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Mason City air service proposal deadline extended



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MASON CITY - A deadline to receive proposals from airlines wanting to serve Mason City has been extended, according to officials.

Delta Airlines announced in July that it would drop service to Mason City, as well as other markets.

Initially, that meant all proposals would be into the U.S. Department of Transportation by Aug. 9.

But that deadline was extended - although until when remains a question, said Mason City Municipal Airport officials on Monday.

No change in service will take place until October when Delta's contract with Mason City ends.

In July, Delta officials said since Mason City was part of the Essential Air Service system, the airline cannot end service until another carrier is in place.

Proposals are made to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Those proposals will eventually be forwarded to the Mason City Airport Commission.

Other Iowa markets affected are Fort Dodge, Sioux City and Waterloo.

Delta officials said in July that it intends to retire its fleet of Saab turboprop airplanes that has serviced smaller markets at an annual loss of \$14 million.

The Essential Air Service program subsidizes airlines to serve small markets such as Mason City to ensure small communities continue to have access to passenger air service.

- By Deb Nicklay

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