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FOR CHILDREN

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May 6, 2004

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary of Transportation
Department of Transportation
400 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta

I wanted to write a letter in support of the Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP), which is being requested by the Abilene Regional Airport in Abilene, Texas.

My connection with the Abilene Regional Airport began in 1970 when I came to Hardin Simmons University to play in the Cowboy Band. As a member of the band, we had the opportunity to welcome personalities such as Will Rogers and influential political figures to our community, serenading them with western tunes from our heritage and culture. As a freshman, I recognized the importance of the airport in connecting West Texas to the rest of the world.

In the 1980's I returned to Abilene as an assistant vice president for development for my alma mater. That job required me to fly in and out of Abilene frequently, sometimes on the University plane and other times using commercial airlines. Although I was not serenaded by bands upon my return from business trips, my heart was always thankful for the airport as it presented me, the University, and our community with business opportunities.

Now that I am middle-aged and enjoy some financial security, I enjoy the airport equally for its convenience in both business and pleasure. Over the past two weekends I have flown out and into the airport, conscientiously admiring the latest additions to the facilities. I realize that the tremendous advances of the airport from the 1970's to the 2000's did not come with just the strong effort of the civic leaders within our community; but rather, capital improvements were dependent on federal funds, such as the SCASDP grant. These grants have contributed so emphatically to the prosperity of Abilene and Midwest Texas over the past 30 years. For that reason, I sincerely ask for your strong considerations of this pending SCASDP request, knowing personally how your decision can help shape our future as it has our past.

All the best, and

Warmest regards,

David W. Miller, Ph.D.
President and CEO

DWM/kca