

RADIO IOWA

Delta doesn't love to fly to Mason City and Fort Dodge

by RADIO IOWA CONTRIBUTOR on JULY 15, 2011
in BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Delta Airlines has announced that they will be dropping money-losing flights in 24 small markets across the country, including all service in Mason City and Fort Dodge. They'll also be asking for Essential Air Service funding to continue to provide service in Sioux City and Waterloo.

Delta officials in a news release say that flights in the markets on average depart with 52% of the seats filled, with some as low as 12%. Delta flights in Mason City have a 46% load factor, with Fort Dodge flights having a 39% load factor. Delta had previously announced its intent to reduce capacity this fall by four percent and retire 140 Saab turbo-prop aircraft.

Mason City Municipal Airport manager Pam Osgood says despite Delta's announcement, commercial air service will continue in the future under the EAS program. She says Delta does have to find a replacement carrier. She says the requests for proposals to serve markets like Mason City are due by August 9th.

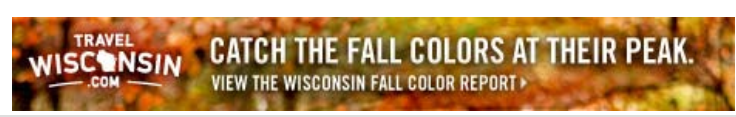
That means city officials and the airport commission will then have to decide on the future direction of air service into Mason City. Osgood says she's disappointed about Delta's decision to leave the market. She says Delta along with Northwest prior to their merger has provided quality air service to the airport, and she hopes the airport will find a carrier that will continue to provide quality service to its customers.

Iowa Senator Tom Harkin says in a written statement that Delta's decision will have a negative effect on Mason City and Fort Dodge, with the airline's request seeking financial assistance to continue service to Sioux City and Waterloo creating some risk for service in those communities as well.

By Bob Fisher, KRIB, Mason City

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