
Opinion: Flying to LA, just not with Advanced Air

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When I began to research an upcoming trip abroad, I took a quick look at the possibility of using Advanced Air's new Crescent City to Hawthorne service as an alternative to flying out of Medford. The look ended rather abruptly when I realized not only were there several unnecessary hurdles to overcome on the flight itself, but it added nearly \$900 to the cost of my proposed trip and it only goes to LA twice a week. Advanced Air's flight schedule may work for those going to the Bay Area, or to LA, but anything further adds cost and complications to air travel which is already becoming more complicated and expensive.

My first trip out of Crescent City, back when Sky West was the regional carrier, was to San Francisco enroute to Milan, Italy 2001. Over the next decade plus, my wife and I traveled regularly from Crescent City enjoying the local convenience of traveling seamlessly to many overseas destinations with few issues.

Then came a change in 2014 when regional carrier Sky West converted from prop driven aircraft to small 44 passenger jets which could not land on the short 5,000-foot runway of Jack McNamara Field. Since the ending of Sky West flights to San Francisco and Sacramento, a mixed lot of different air carriers have tried operating out of McNamara Field with limited success and I and many others have taken to flying out of Medford.

Since 2014, the Border Coast Regional Airport Authority (BCRAA) has been unable to find a suitable air carrier which can claim even 10,000 enplanements in a calendar year. Neither Oakland or Portland have proven to be suitable options for those flying out of Crescent City.

Advanced Air struggled to clear 8,000 enplanements between March of 2024 and March of 2025. With ten flights per week in Advanced Air's thirty passenger jets, it means most flights leave and return to Crescent City half empty. While Advanced Air successfully received an increase in the subsidy they will enjoy over the next four years, the flights to LA do not appear to have improved the enplanement numbers. In fact, Advanced Air can claim a bit more than half the enplanements of Sky West's final year of being the carrier for Crescent City.

It is likely Advanced Air even with the increased subsidy will have difficulty remaining as a local air service for many years in the future. The BCRAA made a serious mistake when the BCRAA went for a new terminal in lieu of lengthening the runways to accommodate the new 44 passenger regional jets. This error in judgement has turned what could have been increased enplanements out of Crescent City to San Francisco, Sacramento, or LA, into the struggle to maintain any sort of air service to Oakland or Hawthorne.

Most air travelers going to connecting destinations will continue using Medford's airport as have I. With airfare increasing in cost over the last few years, Advanced Air does not become an option. Similarly, lack of agreements with other carriers, ground transfers between Hawthorne and LAX, or Oakland to SFO, baggage transfers, renewed check in, and standing in line at security are definite negatives Advanced Air will have difficulty over coming. Most of those challenges can be laid directly at the feet of Del Norte County's BCRAA.

While it is not too late to turn this train wreck around, the BCRAA needs desperately to consider "How to lengthen the runways at Jack McNamara Field to accommodate the regional jets?" Perhaps, incorporate proposed runway repair with lengthening the runways at the same time. Find a carrier going to San Francisco, Denver, or LA. Stop the bleeding to Medford with service other than Oakland!