

Chippewa Valley Regional Airport (EAU)

Essential Air Service- Frequently Asked Questions

Updated June 26, 2024

Airline service to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport has been provided through a contract with the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) Essential Air Service (EAS) program since March 2010. US DOT EAS contracts with an airline are usually 2-3 years in length and the current contract with Sun Country Airlines began December 1, 2022 and runs through November 30, 2024.

The following frequently asked questions have been drafted to keep the community informed and will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.

What are the next steps for determining an airline to serve EAU?

On May 16, 2024, US Department of Transportation (US DOT) issued an Order requesting proposals from airlines interested in providing service to EAU. Two carriers submitted proposals for airline service to EAU, Sun Country Airlines and SkyWest Airlines with United Airlines branded service. Before making a decision on a carrier to serve the community, the US DOT has requested a letter of community support from the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport Commission (Airport Commission).

The Airport Commission received a presentation summarizing the proposals from the Airport's air service consultant at their regular meeting on Wednesday, June 26. After discussion at the meeting, Commissioners requested the opportunity to further discuss the proposals with the airlines. Scheduling for a subsequent meeting is being worked on and the FAQ's will be updated once a date has been established. It is the intention of the Airport Commission to make a decision on their recommendation to the US DOT at the end of this next meeting. The interviews with the carriers will be conducted in closed session but the official action by the Airport Commission will occur in open session.

Individuals interested in providing feedback to the Airport Commission in advance of the upcoming meeting can do so by emailing admin@chippewavalleyairport.com.

What proposals were received by the US DOT in response to their RFP?

The incumbent carrier, Sun Country Airlines, provided a proposal to serve the community through September 30, 2028. The Sun Country Airlines proposal is similar to the service they are currently providing, with at least three flights per week to the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport (MSP) utilizing Boeing 737 aircraft along with non-stop service to rotating seasonal destinations in Fort Myers, FL, Orlando, FL and Las Vegas, NV. 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.

SkyWest Airlines, operating as United Express, provided a proposal for 12 non-stop roundtrip flights per week to O'Hare International Airport (ORD) utilizing CRJ-200 regional jet aircraft. The proposal indicated service to ORD will be well timed to connect to United Airlines network of operations. SkyWest Airlines proposal is to serve the community for a three-year period.

Why can't both airline proposals be selected for EAU?

The EAS program limits the US DOT from contracting with more than one airline at a time for each community. The EAS program also limits an airline to providing service to a maximum of two hub airports at any given time.

What does this mean for my upcoming Sun Country Airlines flight?

Sun Country Airlines flights are for sale through April 2025, as it is common practice for the incumbent carrier to extend their schedule for sale past their contract obligation. The current contract for Sun Country Airlines at EAU is through November 30, 2024, but Sun Country will continue to serve EAU until they are either reselected by the US DOT for a subsequent contract or another carrier starts service. Reservations can continue to be made from EAU at www.suncountry.com.

Should I schedule a future Sun Country Airlines flight?

Customers can continue to make reservations at www.suncountry.com from EAU. Sun Country Airlines will continue to serve our market until they are reselected by the US DOT or another carrier starts service. Should Sun Country Airlines discontinue service at EAU, customers with a current reservation will have the option to rebook at another Sun Country location.

Where does Sun Country Airlines currently fly from EAU?

Sun Country Airlines provides multiple weekly flights to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and at least two flights per week seasonally to Ft. Myers, FL, Orlando, FL and Las Vegas, NV. The rotation of the nonstop flights is based upon seasonal demand. Visit our flight information page at [Flight Information | Eau Claire County \(chippewavalleyairport.com\)](http://FlightInformation|EauClaireCounty(chippewavalleyairport.com)) for more information on schedule and seasonal flight changes.