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Great Lakes Airlines stops flights to Mason City, Fort Dodge

January 28, 2014 By [Radio Iowa Contributor](#)

As of Friday, Great Lakes Airlines will be suspending service to Mason City, Fort Dodge and four other airports around the Midwest. Great Lakes CEO Charles Howell states in a news release that due to the unintended consequences of the new congressionally mandated pilot regulatory requirements, his company feels it's in the best interest of their customers, communities and employees to suspend service until they are able to rebuild their staff of pilots to provide reliable service.

Great Lakes and many small airlines have been suffering with the new federal regulations that require pilots on small airlines to have 1,500 hours of experience, up from 500 hours previously. The requirement is the same now for pilots on larger airlines, resulting in pilots with that level of experience going to those bigger companies due to higher salaries.

The airline, which had over 300 pilots a year ago, now has 98, leaving it unable to staff all its routes. Also losing service will be: Jamestown and Devils Lake, North Dakota; Ironwood, Michigan; and Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

(Reporting by Bob Fisher, KRIB, Mason City)

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