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• Great Lakes replacing 19-seat passenger plane with 30-seater

By Josh Mitchell

Staff reporter

More people will be able to fly from Sheridan to Denver beginning May 1, as a 30-seat plane is replacing a 19-seat plane at Sheridan County Airport.

Great Lakes operates three flights daily from Sheridan County Airport. All are to Denver with two flights on 30-seat planes and one on a 19-seat plane.

Forward Sheridan President and CEO Philippe Chino and Airport Manager John Stopka told The Sheridan Press about the increased number of seats Tuesday.

Stopka said he thinks 90 seats a day from Sheridan will fill the market's needs. However, he said there are some summer days when more than 100 people want to fly out of Sheridan.

Forward Sheridan's airline task force, Stopka and the Boyd Group — an Evergreen, Colo., consulting firm hired by Forward Sheridan to recruit airlines — are responsible for getting Cheyenne-based Great Lakes to add the larger plane, Chino said.

The group has been working to attract more air service here since the former Big Sky Airlines of Billings went bankrupt in January.

Chino and Stopka said Great Lakes has been losing some Sheridan customers because of delayed flights.

Great Lakes has vowed to improve its service and wants passengers to give them another chance, Stopka said.

He said Great Lakes was experiencing some delayed flights because of a lack of pilots, but now the airline says that is not a problem.

Between June and March about 65 percent of the flights were on time, Stopka said. He did not know the average delay.

He said Great Lakes plans to meet here soon with companies to say that flight times will become more reliable.

Several companies have begun flying from Billings because of the delays, Stopka said.



John Stopka
Airport
Manager