



Idaho Falls Regional Airport Eastbound Service Analysis
June 2016

With limited eastbound service, Idaho Falls passengers commonly request additional service to connect to destinations on the east coast. Idaho Falls has strong eastbound service for a regional market in the inter-mountain west, with non-stops to Denver on United, Minneapolis on Delta (during the summer season) and Salt Lake City on Delta. No other market in its region can claim the same number of flights to the east.

Idaho Falls service is provided by the major “network” carriers that connect passengers throughout the world, but often have fares higher than the “low cost” carriers. Low cost carriers include Frontier, JetBlue, and Spirit. Idaho Falls did have previous seasonal service on Frontier, before that airline was sold to a new investment group that restructured the business to serve mostly major US markets with at least one million residents.

The challenge in recruiting low cost carriers to regional markets like Idaho Falls is compounded by the basis of these carriers’ business plans – to connect large population centers with limited connections and frequent non-stop flights. Idaho Falls would be an exceptionally small market relative to low cost carrier networks. For the three major low cost carriers, these are the smallest current markets served:

✈ **Frontier:**

- Year ‘Round Service: Sioux Falls, South Dakota (257,000)
- Seasonal: Bozeman, Montana (97,000), but most traffic is funneling into Yellowstone National Park

✈ **JetBlue:**

- Nationwide: Savannah, Georgia (379,000)
- West of the Rockies: Albuquerque, New Mexico (907,000)

✈ **Spirit:**

- Plattsburgh, New York (82,000) – but only 45 minutes from Montreal, Quebec (4.3 million)

By comparison, the current metro area population of Idaho Falls is 136,000 people. Idaho Falls is just 53% the size of Frontier’s smallest year ‘round market. Idaho Falls is just 36% the size of JetBlue’s smallest market and just 15% the size of its smallest western market. Idaho Falls is just 0.3% the size of Spirit’s smallest market, which they sell as “Montreal-Plattsburgh.” It should also be noted that none of these carriers serve Boise, despite its population of 664,000 people.

Other small western markets have recently attempted to recruit low cost service to the east. A market in the desert southwest offered JetBlue a revenue guarantee of \$3 million for eastbound service – but JetBlue refused to launch service despite the incentive.

Idaho Falls can recruit additional eastbound service. But the focus will likely be on the expansion of network carrier service through incumbent carriers or through network carriers that don’t currently serve the region.

Air Transportation and Airport Consulting Services