



ANDOVER, ARKANSAS CITY, AUGUSTA, BEL AIRE, BENTLEY, BENTON, BUTLER COUNTY, CHENEY, CLEARWATER, COLWICH, CONWAY SPRINGS, DERBY, EL DORADO, GARDEN PLAIN, GODDARD, HALSTEAD, HARVEY COUNTY, HAYSVILLE, HESSTON, HUTCHINSON, KECHI, KINGMAN COUNTY, MAIZE, MCPHERSON COUNTY, MOUNT HOPE, MULVANE, NEWTON, PARK CITY, RENO COUNTY, ROSE HILL, SEDGWICK, SEDGWICK COUNTY, SUMNER COUNTY, VALLEY CENTER, WELLINGTON, WICHITA

PRESS ADVISORY

DATE: July 12, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Joe Yager, REAP Chief Executive Officer, joe.yager@wichita.edu, 316-978-6542, www.reap-ks.org.

REAP Awards Funding under Kansas Affordable Airfares Program

At its regular monthly meeting of July 12, the Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) took action to assure and enhance affordable airfares in Kansas.

REAP recommended the award of a \$5 million state grant to Sedgwick County to address all statutory criteria for the allocation of funding including the priorities of maintaining affordable airfares to eastern and western U.S. destinations for residents throughout Kansas. The action renews a contract with AirTran for the 12 months beginning July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. In addition, the grant provides for continuation of a contract with Frontier through June 30, 2011. The grant requires a local match of 25 percent or \$1,675,000, which will be pledged by Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita.

"REAP recognizes the importance of the Kansas Affordable Airfares Program and has dedicated staff time and resources into maintaining the transparency and integrity of the program," stated REAP Chair, Mayor Kristey Williams of Augusta. "Our action today specifically addresses statutory objectives to ensure that air travel is more available, more competitive, and more affordable to all Kansans."

This grant will continue and enhance a program that saved Kansans more than \$29.5 million dollars in reduced fares in 2009. According to studies conducted by Mid-Continent airport, Kansans from three of every four Kansas counties regularly utilizes the airport and this program will continue to lessen the need for Kansans to leave the State when traveling by air. This program helps residents from many communities throughout Kansas, including some of the biggest users of the Mid-Continent airport: Colby, Hays, Salina, Junction City, Emporia, McPherson, Hutchinson, Great Bend, Garden City, Dodge City, Newton, El Dorado, Independence, Parsons, Winfield, and Wichita.

In addition, a fiscal impact study conducted by the Center for Economic Development and Business Research at WSU concluded that AirTran's presence has a pronounced impact on the local economy and on state and local tax receipts. The study shows AirTran's presence in the Wichita MSA has increased employment by 9,720 jobs and the average annual payroll by \$283.4 million. As a result Kansas state government has

7/12/10

REAP Press Advisory

Page 2

received \$5.25 of benefits for each \$1.00 of funding that has been provided to the Affordable Airfares Program.

"This program has been effective and has proven that commercial air service in South Central Kansas is an economic development tool that benefits all Kansans," stated Williams. "This program has been a great investment for the companies and citizens in our State with millions of dollars saved each year which goes back into our economy and our citizens' pockets to spend elsewhere, while also funding the state general fund."

REAP is a council of local governments comprised of thirty-six cities and counties in South Central Kansas. These local governments have voluntarily joined together to guide state and national actions that affect economic development in the region and to adopt joint actions among member governments that enhance the regional economy.

Under the authority of House Substitute for Senate Bill 475 and the omnibus appropriation bill, Senate Bill 2968, both enacted in the 2006 session of the Kansas Legislature, REAP was assigned authority for administering the Kansas Affordable Airfares Program. In the 2010 legislative sessions, Governor Parkinson recommended and the Kansas Legislature appropriated \$5 million for continued funding of KAAP as has been recommended each year since 2006.

To learn more about REAP, go to www.reap-ks.org or contact Joe Yager at 316-978-6542 (joe.yager@wichita.edu).

#