

## Allegiant to add more flights at Gateway

**Tony Natale, Tribune**  
**January 8, 2008 - 3:58PM**

Allegiant Air is adding four flights from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport beginning in March to serve the increasing number of passengers flying the Las Vegas-based airline.

Since the carrier started service to and from the East Valley airport in October, it reconfigured its planes serving Gateway to seat 150 passengers instead of 130.

The added flights and larger-capacity planes underscore an optimistic Allegiant ridership report released Tuesday showing a 51.4 percent rise in fourth-quarter traffic to 848.9 million revenue passenger miles, compared with 560.7 million during the same time in 2006.

"Mesa has played an instrumental role in driving these passenger traffic increases," said Tyri Squiyres, Allegiant spokeswoman.

The added flights will serve Cedar Rapids, Iowa on Tuesdays, March 4-25; Fargo, N.D. on Tuesdays and Sundays March 1-29; Missoula, Mont. on Wednesdays, March 5-26 and Sioux Falls, S.D. on Tuesdays, March 4-25.

Brian Sexton, Gateway public information officer, said the airport is filling with Allegiant passengers. "Their flights are between 90 and 100 percent full," Sexton said. "They're really popular. People want to fly out of Gateway, and the airport staff is really excited about it."

The airline serves 54 cities with nonstop service to four hubs: Las Vegas, Orlando and Tampa Bay-St. Petersburg, Fla. and Gateway.

While Allegiant's passengers increased during the fourth quarter between 2006 and 2007, so did fuel costs, the company reported.

The average price rose 41.2 percent to \$2.74 a gallon.

Allegiant, which started in 1997 and went public in 2006, operates 34 MD-80 jets seating between 130 and 150 passengers. The airline is planning to increase its number of jets to 40 this year.