Speaker 1: The Missouri State Journal, aweekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap: Summer is just around the corner. With easing of restrictions and increased vaccination rates, many people around the country are ready to travel again. What will summer travel look like? How can people enjoy taking trips safely? I’m Emily Yeap.

Joining me today to answer these questions and more is Dr. Stephanie Hein, department head of hospitality leadership at Missouri State University.

Dr. Stephanie Hein: I do think now that we’re seeing more people being vaccinated and we are seeing restrictions loosen up nationwide, I believe we’re gonna see some increases in demand for travel in the industry. There’s a tremendous
 amount of pent up demand. People are ready to go. They’re ready to see
 other places. They’re ready to see their families. They’re ready to travel,
 plain and simple.

I see it on my side with the number of industry employers who are
now coming back to hire our students and they don’t have enough talent to supply the demand that they foresee coming this summer. So, I think we are going to see a big summer this year.

Emily Yeap: Hein highlights some safe and realistic trips people can take.

Dr. Stephanie Hein: If you are in and around the Ozarks region, fortunately we have a wealth
 of outdoor activities that you can participate in via either lakes or rivers,
 those types of venues. If you are willing to go a little bit further, the park
 systems that we have across the state or across the U.S. are great
 opportunities as well.

I think anything with the beach – beach locations where you can be
 outside, a lot of the activity is outside. I think those are good, safe options.
 And there are multiple ways that you can get a little bit safer as you travel,
 continue to be cautious and smart about what you do.

Emily Yeap: If you do want to travel, now is a good time to make reservations.

Dr. Stephanie Hein: Things are starting to fill up and starting to book up. So, if you have in
 mind what you wanna do, go ahead and start making those reservations,
 start making those plans to make the trip as smooth as you possibly can. I
 do think we’re gonna see rates start to climb and rebound a little bit whenever we’re looking at hotels, so be mindful of that. People are gonna
 gravitate to similar places, so I think the sooner you can book and make
 your decision, the better.

I would also encourage people to take advantage of all the touchless or measures that hotels and restaurants have done to reduce some interactions. For example, if you book at certain hotels, you can download the digital key and you can check in on your phone and you get your room assignment on your phone and you can skip the front desk and go directly to your room. So, in theory, you can really minimize any inside interactions, in that way, if you take those steps.

On a recent trip that I made to Dallas, we used our phone to order everything. we ate outside. I think there are still ways that we can be safe. We can minimize those interactions, but still get to see the people that we want to see.

And I do think that’s gonna be another trend that we’ll see. People want to interact with their family and friends again. So, they may forgo a certain type of vacation or traditional type of vacation simply to go see family and friends again because they haven’t been able to do so this past year.

Emily Yeap: As travel this summer is going to ramp up quickly, Hein offers this
 important piece of advice.

Dr. Stephanie Hein: I think we’re going to see more demand for products and services than we may have employees to help service that demand. So, I would just encourage everyone as you’re traveling, just be kind, be courteous, be
 patient as you’re in those establishments because they are working with
 skeleton crews right now, minimal number of employees. Anything that
 we can do on a consumer side to be mindful of that strain on the operation,
 will be helpful. The operators are gonna be so glad to see customers there
 and they’re so happy to see it rebounding. But, they’re also dealing with
 another challenge right there. So, just be kind, courteous and respectful of
 those that you’re interacting with as you go throughout your summer
 travels.

Emily Yeap: That was Dr. Stephanie Hine, department head of hospitality leadership at
 Missouri State. I’m Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Speaker 1: For more information, contact the Office of University Communications at (417) 836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at
 KSMU.org.