

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

### **Essential Air Service - Frequently Asked Questions**

**Updated September 30, 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 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.*

*On September 11, 2024, the US DOT issued an order selecting SkyWest Airlines to serve the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport with service starting December 13, 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 does this mean for my upcoming Sun Country Airlines flight?**

Airline customers should be aware that Sun Country Airlines will fly their current published flight schedule at EAU until November 30, 2024. After a brief pause in service, Sun Country will resume non-US DOT subsidized service to Fort Myers, FL on January 31, 2025, through April 7, 2025. Reservations for Sun Country flights can be made at [www.suncountry.com](http://www.suncountry.com) or by calling 651-905-2737.

Passengers impacted by schedule changes or cancelled flights will receive emails from Sun Country with updated itineraries once they process the schedule changes. From that email, customers can self-service if they want to keep the updated reservation, make a flight change, or receive a refund without having to contact Sun Country or Airport Administration.

#### **Should I schedule a future Sun Country Airlines flight?**

In short, yes. Customers may continue to make reservations on the current published Sun Country flight schedule at [www.suncountry.com](http://www.suncountry.com) for regular service through November 30, 2024 and for seasonal nonstop flights between EAU and Fort Myers, FL for January 31, 2025 through April 7, 2025.

#### **When can I schedule a flight on United Airlines from EAU?**

United Express flights operated by SkyWest Airlines will start December 13, 2024. Tickets are available to purchase now at [www.united.com](http://www.united.com) or by calling 1-800-United-1.

#### **Where will United Airlines fly from EAU?**

United Express flights operated by SkyWest Airlines will arrive and depart Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), where passengers can connect to the extensive United Airlines network of flights. SkyWest Airlines flights will be provided on a 50 seat CRJ 200 aircraft.

#### **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 have provided since December 2022, 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 allows EAU passengers to make connections to the Sun Country network of destination airports and the seasonal service would 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.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport Commission carefully deliberated both proposals and ultimately supported the proposal by SkyWest Airlines as the best option to serve the most passengers with service to Chicago and connections beyond on United Airlines network of domestic and global flights.

### **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.

Outside of the EAS program, any airline may choose to serve an airport on a regular or seasonal basis with few exceptions. Given their commitment to our region, Sun Country Airlines has decided to maintain a seasonal presence to Fort Myers, Florida from January 31, 2025, through April 7, 2025. These flights will no longer be subsidized by the US DOT after November 30, 2025.

### **Will Sun Country continue to offer seasonal Fort Myers flights after April?**

The success of the Fort Myers, FL seasonal flights will determine whether Sun Country chooses to offer them again next season. It is important to note the public can assist us in making the flights as successful as possible by utilizing Sun Country Airlines. This means booking a ticket from EAU on Sun Country during January 31, 2025, through April 7, 2025, for your Florida travel needs.