

Holiday Trends

Navigating Holiday Stress—Tips From Mrs. Claus

(NAPSA)—For millions of Americans every year, the holiday season is typically a time for family travel, shopping for special gifts and increased levels of stress. According to a recent American Psychological Association survey, “Americans list lack of money (61%), the pressures of gift giving (42%), lack of time (34%) and credit card debt (23%) as top causes of holiday stress.”

For over a century, Mrs. Claus has spent most of her time each year preparing for the holiday season, and is considered an expert in the industry. This year, we have asked this premier planner of seasonal festivities for a few suggestions to help keep folks—and Santa himself—on track for a happy holiday.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas...

“Santa and I believe that a successful holiday depends on 90 percent planning and 10 percent inspiration,” states Mrs. Claus. “Given the limited amount of time available for a one-night worldwide trip, it is critical that Santa has his route planned as efficiently as possible.” This holds true for holiday shoppers as well. “Before you rush out to do all your shopping, make sure you have used trip planning software, which will allow you to easily plot the quickest route.”

Won't You Guide My Sleigh Tonight?

“Rudolph's nose isn't the only thing guiding Santa's sleigh these days,” admits Mrs. Claus. “Holiday traffic can be a nightmare even for Santa.” Without the need to have an Internet connection in their sleighs, folks can receive current traffic updates alerting them to road construction, acci-

dents and congestion if they use Microsoft Streets & Trips 2008 with Connected Services. With that same product, drivers can search for the lowest gas prices in their area to help keep them on budget when they need to fuel up.

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

Every year, it seems that holiday decorations get put up sooner. This is the cue to start spreading the expenses of gift giving over a couple of paychecks. “Sometimes only Santa knows what your special someone wants, but any gift that comes from love and thoughtfulness will always be cherished,” says Mrs. Claus, adding, “The worst thing to do is try to do all one's shopping at the last minute, which inevitably costs more, reduces choice and certainly increases stress.”

O'er the Fields We Go

Road trips to visit family and friends are a time-honored holiday tradition. However, they can often be fraught with problems stemming from poor planning, a rushed itinerary or getting lost. Mrs. Claus warns, “Don't be so focused on getting to Grandma's house that you forget to enjoy the trip itself! Even Santa makes planned pit stops during his deliveries.” With Microsoft Streets & Trips 2008 with Connected Services, families can easily plan stops along the way, making the trip even more enjoyable. “And when you inevitably make that wrong turn, it automatically reroutes your trip to get you back on track—something any traveler, even one as experienced as Santa, can't live without.”

For additional information about Microsoft Streets & Trips, please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/streets>.