



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

**Subject: Yakima Airport Selected as Test Site**

**Contact: Yakima Airport Director Rob Peterson – 575-6149**

**Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142**

**Release Date: Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**

## **Yakima Airport Selected as Electric Aircraft Test Site**

Yakima Air Terminal-McAllister Field (YKM) is one of six airports selected to be an electric aircraft beta test site.

The selection was announced last month in a feasibility study published by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division. The state legislature tasked the WSDOT Aviation Division with forming the Electric Aircraft Working Group in 2018 to explore electric aircraft service across the state.

“Yakima’s selection as one of the first electric aircraft test locations is a pivotal moment in aviation history,” said YKM Director Rob Peterson. “Our low energy rates and the amount of sunshine we receive are vital, as these aircraft will require a battery-powered system. Our location can take advantage of solar power to charge them.”

The potential implementation and growth of commercial electric aircraft could be a boon for Yakima’s economy, Peterson said.

“If airline and cargo operations can lower operating costs with electric aviation it could open YKM to service markets in various areas of the Pacific Northwest,” Peterson said. “Ultimately, if airlines or carrier operators do begin electric aircraft passenger service we’ll be five steps ahead.”

Additionally, the potential for expanded air service could have a positive impact on employment. More workers would be needed in the aerospace sector, as well as an increase in jobs needed to support electric aircraft, Peterson said. Furthermore, increased passenger and cargo traffic could affect the flow of goods and people within Washington state. “One example is a potential shift from ground transportation to electric aircraft for transporting good and services,” Peterson said. “That would benefit travelers while reducing emissions and congestion on state highways”

The other airports selected are Spokane Felts Field, Chehalis-Centralia Airport, Boeing Field/King County International, Grant County International Airport and Olympia Regional Airport. Sites were selected based on factors such as geographic dispersion, local demand analysis, economic vitality, connectivity and presence of fuel and/or fixed base operator.

“While the ultimate deployment of electric aircraft will be driven by market and industry readiness, airports selected as beta test sites are expected to start incorporating electric aircraft into their planning processes,” said T.S. “Max” Platts, an aviation planner for WSDOT Aviation Division. “Beta test sites will also play an active role in building a market for such operations.”

Funding for the beta test site studies is anticipated to come from a variety of sources including sponsor investment, public/private partnerships, and state grants and loans.

Information about flights and services at YKM is available at <https://flyykm.com/>