

City of Muscle Shoals

DAVID H. BRADFORD
MAYOR

RICKY WILLIAMS
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OST-2004-18443-4

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Dockets Operations and Media Management
Dennis J. DeVany, Chief
400 7th Street, S.W.
Rm. PL-401
Washington D.C. 20590

Ref. EAS Community Participation
Docket OST-2004-18443

Dear Chief DeVany,

The Northwest Alabama Regional Airport is currently served by two flights per day by Mesaba Airlines Inc. also a Northwest Airlink code-shares affiliate of Northwest Airlines with large hub service from Memphis Tennessee. The area served is made up of Colbert, Lauderdale, Franklin, Marion and Winston Counties. The major cities are Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Russelville Alabama. The population in these counties is approximately 227,000 people. The Shoals is 69 miles from the nearest jet-service airport.

Our air service is critical to the economic development of this community. Other markets are being subsidized at a higher cost than subsidy cost for the Shoals. The Shoals continues to have one of the most highest unemployment rates in the State of Alabama. The city of Muscle Shoals has just purchased approximately 450 acres adjacent to the airport property and is currently planning an Airport Industrial Park Complex. Along either side of the airport we have one of the largest railway yards in the southeast at Norfolk Southern Railway and the Florence Port Authority Docks on the Tennessee River.

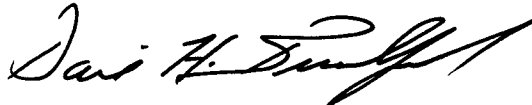
The City of Muscle Shoals currently provides fire service on location at the airport with twenty-four hour, seven day per week staffing of the airport fire station. We also provide all utilities, and maintenance cost. The City of Muscle Shoals along with other government entities provide a yearly appropriation to the Airport Authority for terminal

and other expenses. Our entire area understands that we have to be active participants in economic development.

We currently are working to develop tourism as an additional industry. The Robert Trent Jones Golf trail is scheduled to open with a 36-hole championship golf course and 250 room four star hotel and conference center in August 2005. This project will likely enhance the need and traffic at airport. We are home to the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, W.C. Handy Festival, Helen Keller Festival and the largest lift lock dam in the world (Wilson Dam TVA) on the Tennessee River. We also have active recording studios and are looking at developing the film industry. A four-year University serves us (The University of North Alabama) and a two-year college (Northwest Shoals Community College) currently serves our area.

The biggest problem we have is the limited two flights and their times of departure. We need three flights per day with an early and late flight. I believe, if you evaluate the airports served under EAS program considering facilities, population of the area served, local and state participation in economic development on and near the airport and the amount of funding currently spent in each of these EAS communities the airports with the greatest potential, needs and least expense would be clear. Also if there were some incentives for the EAS airline to come off EAS subsidy it might help. I hope that your agency can evaluate communities in need and keep vital air service.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David H. Bradford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "B".

David H. Bradford
Mayor