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DOT Seeks Applications for Grants To Improve Air Service to Small Communities

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today invited communities to apply for grants under a program designed to support small towns and cities working to improve their airline service.

The Small Community Air Service Development Program uses federal funds to support communities working to attract or improve air service. Congress appropriated approximately \$10 million for up to a total of 40 grants this year to help communities address their local air service problems, such as high fares and insufficient levels of service. This is the fifth year DOT will award grants under the program.

“The Small Community Air Service Development Program supports communities in finding new and innovative ways to improve their commercial air service,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta. “We are seeking to partner with communities who are willing to do the work necessary to connect their economy to the national transportation system.”

The Secretary noted that many of the grant recipients from previous years have already gained new or upgraded air service because of the grants. Additionally, passenger traffic increased at most local airports where a grant went into effect over the past four years, the Secretary said.

DOT will give priority to proposals from communities that have high airfares compared to other communities, contribute financially to the project from sources other than airport revenues, have established or will establish a public/private partnership to improve their air service, submitted proposals that will benefit a broad segment of the public with limited access to the national transportation system, and will use the assistance in a timely fashion.

The program was established in 2000 by the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century, and was reauthorized by the Vision 100 – Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act, signed by President Bush on Dec. 16, 2003.

Applications for grants are due April 7. The department’s request for proposals is available on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>, docket number OST-2006-23671. Community proposals also will be filed in this docket.

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