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Aim Higher Fort Dodge-- Great Lakes Equals Great Service



Dave Tappe
• Tue, Jun 04, 2013

It is safe to say I am a frequent flyer. While many people have surely flown more miles than me, as a 26 year professional helicopter pilot, I have been traveling almost continuously for the last 10 years. I've been in and out of every major hub in the United States and several outside the

country. I have no love for long security lines, rude passengers, and grumpy flight attendants. I know every trick of the trade, from booking to baggage claim. So it was with a jaded eye that I began to use Great Lakes Airlines as my connection to Minneapolis. That attitude didn't last for long; I was in for a refreshing surprise.

Great Lakes Airlines, located at the Fort Dodge Regional Airport, is the only commuter airline serving the area. While doing a little research, I was surprised to find Great Lakes has 4 regional hubs located at Minneapolis St. Paul, Denver, Phoenix and Los Angeles. Between these hubs, Great Lakes is able to provide service to outlying areas from as far west as Merced, California to eastern locales like Ironwood, Michigan. After quick check of Google maps, I find that without Great Lakes providing service to Fort Dodge, you'd have to drive to Des Moines, Mason City, or Waterloo in order to find the next closest commercial transportation. The Fort Dodge area is quite fortunate have this airline serving our needs.

Great Lakes flies the reliable Beechcraft 1900 airplane, a 19 seat, twin turbo-prop capable of cruising at 325 mph. Great Lakes provides convenient, affordable flights, 7 days a week to and from Minneapolis St. Paul, with 3 scheduled daily flights, Monday through Friday, and 2 scheduled flights on Saturday and Sunday. The Fort Dodge Regional Airport provides free parking and rental cars may be obtained from the Hertz office, located in the passenger terminal.

Great service starts at the top. Deanne Tarbox manages the Great Lakes team serving the Fort Dodge airport, with a staff of 5 crewmembers. A Fort Dodge native, Deanne has served with Great Lakes for 6 years. Previously, she worked for Delta Airlines. With a crew of 8 aircraft mechanics, the FOD location can perform scheduled and unscheduled maintenance at their hangar, which is located on the field. Deanne tells me they fly 400 to 450 passengers a month. When I asked her what she loved about her job, she responded, "Everything!" She says she works with great people and enjoys the travel opportunities provided by her position.

Several months ago, Deanne fell down a flight of stairs, fracturing her skull and ending up comatose with substantial injuries. After recovering she was able to return to her station manager position. Shanna Brennan assumed Deanne's duties while she was injured. Deanne says Shanna did an outstanding job in the interim. As a frequent flyer myself, I can attest to her appraisal of Shanna Brennan. Last month I arrived at the airport and was informed by Shanna that the inbound aircraft was delayed by weather, and there would be at least an hour delay. I asked her if I could step out for 30-45 minutes for lunch, and she thought that would be fine. 30 minutes later, Shanna is calling my cell phone advising me the plane was inbound, and to make my way back to the airport. In 26 years of flying, I have never had a gate agent give me a

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courtesy call. I continue to be impressed with the excellent customer service, courtesy and professionalism of the staff.

Deanne would like to advise those traveling out of Fort Dodge to make use of the Fort Dodge Regional Airport website and check out the downloadable document called: "How best to fly in and out of Fort Dodge." Phone numbers, flight schedules, and other helpful information are present on the site. Feel free to call the staff at Great Lakes with any questions you may have. She also asks for your understanding and patience when encountering delays. In most cases, the delays occur because they want to present the safest aircraft, and the safest flights possible. She also asks people to remember that even though Fort Dodge is a small terminal, all TSA screening rules apply, just as they do in a large airport. Make sure you get there an hour early and understand what you can, and cannot carry on board.

So, whether you're flying to Minnesota to catch Walleyes, or connecting to an amazing destination vacation, support your local hometown airline and fly Great Lakes Airlines. The eager staff is here to provide you the safest, most convenient flight possible.

Helpful websites

Great Lakes Airlines: flygreatlakes.com

Fort Dodge Regional Airport: fortdodgeiowa.org/department/?fDD=5-0

"Why and How" document on how best to fly in and out of Fort Dodge : http://www.fortdodgeiowa.org/egov/docs/1350923762_459259.pdf



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Weather in Fort Dodge - United States

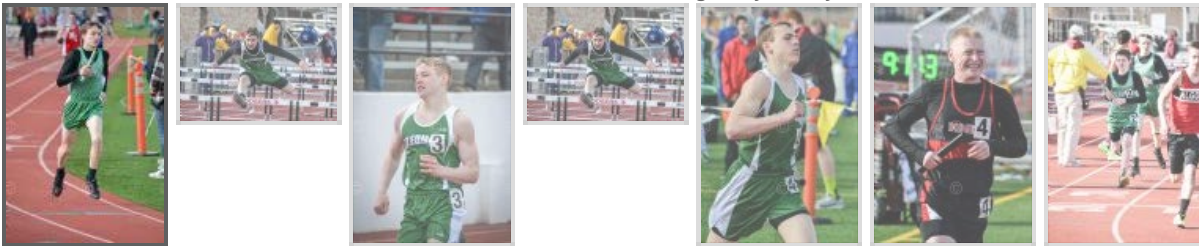


70°F

Cloudy

Humidity is 78%
Wind is NNE 0 mph
Visibility is 10 mi
Pressure is 29.89 inHg

2013 Dodger Boy's Relays



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