

## Business

### New Web service promotes time shares in the sky

Melissa Frederick, The Examiner

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#### WASHINGTON -

Five thousand dollars is a lot of money to save on a plane flight.

For owners of private jets and private jet shares, such savings could be a reality through a new Internet-based forum designed to help buyers and sellers of private plane seats find each other.

Often, individuals who own or use private jets end up with empty seats on their flights, said James Butler, CEO of Bethesda-based Shaircraft Solutions, a consulting firm that advises individuals on private air travel. Until now, though, it was difficult to find someone to share flights to popular destinations such as Martha's Vineyard or Cape Cod.

By splitting the costs, a \$10,000 flight can become a \$5,000 one, Butler said. His new service, Shaircraft Connections, allows individuals to post flight itineraries and sell their shares without having to pay brokers' fees. The Web site will also feature industry news and a vehicle through which flight time can be donated for charity. The site does not feature advertising, and it costs \$495 per year to join, Butler said. In the past six weeks since its soft launch, 65 members have joined.

Alan Meltzer, founder of Bethesda-based insurance firm The Meltzer group, has a partial ownership of a jet through Weymouth, Mass.-based company Sentient. Before the forum, Meltzer said it would be difficult to share a flight unless you happened to have a friend or colleague you knew who could do it.

"I'd rather be giving my money to charity or my children than wasting it on a flight. This hopefully will help me save," Meltzer said. "The simple logic is most of the time when you share a flight, people just sit there and read and nobody bothers anybody. And if you end up meeting some nice people in the process, great."

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