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4/28/2004

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

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

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I support Abilene's request for a Small Community Air Service Development Program grant.

Abilene received $85,010 from the 2002 program which, enabled the airport to:

- Conduct an Air Service Study that defined our market and quantified demand
- Secured a second air carrier - SkyWest Airlines operating as Continental Connection to Houston
- Encouraged both American and Continental to provide low promotional fares

The results were a 46% increase in enplanements in the first six months of two-airline service. As a result of this success and other management factors, Department of Transportation Office of Aviation Analysis now uses Abilene airport us as a best practices model for other small airports.

Your assistance, through approving Abilene's FY04 grant proposal, would fund a business plan that will further address service and fare deficiencies, including:

- Outreach to the rural areas of the airport's 32-county service area
- Formalizing a web-based Customer Knowledge Project to better understand needs and expectations of consumers and businesses
- Pursue more efficient western service to meet the demands of more than 50% of our passengers
- Expand our Promotional Fare & Air Service E-mail Program to include paid advertising
- Continuing our emphasis on upgrading aircraft from turboprops to regional jets

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

Sincerely,

H. C. Zachry CEO
Zachry Associates, Inc.

cc: Mayor Grady Barr, City of Abilene, P.O. Box 60, Abilene, Texas 79604

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APR 29 2004
ABILENE REGIONAL AIRPORT