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November 1997 meeting—travel information

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1. Place and time

The meeting will be at the Headquarters Plaza Hotel in Morristown, New Jersey, November 9−14, 1997. The hotel's phone number is +1 800 225 1942 (−1941 from inside New Jersey) or +1 973 898 9100, or by fax at +1 973 898 0726.

2. The hotel

The Headquarters Plaza Hotel occupies the tallest building in Morristown. It is not affiliated with any chain, but accommodations are similar to major business hotel chains such as Hilton or Marriott. The rooms are newly renovated, and every room has a data jack. There is no surcharge for calls to toll-free numbers.

The hotel is part of a complex that includes a multi-screen movie theater, several restaurants, and assorted shops. There are many other restaurants within easy walking distance, with a wide range of cuisines and prices. Also nearby is a commuter train to New York (about an hour each way). As a result, you will probably not need a car during the meeting. However, if you wish to rent a car from Avis (the number of the local branch is +1 973 538 1550) or Enterprise (+1 800 325 8007), they will arrange for you to pick it up and drop it off right at the hotel. There is also a Hertz location nearby. Parking, for your own car or a rental car, is complimentary for registered guests (but because it's valet parking only, you will probably want to tip the attendant).

The hotel rate is $110 single or $125 double, or, if you want to splurge, $145 for the ''CEO Level.'' The hotel will add 6% New Jersey sales tax to those numbers. All rates include breakfast, but the CEO level gets you a hot breakfast as opposed to a Continental breakfast for the standard rooms. The CEO level also offers you your own check-in desk, an open bar from 5−7 PM daily, and other amenities.

3. Getting to New Jersey

Newark International Airport (EWR) is by far the closest airport with scheduled service. It is a major hub for United and Continental Airlines, and dozens of other airlines stop there as well. I urge you to avoid Kennedy and Laguardia airports, because landing at either of those airports will require you to traverse all of New York City, and the Hudson River, to reach New Jersey.

3.1 Car services

Even getting between Newark and Morristown is a bit of a nuisance. The least inconvenient way is probably a limo. I have arranged with Hurley Limo to extend the AT&T corporate rate to attendees; that rate is $36 instead of their usual $47. They will add a 15% tip to the bill, which you can modify up or down depending on how you like their service. On trips from Newark

Airport, your bill will include the parking fee for the limo, which is $4.00 for the first four hours. If you wish to take advantage of this service, you must reserve in advance by calling Hurley Limo at +1 800 327 5434 or +1 908 654 9000 and saying that you are attending a conference sponsored by AT&T. If you tell them your flight number, they will track the flight and will be at the baggage claim area to meet you even if you are delayed. They will also go to the appropriate terminal for the airline. You should say if you're coming from another country, so they will know to meet you at the international arrivals area. I believe that the rate is the same regardless of the number of people, so you may wish to share a limo among several people on the same flight. You can pay by credit card; the driver will have an imprinter in the car.

As an alternative, the hotel has a deal with a limo company called TBT. You can make reservations with them at +1 800 654 6642 or +1 914 358 3200; they charge $24 (plus tip) one way but you will share the car with whoever else happens to show up at the time. Or you can have a car to yourself for $55 each way.

I have personally used Hurley Limo many times and can recommend them. I have not used TBT, but I imagine that if people had trouble with them, the hotel would not recommend them.

3.2 Taxicab from Newark

It is also possible to take a cab. The airport has a dispatcher system to prevent overcharging: You go to the dispatcher, say where you're going, and the dispatcher writes down the rate on a piece of paper, which you give to the cab driver. I've used this facility once, and it seems to work. However, it is not significantly less expensive than the other alternatives, the cabs do not accept credit cards, and you have to bring your own luggage up to the street level without having the limo driver around to help you.

3.3 If you must fly into JFK

If you absolutely must fly into JFK, you probably don't want to take a cab, as the fare will probably be more than $100. You can use Hurley Limo; I don't know the rate, but it will probably be somewhat less. The least painful way from JFK to Morristown is probably to rent a car. If you do so, I urge you to request a map of the area from the car rental agency.

The following directions are obtained by reading a map. I have not personally driven this route recently, so I cannot comment on construction or other delays. However, the route it represents is by far the most direct, so unless the construction is genuinely wretched, it will be the fastest route as well. You should expect it to take about 90 minutes plus whatever time you spend lost or stalled in traffic.

When you leave JFK Airport, you should get on a road that everyone calls the Belt Parkway even though that is not its name. Depending on where you are, its official name is the Shore Parkway, the Southern Parkway, or Leif Ericson Drive. Get on this road westbound (which might possibly be labeled southbound).

From the airport, take the Belt Parkway (or whatever it's called) for about 19 miles. You want to get onto the Verrazano Bridge, which the map indicates is at a complicated interchange at exit 3. If you miss the exit, do not despair; you will have another chance when you intersect the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway after about another 2 miles.

When you cross the Verrazano Bridge, you will be in Staten Island, which is still part of New York City. You will also be on Interstate 278. Follow Interstate 278 all the way across Staten Island (about 10 miles), over the Goethals Bridge, to the New Jersey Turnpike (almost immediately). Take the Turnpike north to exit 14, to Interstate 78 westbound. You are now essentially at Newark Airport, so pretend you're coming from there.

3.4 Driving to the hotel from Newark Airport

Get on Interstate 78 westbound. New Jersey route 24 forks off from Interstate 78 after about 11 miles; follow Route 24 instead of staying on Interstate 78. Route 24 dead-ends into Interstate 287 after about 11 miles; get on Interstate 287 southbound. Get off at exit 35 (South Street, Madison

Avenue). Turn right onto South Street. Follow South Street to the park in the center of town. Go half way around the park to exit at the opposite corner onto Speedwell Avenue, otherwise known as Route 202. There is what used to be a large department store at that corner. The hotel is about two blocks along Speedwell, on your right.

3.5 Driving notes

Both New York and New Jersey require cars' headlights to be on during the day if they are using their windshield wipers. Right turn on red (after stop) is permitted *except* inside New York City. Staten Island is part of New York City. Special note to visitors from the UK: Cars parked on the street must face in the same direction as traffic on that side of the street.

4. Money

I strongly urge visitors from outside the USA to obtain a suitable supply of US currency or dollar-denominated traveler's cheques *before* their trip. It is possible to change money at Newark Airport, but the last time I checked, the rates were horrendously bad. The hotel does not offer currency exchange facilities but does, of course, accept credit cards.

5. Weather

East Coast weather changes rapidly and seemingly at random. You will almost certainly want a sweater or jacket but will probably not need a heavy winter coat—especially if you bring a jacket that will fit over your sweater. Snow as early as mid-November is very unusual. There will probably be at least one rainy day and at least one brilliantly sunny day. Most of the leaves will probably be off the trees. Beyond that, your guess is as good as mine.