Tourism Ministry, 374 million dollars came from the United States, 61 million from Spain and 60 million from Canada. Nonetheless, Pablo Azcárraga, a top man at Posadas de México and president of the private sector's Tourism Business council, maintains investment is 50 percent less than it was in 2008. He blames both the climate of violence and economic conditions for the decline.

New airlines thrive

While Mexicana remains with folded wings, three new airlines now account for 54 percent of the air traffic in Mexico. First among these is Interjet, now the second largest carrier, controlling about 25 percent of the market. Next comes Volaris with 19 percent. VivaAerobus, ten percent, then the older but still small Aeromar and Magnicharters, which no longer is limited to charter flights. Aeroméxico remains number one by far, with 41 percent of the domestic market.

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