

NORTHERN ENGINEERING INC.

1 Fifield Place
Ashland, WI 54806
715-682-6321

March 6, 1998

Mr. John Lewinski
Chairman, Gogebic-Iron Airport Board
E5560 Airport Road
Ironwood, MI 49938

Dear Mr. Lewinski:

Part of our Scope of Work in this project, is to review the essential air service contract to determine if service is timely and reasonable.

In reviewing the responses to the mail out questionnaires, (copy attached,) of the 168 trips reported only 14 or 8% originated from the Gogebic County Airport. Note: If the schedule as presented in the questionnaire was actually in place, that number would increase by ten fold to 143 flights.

Further, in reviewing the interviews with travel agents, copies of which were sent previously, all the travel agents ranked schedules as "poor" or "unacceptable" and all ranked fares as "adequate." Concerning availability of seats, two-thirds ranked seats available as "unacceptable" and one-third ranked it "poor."

The generally accepted practice for a commuter airport is to begin service inbound to a major hub early in the morning so connections can be made with other flights going throughout the country, then returning from the major hub to the commuter airport in the late afternoon or early evening. This is the essence of the hub and spoke system employed by commuter airlines throughout the country. Gogebic County Airport is an exception. The first flight of the day departs at 9:50 a.m. and arrives at Chicago O'Hare (the major hub) at 11:30 a.m. The return trip leaves Chicago at 1:30 p.m. This is a schedule that is unworkable for one day business in Chicago, and further will not provide for timely interconnections.

In addition, it should be noted that Great Lakes Aviation stopped operation the summer of 1997 without the proper ninety day notice.

Mr. John Lewinski

March 6, 1998

Page 2

Great Lakes Aviation has established a practice of not flying during night hours. Obviously, refusing to fly during night hours severely curtails the hours of operations and for some reason they are unwilling or unable to fly at night. Considering that the airport has facilities for night landings, we must assume that their airplanes are equipped for night IFR flying, their pilots are IFR rated and are capable of night flying, not flying during hours of darkness is an unacceptable practice.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, it is my opinion that Great Lakes Aviation, d/b/a United Express, has not, and is not, providing reasonable service to the Gogebic County Airport. While this is not a legal opinion, this is a finding in terms of generally accepted practices. I recommend that you obtain services of a qualified attorney to review the legal aspects of this and to determine if it would be useful for the Board to file complaints with the proper authorities.

Sincerely,



Anthony A. Wilhelm
Transportation Planner