



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Fourth Daily Flight Between Yakima and Seattle

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Release Date: Tuesday, April 21st, 2015

Alaska Airlines Adding Fourth Daily Flight Between Yakima and Seattle

An effort by the City of Yakima to boost the number of people flying into and out of the Yakima Airport in order to convince Alaska Airlines to add a fourth daily flight between Yakima and Seattle has paid off. A marketing campaign called FLYYKM, which the City launched last spring, helped the Yakima Airport exceed an annual load factor target for 2014 set by Alaska Airlines in order for it to consider enhancing air service between Yakima and Seattle.

The load factor is a measure of the percentage of seats that are filled on flights to and from an airport. Alaska Airlines, the parent company of the only commercial air service provider at the Yakima Airport, Horizon Air, told City representatives last year that if the annual load factor on Horizon flights in 2014 reached 75%, an additional daily flight might be added. The 2014 load factor was 76%, up from 71% the previous year.

As a result, Alaska Airlines has announced that in late August of this year, the Horizon Air schedule will include a new 4:10 pm flight from Yakima to Seattle and a new 3:00 pm flight from Seattle to Yakima.

Having a fourth daily flight between Yakima and Seattle provides travelers with more flexibility, said Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins. The additional flight will make flying in and out of the Yakima Airport a more attractive option. It will eliminate the long layovers in Seattle that passengers have experienced in recent years, said Hawkins. The City is grateful that Alaska Airlines has made the decision to add a fourth daily flight between Yakima and Seattle and is pleased the FLYYKM campaign played a part in it.

Although Horizon won't add a fourth daily flight to and from the Yakima Airport until August 23rd, people will be able to start booking seats for flights after that date within the next few days.

The last time Horizon offered four daily flights between Yakima and Seattle was about five years ago. In 2009, the Yakima Airport's annual load factor was about 59%, prompting Alaska to drop a flight from the Horizon Yakima-to-Seattle schedule in 2010 leaving just three flights a day to and from Yakima.

After the City unsuccessfully applied for a federal Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP) grant in 2013, it decided to invest \$75,000 in local money in the FLYYKM marketing campaign. The campaign was launched in March 2014 and utilized multiple media platforms to point out the relative cost of flying in and out of the Yakima Airport versus driving to either SeaTac or the Tri-Cities Airport in Pasco.

The City applied again for a SCASDP grant in late 2014 and learned earlier this year that it had been awarded \$290,000 in federal funds. The City will match that amount, meaning almost \$600,000 will be invested in the FLYYKM campaign.

As of August 23rd, Horizon will fly out of Yakima at 5:40 am, 11:30 am, 4:10 pm, and 6:20 pm. Flights to Yakima from Seattle will be at 10:15 am, 3:00 pm, 5:10 pm, and 11:20 pm.