

## **Chippewa Valley Regional Airport (EAU)**

### **Airline Transition Frequently Asked Questions**

**May 20, 2022**

*On March 10, 2022, SkyWest Airlines filed a US Department of Transportation (US DOT) required notice to end air service under the United Airlines code to 29 airports across the country, including EAU, due to an ongoing pilot imbalance across the aviation industry. There is no immediate loss of airline service to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport, this notice simply triggered the lengthy process to find an alternative airline to serve the region.*

*The following frequently asked questions have been drafted to assist our passengers during this transition period and will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.*

#### **What does this mean for my upcoming United Airlines branded flight?**

Airline customers should be aware there are no immediate changes to United Airlines branded flight schedules. SkyWest Airlines indicated their intent to continue to serve EAU until another carrier starts service. Reservations can continue to be made from EAU at [www.united.com](http://www.united.com).

#### **Should I schedule a future United Airlines flight?**

Customers can continue to make reservations at [www.united.com](http://www.united.com) from EAU. SkyWest Airlines has indicated they remain committed to serving our market with United Airlines branded service during the transitional period. Should this change, customers with a current reservation will have the option to rebook at another United location.

It is important our community works together to continue to utilize the current SkyWest Airlines dba United Express service so EAU remains attractive to any new carrier.

#### **What number should I call if I have specific questions on my United Airlines branded flight?**

All flight specific questions should be directed to United.

#### Reservations and Flight Information

1.800.United.1 or 1.800.864.8331

#### Baggage Information

1.800.221.6903

#### **What did the airport do to secure new airline service to the community?**

The US DOT issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for carriers interested in providing service to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport. During the RFP process, airport representatives presented information to many prospective airlines to ensure our region retained access to the National Air Transportation System. During these presentations a recurring response from the airlines was their inability to take on new air service due to a shortage of pilots and aviation workers.

## **What are the proposals that were received for providing airline service at EAU?**

We would like to thank all carriers for submitting the following proposals to provide airline service to the Chippewa Valley.

### Sun Country Airlines

Sun Country Airlines proposed year-round twice weekly service in a Boeing 737-800 (186 seats) to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), along with seasonal non-stop service to large leisure destinations (Fort Myers/Nov-Apr, Orlando/May-Aug, and Las Vegas/Oct-Nov). The MSP service will allow EAU passengers to make connections to the Sun Country network of destination airports and the seasonal service will operate during periods of peak demand.

### Boutique Air

Boutique Air proposed daily departures to MSP in a single engine, turboprop, Pilatus PC-12 (8 or 9 seats). Boutique Air has a ticketing and baggage agreement and code share agreement with United Airlines and a ticketing and baggage agreement with American Airlines.

### \*Southern Airways Express

Southern Airways Express proposed daily departures to both MSP and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) in a single engine, turboprop, Cessna Grand Caravan (9 seats). Southern has ticketing and baggage agreements with American Airlines, United Airlines and Alaska Airlines.

*\*Southern Airways withdrew their proposal for airline service to EAU in a letter dated May 19, 2022. The letter was submitted to the US Department of Transportation which then provided the letter to EAU Airport staff on May 20, 2022.*

## **What proposal will the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport support?**

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport Commission voted unanimously to support the Sun Country Airlines proposal to provide airline service to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport for the next 2 years. Sun Country Airlines provides an exciting opportunity to work with an Ultra Low Cost Carrier with a brand that is already known in our region.

It is important to note that despite their unanimous support for Sun Country's proposal, the Airport Commission is deeply disappointed in the discontinuation of twice daily, scheduled United Express service by SkyWest Airlines. The Airport team has worked hard to grow the United Airlines brand in the community over the last 12 years through our partnership with SkyWest Airlines. We are saddened the national pilot shortage will no longer allow SkyWest Airlines to continue to provide the airline service we currently enjoy in our community.

In considering the options available, the Airport Commission looked for the opportunity to serve the most passengers over the next two years. Sun Country's proposal for twice weekly flights to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport will provide connections to their network of destination airports and non-stop weekly flights to seasonal destinations will capture passengers during periods of peak demand. Sun Country's proposal provides the best opportunity to grow and expand passenger traffic utilizing the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport from those proposals received.

Accepting either of the single engine, turboprop proposals received by Boutique Air or Southern Airways Express would require waiving the community's right to multi-engine airline service. While we appreciate the proposals submitted by both airline's, the Airport Commission did not think it was in the best interest of the long-term viability of airline service to the Chippewa Valley to waive the right to multi-engine service.

**When will a new airline start service at EAU?**

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport will write a letter of support recommending the Sun Country Airlines proposal for EAU, but the US DOT will make the final determination of what carrier is selected. Once a new carrier has been officially selected to serve EAU, airport management will work closely with the new airline to determine a start date for the new service. We expect that service with a new airline will not start until November 2022 at the earliest. This FAQ will continue to be updated until a start date for the new carrier is announced.