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Order 2001-8-6

Served: August 8, 2001

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

Issued by the Department of Transportation  
on the 3rd day of August, 2001

Essential air service at

**SALINA, KANSAS**

under 49 U.S.C. 41731 *et seq.*

Docket OST-01-10129 - 3

**ORDER ALLOWING SUSPENSION OF SERVICE**

**Background**

On July 11, 2001, Great Lakes Aviation, Ltd., filed a 90-day notice of intent to suspend its scheduled service at Salina, Kansas, as of October 9, 2001. Great Lakes filed notice pursuant to the Department's "one-third rule": section 323.3(a)(5) of the Department's Regulations requires a carrier to file a 90-day notice if its proposed suspension of service would reduce the total number of passenger seats linking the affected community to a Federal Aviation Administration-designated hub by 33 percent or more.

Great Lakes operates three one-stop round trips each weekday and four each weekend to Denver via Hays, Kansas, with 19-seat Beech 1900 aircraft. In addition to Great Lakes, unsubsidized scheduled service at Salina is also provided by Air Midwest, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, which operates two one-stop round trips each weekday and three each weekend to Kansas City via Manhattan, Kansas, with Beech 1900 aircraft.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the Appendix for a map. Great Lakes' service at Salina is not subsidized under the essential air service program, but the carrier's service at the intermediate point of Hays is. By Order 2000-2-18, February 14, 2000, the Department authorized an increase in the level of subsidized service between Hays and Denver from 12 to 18 round trips a week when Great Lakes proposed serving Salina upline from Hays. Great Lakes' proposal was based on an expectation that Salina's revenue would exceed the cost of operating the Salina-Hays segment of the route, and that 18 Salina-Hays-Denver round trips would thus require less subsidy than 12 Hays-Denver round trips.

Salina's essential air service determination, as established by Order 84-8-84, August 16, 1984, requires at least two nonstop or one-stop round trips to Kansas City each weekday and weekend providing a minimum of 45 seats in each direction.<sup>2</sup>

### **Community Comments**

By letter dated July 31, 2001, the Salina Airport Authority states that it does not object to Great Lakes' suspension of service. The community notes that Air Midwest intends to increase its Salina-Kansas City service to four round trips a day, three nonstop and one one-stop, on October 8.<sup>3</sup> The community is therefore amenable to Great Lakes' suspension in less than 90 days provided that Air Midwest has in fact implemented its increased service and provided further that Great Lakes properly accommodates passengers already ticketed for travel beyond the suspension date.

### **Decision**

After careful consideration, we will allow Great Lakes to suspend its service at Salina. Air Midwest continues to provide scheduled service to Salina's designated hub of Kansas City, and in fact plans to increase service to a level that easily meets Salina's essential air service determination in early October, shortly before the end of Great Lakes' 90-day notice period. In view of Air Midwest's plans, the Salina community is amenable to Great Lakes' departure. We will therefore allow Great Lakes to suspend service at Salina as of October 9, 2001, which marks the end of the 90-day period, or on the day that Air Midwest implements its increased service to Kansas City, whichever is first.

Before Great Lakes 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 other service at Salina, 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 Great Lakes Aviation, Ltd., to suspend its scheduled air service at Salina, Kansas, as of October 9, 2001, or on the day that Air Midwest, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, implements its increased service to Kansas City, whichever is first;
2. We will rely on Air Midwest, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, to provide essential air service at Salina, Kansas; and

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<sup>2</sup> Salina's seat guarantee was based on 29 passengers in each direction and a 65-percent load-factor standard:  $29/.65 = 45$ . However, the Airport and Airway Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1987, P.L. 100-223, subsequently established a load-factor standard of 60 percent. Although the Department has not formally updated Salina's determination, for all practical purposes the community's seat guarantee is now  $29/.60 = 48$  seats.

<sup>3</sup> Mesa Air Group, Inc., Air Midwest's parent company, has informed Department staff that the increased schedule will be implemented on October 6.

3. We will serve copies of this order on the mayor and airport manager of Salina, Kansas; Great Lakes Aviation, Ltd., and Air Midwest, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express.

By:

**SUSAN McDERMOTT**  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation  
and International Affairs

(SEAL)

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# SALINA, KANSAS, AND THE SURROUNDING REGION

