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January 14, 2004

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Mr. Dennis J. DeVany
Chief, Essential Air Service Division, X-53
400 Seventh St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Re: December 5, 2003 and December 12, 2003 Letters Requesting Comments on Essential Air Service for Athens Georgia.

Dear Mr. DeVany,

Thank you for your assistance in requesting proposals for air carriers to provide EAS supported air service to the Athens-Ben Epps Airport. As mentioned in earlier letters, we feel that our commercial carrier is vital in the economic development of Athens and N.E Georgia by providing a connection with the National Air Transportation System.

In past years we have watched our enplanements decline. As we have been serviced by Air Midwest, d.b.a. US Airways Express, we have many times expressed our concerns over the decline in passengers. A lack of interest in advertising, limited contact with local industry, the University of GA, US Navy Supply Corps School has been exhibited by Air Midwest. When Athens Clarke County subsidized a fourth daily flight for the airline and six months of advertising, the airline failed to honor their portion of that agreement. At a recent meeting of the Airport Authority and Clarke County Representatives, Mesa airlines completely misrepresented their EAS proposal by not disclosing the fact that they were losing their code share with US Airways.

Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, UGA and the Navy School have all expressed interest in a connecting flight to the Atlanta Airport. The Athens-Charlotte route works well for connecting flights up the East Coast, but Atlanta offers flights to many more destinations. A commuter flight to Atlanta will eliminate a two hour [or longer] drive to Atlanta in heavy traffic, paying car parking fees and eliminate long security lines. This is very attractive to our businesses and citizenry. Corporate Airlines offers this route.

After reviewing the proposals and meeting with both airline representatives, the Athens Airport Authority voted unanimously to recommend that the EAS contract be awarded to Corporate Airlines for Option #2, 18 round trips per week (Athens-Atlanta) for \$882,057 annually. As the route to Charlotte has proven its ridership will continue to decline, we feel the Athens-Atlanta route will increase our passengers by offering a convenient connection to the Atlanta Airport.

Sincerely,

Heidi Davison,
Mayor – The Unified Government of Athens Clarke County

cc: Athens Airport Authority
Air Midwest
Corporate Airlines

MAYOR HEIDI DAVISON
UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

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