



REGIONAL ECONOMIC AREA PARTNERSHIP (REAP)  
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**PRESS ADVISORY**  
07/10/07

**REAP Awards Funding under  
Kansas Affordable Airfares Program**

At its regular monthly meeting of July 9, 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 maintain low-fare air services to Eastern U.S. destinations through a contract with AirTran and initiating a new competitive low-fare service through Frontier to Western U.S. destinations, beginning in October of 2007. The grant requires a local match of 25 percent or \$1,670,000, which will be pledged by Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita.

"Affordable airfares are essential to state and regional economic development and represent a concern to all Kansans," stated REAP chairman, Commissioner Tom Winters of Sedgwick County. "Through the process and statutory guidelines enacted by the Kansas legislature, REAP was able to select a program 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 saves Kansans on average \$27.6 million dollars a year for eastern service and is projected to save \$16.1 million per year on western service, for a savings of nearly \$44 million per year

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to the residents of Kansas. According to studies conducted by Mid-Continent airport, 3/4 of the State utilizes the airport and the enhancement of this program will continue to lessen the need for Kansans to leave the State when traveling. This program helps 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.

REAP is a council of local governments comprised of thirty-two 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 2007 legislative session, Governor Sebelius recommended and the Kansas Legislature appropriated \$5 million for continued funding of KAAP, through House Bill 2368.

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