Abilene
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
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The Friendly Frontier

May 3, 2004

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

Re: City of Abilene's Application to DOT's FY04 Small Community Air Service Development Program

Dear Secretary Mineta:

On behalf of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau, we support the City of Abilene's request for a Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP) grant to continue improving air service at Abilene Regional Airport for the benefit of west central Texans.

A previous grant of $85,010, combined with local funds, enabled the airport to create a formal Business Development Program which improved our air service considerably. The improvements resulted in a 46% increase in enplanements during the first six months of two-airline service. The Abilene Regional Airport has been so successful that the Office of Aviation Analysis in the U.S. Department of Transportation uses us as a best practices model for other small U.S. airports.

Abilene's FY04 grant proposal would fund a business plan that will further address service and fare deficiencies, including rural outreach, needs and expectations survey, pursuit of more efficient service to our top western markets to better meet the demands of more than 50% of our passengers, expanding its Promotional Fare & Air Service E-mail Notification Program to include paid advertising and the potential to upgrade aircraft from turboprops to regional jets.

As a result, I respectfully request your favorable action on Abilene Regional Airport's grant application.

Sincerely,
Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau

Lou Murray
Chairman

Nanci Liles
Executive Director