



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Yakima Airport Grant

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Federal Grant Could Mean More Commercial Flights to and from Yakima Airport

The City of Yakima's successful efforts to boost the number of people flying in and out of the Yakima Airport have gotten a helping hand from the U.S. Department of Transportation in the form of a \$290,000 Small Communities Air Service Development Program (SCASDP) grant.

The City plans to utilize the SCASDP grant to both enhance a marketing campaign called **FLY YKM** it launched earlier this year and to provide so-called **revenue guarantees** to Alaska Airlines to offer a fourth daily flight to and from Seattle and to explore adding a flight between Yakima and Portland.

Senator Patty Murray, Senator Maria Cantwell, and 4th District U.S. Representative Doc Hastings helped the City secure the grant. 14th District State Senator Curtis King and 14th District State Representative Norm Johnson also lent their support to the City's application.

We are excited about the possibilities to increase the number of flights in and out of Yakima now that we have been awarded this grant, **said** City of Yakima Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins. **More** people are using our airport, but the fact that there are currently only three flights daily between Yakima and Seattle has still been a hurdle for us. With this grant, hopefully **we** overcome it, **said** Hawkins.

The City will match the SCASDP grant by investing another \$290,000 to ramp up the **FLY YKM** marketing campaign and to ensure Alaska Airlines will generate revenue on any flights it may add in and out of the Yakima Airport.

This investment is a shot in the arm for economic development in the Yakima Valley, **said** Senator Cantwell, Chairwoman of the Senate Aviation Subcommittee, who wrote a letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation in support of the grant. **This** grant will support Yakima Air Terminal's growth, with more flights to Seattle and Portland. Yakima is a key agriculture and manufacturing hub for our economy, **said** Senator Cantwell. **Growing** air service in Yakima will help the area grow more jobs.

After missing out on a SCASDP grant last year, the City, which owns the airport, decided to take matters into its own hands. The City invested about \$70,000 during the spring and summer of this year on the **FLY YKM** campaign trying to encourage more people to hop on board Alaska Airlines flights between Seattle and Yakima. March through September historically see the lowest numbers of the year for Yakima Airport passenger boardings.

By all accounts, the marketing campaign has been a success. When compared to 2013, Alaska Airlines boardings at the Yakima Airport have increased every month since the **FLY YKM** campaign began. Boardings increased in March from 70% capacity in 2013 to 79% this year, in April from 65% capacity to 67% this year, in May from 65% capacity in 2013 to 67% this year, in June from 72% capacity in 2013 to 77% this year, in July from 65% in 2013 to 70% this year, and in August from 64% in 2013 to 72% this year.