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Tuesday, May 29, 2012

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George Ford

George Ford has spent decades covering business news across Eastern Iowa. Ford is a native of Lexington, Ky., but has [...]

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Taxi in the sky

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CEDAR RAPIDS — Time is money, and anything that enables Corridor business executives to be more productive is welcome.



Patrick Gordon conducts a preflight check of the company's Cessna Citation Mustang for a flight to Chicago from the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. (Nikole Hanna/The Gazette)

With that in mind, James Kaas earlier this year launched **Jet There LLC**, a light jet air taxi service based in the former Cedar Rapids Police Department helicopter hangar and office at the **Eastern Iowa Airport** in Cedar Rapids.

"We work on projects that frequently have multiple people involved," said Kaas, president of Iowa Fluid Power Group in Cedar Rapids. "If we had to take a day to fly out, a day to do business and a day to fly back, we might just send one guy or do it by phone.

"If you can fly out there today, stop somewhere going out or on the way back to transact additional business and have the extra seats available, you might take some younger project engineers. It's hard to put a price tag on the knowledge they gain from having that firsthand experience."

Kaas, a licensed pilot with airline transport certification and private pilot privileges, has 14 years experience operating a corporate flight department at Iowa Fluid Power. During that time, he managed three aircraft owned concurrently, five full-time employees who are pilots and numerous contract pilots.

Kaas said repeated requests by fellow Corridor executives for the use

Multimedia



Photo: 7531839-LAS-Jet-There-05_18_2012-15.56.jpg



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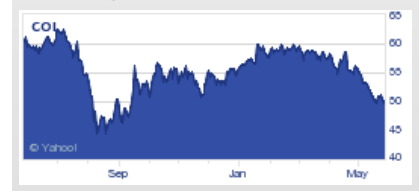


Photo: 7531839-LAS-

Eastern Iowa Stocks

NAME	Quote	Web	LAST
COL - NYQ			\$50
Rockwell Collins, Inc. Common S			

1 YEAR CHART



AEG - NYQ			\$
AEGON N.V. Common Stock			
AFL - NYQ			\$30
AFLAC Incorporated Common Stock			
AGCO - NYQ			\$40
AGCO Corporation Common Stock			
ADM - NYQ			\$30
Archer-Daniels-Midland Company			
LNT - NYQ			\$40
Alliant Energy Corporation Comm			
GIS - NYQ			\$30
General Mills, Inc. Common Stoc			
HNZ - NYQ			\$50
H.J. Heinz Company Common Stock			
PENX - NGM			\$0
Penford Corporation			
PEP - NYQ			\$60
Pepsico, Inc. Common Stock			
PG - NYQ			\$60
Procter & Gamble Company (The)			
UFCS - NMS			\$20
United Fire Group, Inc			

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of his 2008 Cessna Citation Mustang prompted him to form Jet There, a Federal Aviation Administration-certified air carrier.

“There are a lot of people who fly private jets out of Cedar Rapids, but most are corporations who own their aircraft or the big guys,” Kaas said. “Anyone else has to bring in a charter aircraft, fly commercial or fly turboprop.”

“There’s nothing wrong with a turboprop, but we offer a jet alternative at competitive rates per mile with turboprop aircraft.”

While there are national jet charter services that will provide a plane at your destination for the return flight, they schedule jets for specific times with little margin for meetings that last longer than expected.

Kaas said Jet There will wait for the customer to arrive, allowing them set the departure time regardless of when their business is concluded.

Kaas said Jet There’s target customer is a company located east of the Rocky Mountains with one to four people who need to fly somewhere for a daylong meeting.

Jet There, in documents provided to the Cedar Rapids Airport Commission, projects first-year sales of \$153,6000, second-year sales of \$268,800 and sales of \$480,000 for each of years three through five.

Patrick Gordon, chief pilot and director of aviation for Jet There, said ultimately Jet There wants to establish long-term relationships with Corridor businesses and corporate executives.

“We also would like to be a second or third aircraft for corporations that have their own jets,” he said. “We want to fill a niche in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Waterloo Corridor for those customers who fly occasionally, but not enough to justify buying their own aircraft.”

Gordon previously served as a pilot for Virgin America and Frontier Airlines flying Airbus aircraft, and Pinnacle Airlines (Northwest AirlinK and Express 1 Airlines) flying Canadair Regional Jets.

The Cessna Citation Mustang is somewhat unusual for a jet in that it can be flown by a pilot without the requirement of a second officer or co-pilot. Kaas said that reduces the cost of flying the aircraft without sacrificing any safety.

“We will offer another pilot if — for whatever reason — a customer would feel more comfortable with another pilot,” he said. “The economics get better on a longer flight, so it’s more cost effective for someone to fly to somewhere like Sarasota, Fla., or Pittsburgh, Pa.

“You can fly commercial, but usually that means you will not get as much accomplished. If several people are going, you can hold a meeting while you’re in the air, work at your destination and hold another meeting during the return trip.”

The cost per hour is about \$2,000, and sometimes significantly below that, Kaas said.

he added that passengers are not required to go through the airport’s security checkpoint. In many cases, passengers can have someone with a car meet them as they step off the plane, then return them to the

aircraft when they're ready to return home.



Patrick Gordon conducts a preflight check of the company's Cessna Citation Mustang for a flight to Chicago, from the Eastern Iowa Airport, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Friday, May 18, 2012. Jet There LLC, is a new Cedar Rapids-based light jet charter service, offering anytime, anywhere flights typically for business passengers. (Nikole Hanna/The Gazette-KCRG)

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@Blue Moose Tap
House



The Robert Cray
Band
May 31, 8:00PM
@The Englert Theatre



Kelly Steward &
The Restless Kind
June 01, 9:00PM
@The Mill



Iowa Arts Festival
- Greg Brown
June 01, 9:00PM
@Iowa City
Downtown

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