THE JOPLIN GLOBE

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SkyWest flight service continues for Joplin

New contract obtained from EAS program

DEBBY WOODIN
DWOODIN@JOPLINGLOBE.COM

Flight services for Joplin-area passengers will continue with SkyWest Airlines as the result of federal efforts to provide a new contract through the Essential Air Service program.

Joplin's assistant public works director, Jeremy Hagerman, said at a Joplin City Council meeting on Monday that 12 flights per week will continue on SkyWest.

The airport hubs for those flights have been Denver and Chicago, although there will be a change in upcoming weeks to Denver and Houston.

Joplin officials and SkyWest submitted requests in September to change from the Chicago hub to Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport with consent from the council.

The recommendation followed a Joplin City Council presentation Sept. 22 and an Airport Board meeting earlier that month.

The EAS program subsidizes commercial airlines to maintain scheduled flights to smaller and rural communities that would otherwise be unprofitable. The U.S. Department of Transportation provides the subsidies through contracts to air carriers.

Joplin has had EAS service since 2006.

Hagerman told the council that in late August the Federal Aviation Administration informed airport and city officials and the city's air service consultant that the agency was going to reduce the number of flights out of Chicago for safety reasons because of construction at that airport.

"As part of that, they are redoing their flight schedules at Chicago," Hagerman said at the time.

The Joplin Airport Board made a recommendation earlier that the city change to Houston because flight times would be more convenient for travelers. While the Chicago flights offer connections to the East Coast and provides destinations favorable to business travelers, Houston flights have global connectivity to destinations in Mexico, South America, Asia and Europe, and are convenient for leisure travelers, according to city officials.

"Houston does have connections to the East Coast as well just not as strong," Hagerman said at the time.

At the Sept. 22 meeting, Councilman Keenan Cortez said he believes Houston could fill a need for more recreational travel for Joplin-area passengers while Chicago provides service more to business passengers. He endorsed the Houston change.

SkyWest is the largest airline provider of service for EAS airports.

MoDOT brings interstate rebuild into focus at public meeting



Image provided

This rendering provided by the Missouri Department of Transportation shows how the Fidelity interchange will look after the upgrade.



Globe | John Hacker

Johnny Teegardin, left, an engineer with CMT Engineers, explains some of the details of the planned reconstruction of the I-44/I-49/ Missouri 59 interchange to Carthage City Administrator Traci Cox, center, and Carthage Fire Chief Jason Martin during a meeting Tuesday.

JOHN HACKER
JHACKER@JOPLINGLOBE.COM

Residents got a clearer picture of changes coming to a major Interstate 44 interchange and to other sections of I-44 in Southwest Missouri Tuesday at a Missouri Department of Transportation public meeting

MoDOT spokeswoman Regan Mitchell said more than 90 people attended the meeting held at the Victory Christian Center on Burr Oak Road southeast of the Fidelity interchange, and many asked questions about about all the projects connected to the Forward 44 Program to upgrade the interstate from St. Louis to Joplin.

"The meeting was really well attended and that supports the fact that we're getting with the community and getting information out there about these projects," said Matt Koppitz, MoDOT deputy project director for the Forward 44 projects between Springfield and Joplin. "It's great because we're able to get information

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Interchange just one part of upgrade

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Besides improvements to the Fidelity interchange, the Missouri Department of Transportation said Forward 44 plans in Southwest Missouri also include:

- High friction surface treatment on the I-44 curves east of Range Line Road in Joplin.
- Pavement improvements on I-44 east of Sarcoxie in Lawrence County.
- Addition of a westbound I-44 third lane from Missouri Route 266 (Chestnut Expressway) in Springfield to Route B in Webster County.
- Addition of an eastbound I-44 third lane from Chestnut Expressway to mile marker 91.2.
- Existing pavement improvements from Chestnut Expressway to Route B.
- Widening and rehabilitation of the I-44 bridges over the BNSF railroad in Springfield.
- Replacement of the Route EE (Division Street) bridge over I-44 in Springfield.
- Geometric improvements and bridge replacement at Missouri Route 744 (Kearney Street) in Springfield.
- Interchange improvements at U.S. Route 160 (West Bypass), Missouri Route 13 (Kansas Expressway), Grant Avenue, and U.S. Route 65 in Springfield
- Relocation and expansion of the eastbound truck parking lot east of Strafford.
- Realignment of the eastbound curve from Mile Marker 92.2 to 93.4.
- Pavement improvements and interchange ramp extensions on I-44 from Route B through Conway in Webster and Laclede Counties.

Although not part of the Forward 44 initiative, work will include replacing pavement and widening I-44 to six lanes between Missouri Highway 43 (Main Street) and Loop 49 (Range Line Road). Additional lanes will be installed in the median.

MSSU

Athletic center rededication set for Saturday

Ceremony will take place between men's, women's basketball games

JERRY WILLIS
JWILLIS@JOPLINGLOBE.COM

JOPLIN, Mo. — Missouri Southern State University will celebrate the completion of renovations to its Leggett & Platt Athletic Center with a special rededication ceremony on Saturday between the women's and men's basketball games.

The ceremony, scheduled for about 2:45 p.m., will recognize Leggett & Platt for its $1 million contribution and will honor other contributors to the university's renovation project.

"This was about a $4 million undertaking with funding through the support of the Missouri Southern board of governors, the Missouri Southern Foundation, Leggett & Platt and ... Guaranty Bank came in and helped with the video board as well," Rob Mallory, MSSU athletic director, said this week.

The project included removing and replacing the bleachers, installing a new track surface, replacing the basketball court and installing new, state-of-the art video boards, new scorer's tables and upgrading other areas in the complex, including partial roof replacement.

"We started this project back in May of 2025," Mallory said. "The Leggett & Platt Athletic Center — at that point, 25 years old, kind of starting to show its age — most of the infrastructure in the building was original to that construction in the late '90s. So, we were at a point where our bleachers were in disrepair, we had an entire section that was not functional. Our track, while we were able to use it, we had to make modifications to the way our track student-athletes trained on the surface, because track surfaces are really only designed for about eight to 14 years of useful life. ... The basketball court was also original to the late '90s. ... We were not going to be able to sand it down

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"This is a facility that is used as a campus and community asset … so it was important that we bring this facility back up to the standard to maintain that standing as a community asset."

ROB MALLORY
MSSU athletic director

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