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PORT OF OLYMPIA APPLIES FOR AIR SERVICE GRANT

The Port of Olympia has applied for a federal grant to bring non-stop air service between Olympia and Portland, Oregon. The application was submitted in June under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Small Community Air Service Development Program. Grant awards will be announced prior to October. Airports in Hoquiam/Aberdeen, Tacoma and Roseburg, Oregon have joined the grant application.

Under the proposal submitted, there would be three round-trip flights per day from Olympia to Portland. Three separate round-trip flights per day to Portland from each of the other three communities listed in the grant application are also proposed. The proposed start date is May 2009, and the type of aircraft anticipated for the service would be a nine-seat, twin-propeller aircraft, such as a Cessna 402.

"We believe there is strong demand for commercial air service in our community," said Port Commissioner George Barner. "If we are able to get this grant, we will have the 'seed money' to make necessary facilities changes and test-market the service in the area."

The total grant requested was \$1.5 million, or \$375,000 for each of the four airports. Grant funding would be used to offset the cost of service start-up and marketing as well as providing a revenue guarantee for the air carrier for a limited period. If a grant is awarded and accepted, the cost to the Port would be ten percent or about \$37,500.

The communities are working with Sixel Consulting Services in submitting the grant application and recruiting an air carrier. The proposal has received the support of U. S. Senator Patty Murray, U. S. Representative Brian Baird, the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, City of Olympia, City of Tumwater, City of Yelm, the Thurston County Commission, Thurston County EDC, Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater Visitors & Convention Bureau, and the Thurston Chamber of Commerce.

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About the Port of Olympia

The southernmost deepwater port on Puget Sound, the Port of Olympia is Thurston County's partner in economic opportunity. The Port owns and operates a diversified international shipping terminal, a strategically located regional airport, a vibrant 656-slip recreational marina and boat haulout/repair facility, and a thriving real estate division. A community port, it generates an estimated 2,600 jobs in Thurston County and indirectly over 5,000 jobs in Washington State.