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Joplin EAS airline service to go out for rebid this year

There's a chance airport hub could change

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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A possible scheduling change in Joplin's flights and the potential that a change in hub airports could come in the future were discussed Tuesday by the Joplin Airport Board. Currently, Joplin flights,

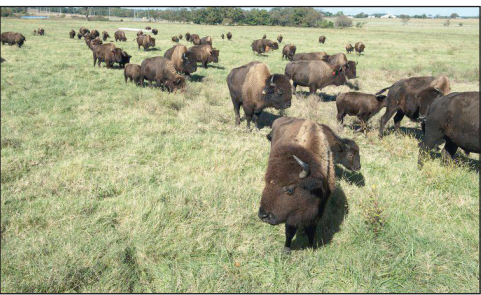
through the federally subsidized Essential Air Service program, are provided to passengers by SkyWest, which is a part of United Airlines. The flights go to and from Chicago and Denver. However, a scheduling change is expected to occur in January, and one of the airport board's functions is to make a recommendation to city officials on a potential change. The EAS program subsidizes commercial airlines

to maintain scheduled flights to small and rural communities that would otherwise be unprofitable. The U.S. Department of Transportation provides the subsidies through contracts to air carriers. There is a Friday deadline for Joplin officials to convey whether they wish to change hub service from Chicago to Houston, according to the airport board's discussion. Jeremy Haggerman, the city's assistant director of

public works, said that the Federal Aviation Administration, which operates the EAS program, has an order in place now to limit how many flights can be provided in and out of the Chicago airport as a result of construction that is occurring there and the large number of flights that go in and out of that airport. For safety reasons, the airport has to limit how many flights can take place during the construc-

tion. That has resulted in the Chicago airport prioritizing flights and the EAS program is lower priority, though SkyWest is one of the top EAS providers in the nation, according to city officials. While there is a Friday deadline from SkyWest to meet a scheduling change in January for Joplin flights in Chicago, if Joplin officials decide they want to switch to Houston, that could happen in February, according to the airport

board discussion. Joplin's airport provides 12 round-trip flights to Chicago and one flight a day five days a week to and from Denver, Haggerman said. He added that passenger counts, called the load factor, is 65% to 75% full on a 50-seat plane. With 33 to 35 seats filled, that load factor for EAS flights is good, Haggerman said. City Manager Nick SEE EAS, 2A



A partnership between Native American tribes and the National Park Service is bringing bison to many tribes. Bison from Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona came to Northeast Oklahoma in 2019. GLOBE FILE

Deaths of Quapaw Nation bison being investigated

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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QUAPAW, Okla. — Several bison in a herd belonging to the Quapaw Nation have died and the cause remains under investigation, according to tribal officials. "We are deeply saddened by this tragic loss. The health, safety, and responsible stewardship of the Quapaw Nation's bison herd are matters the nation takes very seriously," Barry Linduff, director of communications for the nation, said in a statement. "The circumstances surrounding the bison deaths are currently under investigation, and the nation is working to gather and verify all relevant information. "Because this is an active and ongoing investigation, the Quapaw Nation will not speculate regarding the circumstances or potential cause of the loss at this time," Linduff said in the statement. "We appreciate the public's understanding and patience as this matter is thoroughly investigated," the statement read. There has been a tribal bison project involving bison at Downstream Casino Resort, operated by the Quapaw Nation. The tribe first began raising bison in 2010, roaming on land near the Downstream Casino Resort. A herd of 31 bison from Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona were given a home with the Quapaw Nation of Oklahoma in 2019. Hundreds of the massive animals live in the park, so many that park officials say they're spoiling water sources and harming the landscape. Two years earlier, the park introduced a pilot program for corralling and relocating bison from the canyon's North Rim. The InterTribal Buffalo Council, created in 1992, works in partnership with the National Park Service to help distribute the animals among Native American tribes that request live bison to help build up their own herds. All of the Quapaw bison originated with national parks, including Theodore Roosevelt and the Badlands national parks. At one point, the herd also included a white bison, considered sacred by many Native American tribes. The Quapaw Nation is a federally recognized tribe of approximately 6,060 citizens based in Quapaw.

Weighing ballot case



The Missouri Supreme Court takes the bench on Sept. 10, 2024, in Jefferson City. Shown are (from left) Judges Kelly C. Broniec, Robin Ransom, W. Brent Powell, Chief Justice Mary R. Russell, Zel M. Fischer, Paul C. Wilson and Ginger K. Gooch. POOL PHOTO | ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Missouri redistricting referendum fight puts Supreme Court precedent to test

BY RUDI KELLER
Missouri Independent

When the Missouri Supreme Court considers Wednesday whether voters can force a referendum on congressional redistricting, the judges will confront a constitutional question the court has never squarely answered. But decades of Missouri Supreme Court decisions offer clues about how the judges may approach it. A recent analysis of 37 state Supreme Court cases since the start of 2000 found the court looked to precedent as the major or controlling factor in 15, the meaning of the text of the constitution in 10 and a mixture of methods in another 12. If the court maintains that record, it would be reasonable for it to find that the referendum power applies to congressional redistricting, said Michael Smith, associate professor of law at the University of Oklahoma and author of "Missouri's Law of Constitutional Interpretation."



Lou Capozzi (right), solicitor general of Missouri, and Michael Patton of the attorney general's office leave the Cole County Courthouse on Aug. 19 after the trial over whether Missourians will have a referendum on redistricting on the November ballot. MISSOURI INDEPENDENT | RUDI KELLER

"If the Supreme Court reads the referendum provision in context, they will see that there are these other provisions emphasizing the inherent power of the people," Smith said. "That provides strong textual support to a liberal and broad referendum power by the people." Smith analyzed 105 cases from the earliest years of the Missouri Supreme Court to the present in his paper, published last year by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Law

Review. Cole County Circuit Judge Daniel Green's ruling that kept the referendum off the Nov. 3 ballot used a method of constitutional interpretation called structuralism that has not played a dominant role in recent decisions, Smith said. "There's an absence of common law reasoning" in Green's decision, Smith said in an interview Monday with the Independent. "That absence is a little bit glaring, given the Missouri Supreme Court's pretty

consistent treatment of cases that implicate direct democratic power. This case really comes down to the scope of the referendum provision, which implicates how much power the people directly have over the Legislature." On Wednesday, Chuck Hatfield, attorney for a political action committee called People Not Politicians, will argue that the text of the referendum provision, which says "any

SEE CASE, 2A