



Expansion of Iowa Airports Discussed in Des Moines

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DES MOINES, Iowa – State officials are looking at ways to improve, expand, and retain the airports across the state of Iowa, sharing ideas and frustrations in a meeting at the Des Moines International Airport Wednesday.

The Commercial Air Service Expansion and Retention Committee was formed as a result of a bill passed by the state legislature in 2014; the committee includes members from the state Department of Transportation, two members of the state senate (one appointed by the majority leader, and one appointed by the minority

leader of the chamber), two members of the state house (one of each appointed by the speaker and the minority leader of the chamber), as well as the managers of each commercial airport in Iowa. Their task is to come up with a plan, on or before December 31, 2014, for the retention and expansion of passenger air service in Iowa.

“We have Cedar Rapids and Des Moines which have multiple carriers, and we’re seeing improved enplanements and good passenger activity,” said Michelle McEnany, director of the Office of Aviation at the Iowa DOT. “But the other five, seem to be struggling a little bit. So the state is stepping in saying, let’s look at this and see if there’s something we can do to help these airports out, because it is important to those local communities.”

In Wednesday’s meeting, officials discussed ways to increase funding to the state’s airports and where those revenue sources would come from, as well as how to best attract big-name carriers to make Iowa’s airports more competitive. One proposal the committee came up with on Wednesday was an increase in what the state gives to Iowa’s airports by about \$3.5 million, annually.

One factor McEnany added as to why Iowans should care about keeping the state’s eight commercial airports open is economic development; a DOT survey found the third-most important factor for businesses, when considering where to locate, is proximity to an airport.

“Commercial air service provides Iowans with the ability to get where they need to go quickly and efficiently – businesses absolutely depend on good commercial air service,” she said.

Where do you fly out of?

- Des Moines/other Iowa airports**
- Omaha/Kansas City/other out-of-state airports**

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