



**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

January 12, 2010

The Honorable Luci Larson
Mayor of Salina
Room 202
City/County Building
300 W. Ash Street
Salina, KS 67401

Dear Mayor Larson,

I would like to update you on the essential air service (EAS) situation at the Salina Municipal Airport and give you an opportunity to submit any comments on the record before we submit a recommendation to the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs. As you know, Great Lakes Aviation, Ltd. is the current EAS provider at Salina, and their contract expires March 31, 2010. In anticipation of that, we issued Order 2009-11-25, November 30, 2009, soliciting proposals from carriers interested in providing subsidized EAS for a new, two-year period, beginning April 1, 2010. In response to our request, four carriers responded: Great Lakes, SeaPort Airlines, Sovereign Air, Inc., and TransportAzumah.

You should have received a copy of the proposals from each carrier, and they can be accessed at www.regulations.gov by entering the number DOT-OST-2002-11376 in the search block. As a result, we will only briefly summarize them here.

Great Lakes has proposed one service option to provide Salina with two nonstop round trips each weekday and each weekend (12 a week) to Kansas City or Denver with 19-seat Beechcraft 1900D aircraft for an annual subsidy of \$1,517,138.

SeaPort has proposed one service option to provide Salina with three nonstop round trips a day (18 a week) to Kansas City with 9-seat Pilatus PC-12 aircraft for a first-year annual subsidy of \$1,489,435 and a second-year of \$1,493,381.

Sovereign Air has proposed two service options, both of which would be using 9-seat Beechcraft 350 aircraft. Option 1 would offer five daily (35 a week) nonstop round trips to Kansas City for an annual subsidy of \$899,995. Option 2 would offer four daily (28 a week) nonstop round trips to Kansas City for an annual subsidy of \$840,028.

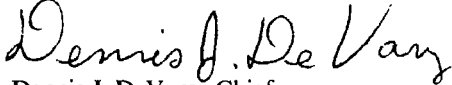
TransportAzumah proposes to act as a Part 380 Indirect Air Carrier and to hire Charter Air Transport, a certified air carrier, to actually operate the service. TransportAzumah has proposed two service options, both using 30-seat Embraer EMB 120 aircraft. Option 1 offers 12 weekly Salina to Kansas City round trips for an annual subsidy of \$2,806,156. Option 2 offers 18 weekly Salina to Kansas City round trips for an annual subsidy of \$3,868,860.

The schedules that the carriers have proposed are illustrative only and they may make schedule changes to reflect changing conditions, e.g., to better meet shifting connecting bank times at the hub. However, the Department does expect a subsidized air carrier to maintain well-timed and well-spaced flights in order to ensure full compensation.

We request that you review the proposals and submit any comments you may have as soon as possible, but no later than February 19. We will carefully consider your comments before we submit a recommendation to the Assistant Secretary for a decision.

Please send your comments via e-mail to EAS@dot.gov or by fax to 202-366-7638. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael Martin of my staff at michael.f.martin@dot.gov or 202-366-6494.

Sincerely,


Dennis J. DeVany, Chief
Essential Air Service Division
Office of Aviation Analysis

cc: Timothy F. Rogers, Salina Airport Authority