City of Goldthwaite

"Gateway to the Hill Country"

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April 29, 2004

Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary of Transportation
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

The City of Goldthwaite supports the City of Abilene's request for a Small Community Air Service Development Program grant to continue improving air service for the benefit of west central Texans.

It is my understanding that Abilene received $85,010 from the 2002 program. Those funds were combined with local funds that enabled the creation of a formal Business Development Program which:

- Conducted an Air Service Study that defined their air service market and quantified market demand
- Secured SkyWest Airlines operating as Continental Connection to Houston Intercontinental Airport
- Encouraged Abilene's two airlines – American and Continental – to provide low promotional fares

The results of these air service improvements were beneficial to Abilene area air travelers, as an increase of 46% in enplanements was realized in the first six months of two-airline service.

Approval of Abilene's proposal would fund a business plan that includes:

- Enhanced outreach to the citizens living in the rural areas of the airport's 32-county service area,
- Formalizing a web-based Customer Knowledge Project to fully understand the air service needs and expectations of those citizens and their businesses
- Pursuit of more efficient service to the top western markets to better meet passenger demands
- Expand Promotional Fare & Air Service E-mail Notification Program to include paid advertising
- Continue its efforts to retain American Airlines, Continental Airlines, and SkyWest Airlines

I respectfully request your favorable action on Abilene Regional Airport's grant application.

Sincerely,

Mike McMahan

Mike McMahan, Mayor
City of Goldthwaite