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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Issued by the Department of Transportation
on the 25th day of February, 2000

Served: February 29, 2000

Notice of

CHAUTAUQUA AIRLINES, INC.,
d/b/a US AIRWAYS EXPRESS

to suspend service at Staunton, Virginia

Docket OST-2000-6953 - 2

ORDER ALLOWING SUSPENSION OF SERVICE AND APPROVING TRANSFER OF ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Background

On February 17, 2000, Chautauqua Airlines, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, filed notice of its intent to suspend its unsubsidized service at Staunton, Virginia, as of April 2, 2000. Chautauqua is the only carrier providing scheduled service at the community, where it operates 5 nonstop roundtrips each weekday and 8 each weekend to Pittsburgh, primarily with 19-seat Jetstream 31 aircraft.[1] In its notice, Chautauqua notes that Atlantic Coast Airlines, Inc., d/b/a United Express, plans to begin unsubsidized service at Staunton on April 2, 2000, by operating 6 nonstop round trips each weekday and 11 each weekend to Washington's Dulles International Airport with 19-seat Jetstream 32 aircraft.

Staunton's essential air service determination, as last established by Order 94-5-7, May 6, 1994, requires at least two nonstop round trips each weekday and weekend to Washington providing a minimum of 66 seats in each direction.

Decision

We will allow Chautauqua to suspend its service at Staunton on the day that ACA institutes its new service at the community, if it chooses. At that time, we will begin to rely on ACA's service to meet Staunton's essential air service requirements. As planned, ACA's new service easily meets those requirements: the new carrier will offer the community 114 seats each weekday and 209 seats each weekend to Washington. Moreover, ACA's code-share relationship with United Airlines will provide travelers with on-line connecting service through Dulles to destinations throughout United's system.

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[1] See the Appendix for a map. Staunton's Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport also serves the nearby communities of Harrisonburg and Waynesboro, Virginia. Chautauqua has served the Staunton market since July 1996; see Order 96-6-8, June 10, 1996.

Before Chautauqua suspends service, however, we expect it to contact all passengers who hold reservations for flights that will be suspended, to inform them of the suspension and the availability of ACA's new service, and to assist them in arranging alternate transportation.

This order is issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.56a(f).

ACCORDINGLY,

1. We allow Chautauqua Airlines, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, to suspend service at Staunton, Virginia, as of the date that Atlantic Coast Airlines, Inc., d/b/a United Express. institutes service at the community;

2. We will rely on Atlantic Coast Airlines, Inc., d/b/a United Express, to provide essential air service at Staunton, Virginia, beginning on the date that it institutes service;

3. This docket will remain open until further Department order; and

4. We will serve copies of this order on the mayor and airport manager of Staunton, Virginia, the Virginia Department of Aviation, Chautauqua Airlines, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express. and Atlantic Coast Airlines, Inc., d/b/a United Express.

By:

A. BRADLEY MIMS
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation
and International Affairs

(SEAL)

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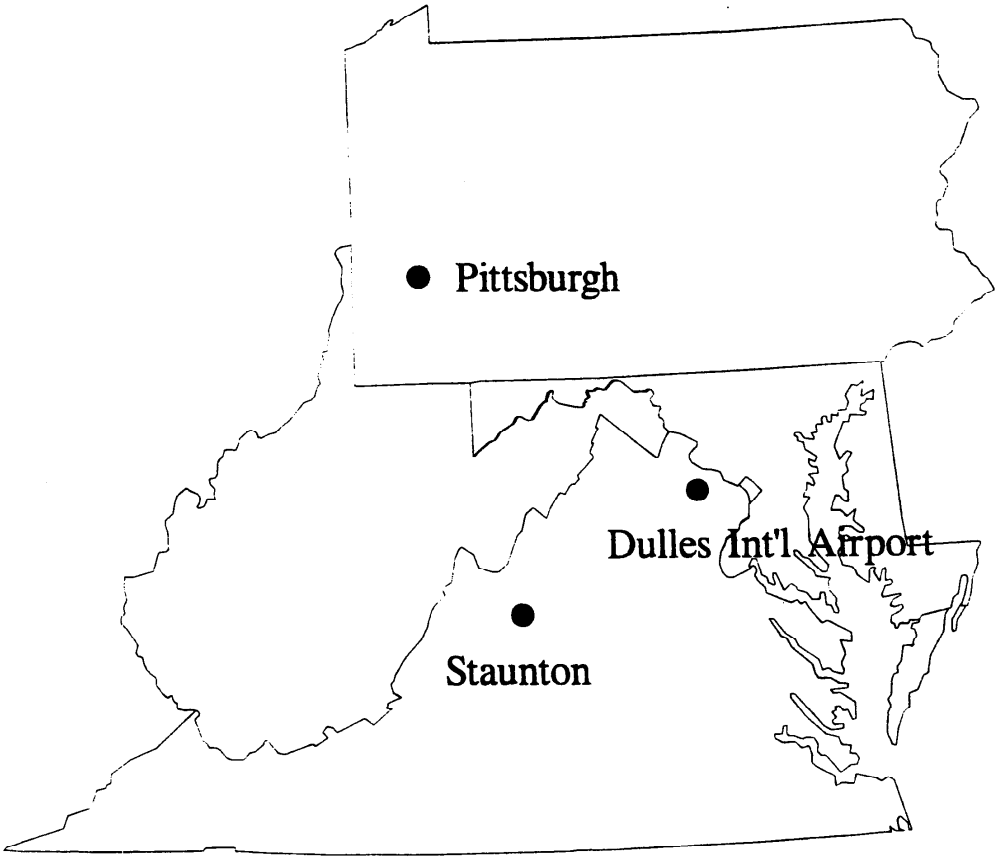
Appendix

STAUNTON, VIRGINIA, AND THE SURROUNDING REGION