



Allegiant's 1st flight from Gateway takes off

Art Thomason

The Arizona Republic

Oct. 25, 2007 03:28 PM

Wearing a new name, the Valley's burgeoning reliever airport launched its biggest airline service Thursday amid fanfare, a water cannon salute and gobs of optimism.

"What a wonderful airport," said Neil Weingarten, an Allegiant Air executive moments after watching one of the airline's 150-seat passenger jets lift off a Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport runway for Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "I saw a lot of people going back to see family."

One of them was Bree Dahm of Mesa who hurried through the terminal as one the last of 108 passengers to board the MD-80.

"I'm going to see relatives," said the property management agent.

Dahm represents the niche market that the regional carrier began serving Thursday from its newest base at Gateway with flights to 13 cities across the northwest, Midwest and upper Midwest.

"Hopefully this means we're going to bring more employees here," said David Baker, Allegiant's vice president of station operations.

Valley airport officials and consultants have said that Allegiant, because of its experience and size, should provide Gateway its biggest boost for developing passenger service and help the former Air Force base turn the corner on that market.

The low-cost passenger carrier, which already provides scheduled service to more than 50 cities across the nation, will serve all 13 markets from Gateway by Nov. 21.

Baker said Allegiant also will continue its charter service agreement with Harrah's casino for flights from Gateway to Laughlin Nev., and was recently certified by the Department of Defense to fly charters carrying military personnel.

Although the airline flies to Las Vegas from other destinations, Baker said Allegiant has no intention of providing such service from Gateway while Vision Airlines, , the airport's first scheduled passenger carrier, continues its Las Vegas flights.

"We have a very good relationship with Vision," he said.

But Allegiant's Thursday flight to Cedar Rapids marked the first scheduled passenger service since the airport's

name was changed on Oct. 15 to reflect its proximity to Phoenix.

Officials of the airline agreed earlier this year to begin the service if the airport's governing board would get Phoenix into the airport's name to enhance the airfield's identification internationally.

Airline and airport executives and employees and officials from the Transportation Security Administration and Federal Aviation Administration were among scores of people who converged on the terminal Thursday morning to witness the momentous flight.

Post a Comment

This is a public comment zone. Readers are solely responsible for the content of their posts and must comply with our [Terms of Service](#) and [Rules of Engagement](#). Report offensive content by clicking on the "Report abuse" link.

azcentral.com login required

- [sign in to post a comment](#) »
- [click here to register for a free account](#) »

- [ampol](#) | [Profile](#)
- Posted: Oct 25, 2007 at 10:01 PM
- [Report abuse](#)

Nice for open new flight Thank-you Allegiant.Only one problem. Need open more lines, on street Power Rd.Traffic bumper to bumper, to Williams Field Rd Passengers

Your Comment:

You must be logged in to post comments.

[Log In](#) | [Register](#)