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Dennis J. DeVany
Chief, Essential Air Service Division, X-53
Office of Aviation Analysis
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. DeVany:

Air Midwest, Inc. has submitted a proposal for Essential Air Service (EAS) at Manhattan, KS. I write to express my support for an Air Midwest option that provides the region with the best service plan.


The City of Manhattan has carefully considered the four service options and evaluated the impact of each option on the viability of scheduled air carrier service for Manhattan and north central Kansas. They determined and I agree that the area would be best served by a plan that increases service to the region, rather than one maintaining the status quo.

Air Midwest's current service fails to meet the needs of the area. Furthermore, nearby Ft. Riley will soon see an influx of roughly 30,000 soldiers, support personnel, and family members. I understand Ft. Riley supports the effort to facilitate increased operations and official travel to and from the post via the Manhattan Airport. Demand for air service in the area will only continue to grow, and the community needs an accommodating service plan. Options 3 and 4 of the proposal split the service to Manhattan from the service to Salina, KS. Each community would benefit by separating the service between the two cities and providing direct flights to the Kansas City International Airport. Option 2 retains the connection between Manhattan and Salina but increases the flight frequency by one daily flight each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Air service in rural areas is not simply a luxury, it is an imperative. As a strong supporter of this program and the needs of our military personnel, I urge you to carefully consider the communities' request. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions.

With every best wish,

Sincerely,


Pat Roberts

PR:jl