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Good numbers from M.C. Airport (Globe Gazette editorial)

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We've always maintained that a thriving airport is crucial to North Iowa's transportation system and thus important to the region's economy.

It's one of the links in that transportation system along with the major highways and rail service that serve our area.

So while we're disappointed that more people aren't using the Mason City Municipal Airport for passenger service, it's good to see numbers rebounding.

A major dropoff occurred after Great Lakes Airlines, based in Wyoming, replaced giant Delta Airlines as Mason City's carrier in April 2012.

In January 2013, it was reported the number of passengers boarding planes here dropped from 11,424 in 2011 to 5,879 in 2012 — nearly a 50 percent decrease.

It's hard to determine for sure what caused the huge dropoff.

Airport Manager Pam Osgood attributed it to the lack of pilots because of a federal regulation; the airline recently reported it still was 15 pilots short.

Or perhaps it was fare increases, or the lack of frequent flier miles that Delta offered but Great Lakes doesn't.

Still, Great Lakes gets the job done, providing flights to Minneapolis that allow connections to the rest of the country and the world.

And numbers are coming back, not rapidly but coming back.

In May, there were 253 passengers boarding in Mason City; in June, 310; in July, 332.

Hopefully that increase will continue as the airport remains viable for even more air travelers.

In the meantime, the airport has garnered good marks in a federal inspection, going discrepancy-

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free for the seventh year in a row, and has received federal funding for a variety of projects. And, said Osgood, Bumbleberry restaurant has proven successful where other operators have failed.

So we're pleased with what's happening at the airport, and we encourage its use by businesses and the public.

We don't relish the idea of driving to Minneapolis and parking our car there when it's so easy to fly locally.

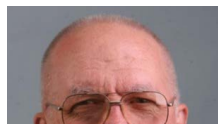
We agree with Osgood: At least look into flying out of Mason City first.

— Send your letters to news @globegazette.com or Box 271, Mason City, IA 50402-0271.

Tags Essential Air Service, Mason City Iowa, Mason City Municipal Airport, Mason City, Great Lakes Airlines, Iowa, Pam Osgood, Great Lakes, Globe Gazette, Delta Air Lines, Airport, Aviation, Transport, Minneapolis, Delta Airlines, Transportation System, M.c. Airport, North Iowa, Wyoming, Airline, Airport Manager, Bumbleberry Restaurant, News Globegazette.com

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