

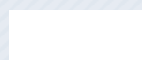


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NEW AIRLINE

American posts strong early numbers at Sioux Gateway

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4 hours ago • By DAVE DREESZEN ddreeszen@siouxcityjournal.com

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SIoux CITY -- American Eagle is off to a fast start at Sioux Gateway Airport.

In its first month of operation at the Sioux City airport, Eagle carried a total of 2,067 passengers on its two daily flights to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, according to airport data. That's up 94 passengers, or 9 percent, from the 1,973 people who boarded Delta Airlines connecting routes to Minneapolis-St. Paul the same month last year.

Eagle's first month performance was all the more impressive, considering that Delta was offering three daily flights a year ago in April 2011. Delta's 50-seat regional jets were about half full on average back then, while

Eagle's 52-seat regional jets flying to Chicago were about 75 percent full on average last month, Sioux Gateway airport director Curt Miller said Wednesday.

"We figured it would take a while to build up the (Eagle) service, but it seems like people it pretty well," Miller said. "We hope it continues..."

Eagle, a regional carrier for American Airlines, replaced Delta as the lone carrier at Sioux Gateway on April 3, the same day Delta flew its last flight to the Twin Cities.

Eagle last fall won a \$1.51 million federal subsidy to serve Sioux City for the next two years. Citing Chicago as the No. 1 destination for both business and leisure travelers, Sioux Gateway leaders

By the numbers

- 4 Flights daily between Sioux City and Chicago
- 44 Seats in American Eagle's regional jets
- 1.51 Federal subsidy in millions of dollars for American Eagle service
- 250 Number of cities with American Airlines connections

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endorsed Eagle's bid for the Essential Air Service contract over a competing proposal from a Delta affiliate.

Sioux Gateway leaders hope that strong ticket sales will convince American to eventually increase the number of flights to Chicago, and even add a second hub, such as Dallas-Fort Worth.

Correction: An earlier version of this story mistated the seating capacity for the regional jets American Eagle operates at Sioux Gateway.

Tags Sioux Gateway, Chicago, Sioux City, American Airlines, Minneapolis-saint Paul International Airport, Fort Worth, Dallas, Sioux Gateway Airport, Delta Air Lines, O Hare International Airport, Sioux Gateway Terminal, Essential Air Service, Sioux Gateway Board Of Trustees

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