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SEEN & HEARD

US Airways fan shares interest online

US Airways has a big fan in Mark Tlalka. Really big. Web site big.

The 17-year-old high school graduate from Chicago has created a site — www.kinglobjaw.com — devoted to all things US Airways.

And the flying enthusiast says he hopes to meet with carrier officials at their Tempe headquarters while he's in the Valley with his folks on a trip to Scottsdale. Tlalka, who said he's flown the airline exclusively since he was 13 years old, remembers just one bad thing from his numerous trips on US Airways.

"Once they lost my bag, but they found it pretty quickly," he said. Otherwise, "I've always found the fares good and the service friendly."

He particularly loves the airline's upgrades and has been known to fly "outrageous" legs to get places to rack up the frequent-flier miles. He was especially happy, he said, when was able to use his US Airways miles on another airline to get to Tahiti.

He's been on many trips throughout the United States and to the Caribbean, some recently to check out college aviation programs. He hopes to earn a degree in commercial



Mark Tlalka of Chicago is in the Valley this week showing off his fan club Web site to US Airways officials. The 17-year-old, shown here in the cockpit of a US Airways jet, plans to go into aviation.

aviation on his way to being a pilot.

People who cruise aviation Web sites often see his postings on Flyertalk.com, which bills itself at the "world's most popular frequent-flier community," and other forums.

"I am very positive and optimistic about this merger," Tlalka said, "and although there have been problems here and there, I think the new US is destined to succeed, and I want them to! I have been flying with US since 2003, exclusively and

am an elite member in the Dividend Miles Program."

American West and US Airways merged in 2005.

Tourism planners meet

Summer in the city, Phoenix style, means camping out

at the Arizona Biltmore and Spa and figuring out more ways to bring more tourists to the state.

Some 600 tourism professionals from around the state are expected to attend the 27th-annual Governor's Conference on Tourism July 11-13. Best-selling author Harvey Mackay will help them brush up on their salesmanship, customer service, leadership, management and negotiation skills.

Mackay, chairman of MacKay Mitchell Envelope Company, is considered on of the top five speakers in the world, according to Toastmasters International.

Headquarters spiffed up

The Phoenix office of Smith-Group is wrapping up redesign and renovation work for InSys Therapeutics Inc., which is relocating its headquarters from Lake Forest, Ill., to the Valley this month.

Zeroing in on rapid development and commercialization of drugs, InSys needed office and lab space that could accommodate fixed and moveable lab benches, fume hoods, linear equipment areas and allow for expansion at the existing office/industrial building on 51st Street in Ahwatukee.



"The thing that a lot of people around the world have realized is that economies are really being driven by investments in education and well-educated people in science and engineering."

William Harris

Former director of Science Foundation Ireland and current director of Science Foundation Arizona, in a just-published study by Arizona State University W.P. Carey School of Business economists on the benefits of scientific research as a regional development strategy

DID YOU KNOW?

TV vs. Internet

In 2001, 72 percent of respondents said they'd take TV over Internet. By 2006, that dropped to 59 percent for TV, according to Edison Research Group.