

# FlySalem seeking non-stop carriers to LA, Vegas, SF

**BY CHARLES GLENN**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The FlySalem steering committee had an update for the Keizer city council at the April 4 meeting. Committee chair Brent DeHart spoke about the impact the pandemic and supply chain shortages have been having on the airline industry, how McNary Field has coped with those challenges, and their plans for the future.

Despite the logistical challenges presented by COVID, the airline industry is not uniformly suffering a drawdown, he said.

“The big airlines are shrinking, but the smaller ones are expanding,” he said. “The low-cost carriers are looking to expand ... these include carriers like Frontier, Allegiant, Jet Blue, Ovello, Breeze. There are four of these carriers with very strong interest in Willamette Valley service.”

Future destinations for these carriers will depend on the arrangement they reach with the airport, but he said the service-to location would depend entirely on the carrier.

“If it’s one carrier, it’s going to be the LA basin,” he said. “If it’s another, it will be Las Vegas. We won’t know until they commit, and hopefully at least two of them will – we’re getting optimistic, now.”

In addition to these two potential non-stop destinations, Sky Harbor in Phoenix and the San Francisco Bay Area are also highly sought-after among commuters in the Willamette Valley.

“It’s possible that within two years, we’ll have non-stop destinations to all four of those sunny locations,” DeHart said.

He also noted that the Salem Airport has been able to operate for the past



Courtesy Photo - Salem Reporter

four-and-a-half years using no additional municipal money other than the annual funds from the City of Salem already dedicated to the airport.

“That is a dedicated fund, it’s important to note – the airport funding doesn’t come out of the general fund,” he said.

DeHart noted that the airport has applied for some federal grant money to help with recruiting new carriers to McNary Field, and he said it was the only

grant request that had backing from the airline carriers, themselves. They unsuccessfully applied for the grant twice before.

“We’re thinking the third time’s the charm,” he said. “We’re hoping for \$850,000 in federal grant money to recruit commercial air service.”

DeHart added that, contrary to popular opinion, the now-terminated 17-month relationship Salem Municipal

Airport had with Delta Airlines was a success. He said the carrier’s reason for leaving was entirely due to problems with the specific aircraft designated for routes in and out of McNary Field: the Boeing 737D.

“It wasn’t just Delta – every airline had to ground those planes,” DeHart said.

# April 12 talent summit to focus on Future Ready Oregon package

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and the Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) are co-hosting the 2022 Oregon Talent Summit on April 12. This year’s summit will focus on Governor Kate Brown’s Future Ready Oregon, a comprehensive \$200 million investment package recently passed by the Oregon Legislature that supports the education and training Oregonians need for family-wage careers, prioritizing underserved communities and equitable prosperity.

Registration is still open for this

in-person event, which will be held from 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. in Portland at the Oregon Convention Center.

The HECC and the WTDB will play an absolutely critical role in the implementation of Future Ready Oregon, and in building an equitable economic recovery for Oregon’s workforce, said Governor Brown.

Future Ready Oregon advances opportunities for training that leads to family-wage careers for historically underserved communities, including adult learners, dislocated workers and

youth. These investments bolster recruitment, retention and career advancement opportunities for key populations, including people of color, women, people with low incomes, rural communities, veterans, people who are incarcerated or were formerly incarcerated, persons with disabilities, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes, older adults and people who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. It will fund innovative equity-focused solutions serving workers in high-demand health care, manufacturing, and technology industry

sectors. It will also bolster successful existing programs to foster a diverse, skilled workforce.

The summit has a track record of bringing together hundreds of participants from the workforce system, education system and employers for strategic focus on emerging workforce needs, best practices and solutions, with successful events in 2018 and 2020. Participation generally includes representatives from business and industry, workforce and talent development, postsecondary and K-12 education, among others.



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