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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 21, 2013

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Boise Metro Chamber Members Pledge More Than \$160,000 to Support Boise Airport Air Service Grant

BOISE, ID – Seventeen private companies and organizations pledged more than \$160,000 in support of the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Boise Airport’s Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP) grant application. Created by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the SCASDP is designed to help small communities address air service and airfare issues by providing the grant applicant the opportunity to self-identify its air service deficiencies and propose an appropriate solution.

Boise’s grant request is based upon the region’s growing demand for access to key commercial centers east of the Mississippi. The Airport requested a grant in the amount of \$700,000, with a local match in excess of 25%, to attract and establish access to an additional east-oriented connecting hub. Potential opportunities have been identified as: American/JFK, Delta/Atlanta, United/Newark, United/IAD, and JetBlue/JFK. Each of these can also open up additional single-connect markets for Boise on the East Coast. The grant would be used to offset the startup costs and risk during the first one to two years of operation of a new route and to promote the new service.

As part of the grant effort, the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce called upon the businesses of the Boise region to support the grant. The response was overwhelming. In approximately one week, seventeen private companies and organizations came forward, pledging more than \$160,000 to the recruitment of the proposed new service. Donations ranged from \$1,000 to \$20,000 from a variety of companies and organizations including A10 Capital, LLC; Boise Inc.; Boise Convention & Visitors Bureau; Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce; Colliers International; Boise Valley Economic Partnership; Gardner Company; HDR, Inc.; Healthwise Incorporated; United Heritage Insurance; Intermountain Gas Company; Idaho Power Company; MWI Veterinary Supply, Inc.; and Thornton Oliver Keller Commercial Real Estate.

In addition, the City of Boise, the State of Idaho Division of Tourism Development, and the Greater Boise Auditorium District together pledged another \$100,000 to leverage the available resources. Boise Metro Chamber President & CEO Bill Connors stated, “Quality air service is a top priority for our business community. Considering Boise’s remote geographic location, convenient and affordable air service is critical to retaining and recruiting businesses and people to our region.”

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The competition for the limited USDOT funds will be significant. Last year, the DOT awarded only 33 grants from more than 80 applicants. This year, there are approximately 60 applicants vying for \$11.5 million in grant funds the DOT has available. Boise Airport Director Rebecca Hupp commented, “The importance of the private sector commitment for the grant application cannot be overstated. It will be a critical consideration when the DOT is deciding which applications to select for funding. It is not enough for a community to want additional air service; there must be a financial commitment to making it successful.”

Even if the Airport is successful in winning a DOT grant, it is not a guarantee that an airline will be interested in serving the route. Airlines will make that decision based on their estimate of the route’s profitability. However, grant funding will provide an advantage for Boise when competing against other cities for similar service.

A list of the 2013 grant filings can be found at
<http://www.regulations.gov/#!searchResults;rpp=25;po=0;s=ost-2013-0120;fp=true;ns=true>.

About the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce: Established in 1883, the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce strives to be the leading business advocacy organization in the Boise Valley. The Boise Metro Chamber is a private, nonprofit, membership-driven organization comprised of nearly 1,800 business enterprises, civic organizations, education institutions and individuals. Its mission is to provide leadership that will help create regional economic prosperity and success for its members.

About the Boise Airport: Boise Airport (BOI) is a municipally owned entity operating as a self-supporting enterprise. No City of Boise general funds are used to operate the Airport. BOI is served by six airlines which offer daily service to 16 non-stop cities. In 2012, more than 2.8 million passengers traveled through Boise Airport.

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