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Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport preparing for American Airlines arrival

The Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport's commitment to air service development began in the early 2000's after losing scheduled air service in 2001. Efforts to attract airlines to Laughlin/Bullhead increased when John Hastings was elected President of the Mohave County Airport Authority (MCAA) in 2009. To assist with the process, the MCAA hired the help of Sixel Consulting Group, a company based in Eugene, Oregon. Sixel specializes in air service development strategy, strategic marketing plans, market studies, social media management, website development, federal grant applications, airport branding and other aeronautical services.

The airport has invested nearly \$220,000 towards the recruitment of scheduled air service, which includes over 50 face to face meetings with most major air carriers across the United States.

In 2015, the airport served 217,776 passengers, making Laughlin/Bullhead International the 6th busiest commercial airport in Arizona. The airport currently accommodates charter flights, which operate to more than 100 airports throughout the United States and Canada. These flights are operated by Elite Airways, Allegiant Air and Sun Country Airlines which serve the airport with regional jets, Airbus 319s and Boeing 737s respectively. The airport services approximately 4 commercial flights per day, year round.

On October 10, 2016, American Airlines announced its commitment to start daily service from Laughlin/Bullhead City to Phoenix starting February 16, 2017. American's interest to serve Laughlin/Bullhead was centered on a \$1.5 million incentive package offered by the Mohave County Airport Authority. This incentive package included \$750,000 from the Small Community Air Service Development Grant Program (SCASDP), \$580,000 in local matching cash pledges and a \$220,000 airport marketing pledge. Once air service starts in mid-February, American Airlines has two years to use the incentives offered in the package.

Now that the announcement has been made, what does the airport have to do to prepare for their first scheduled airline in over fifteen years? Landing an air service deal is just the beginning of the process, with months of preparation to follow until the inaugural flight. Some of the challenges include developing a strategic marketing plan, flight scheduling, retrofitting existing airport infrastructure for a new air carrier, information technology upgrades, security screening upgrades and installation of new gate podiums.

As passengers enter the main terminal for their first flight, they will see a dedicated ticket counter for American Airlines, along with branded ticketing kiosks available for fast check-in. Prior to the first flight, the airport is working closely with American Airlines to install all components needed for passenger check-in and processing, including new ticket counter cabinets, baggage scales, and all Information Technology related systems. Additionally, the Transportation Security Administration will be

upgrading their passenger verification process, with newly acquired barcode scanners to accommodate electronic ticketing.

After passengers pass the security checkpoint, they proceed to Terminal B where they will wait to board the aircraft. An additional gate area will be commissioned at the end of Terminal B, for use by American Airlines. This area will include a newly constructed Gate 3 podium and an ADA accessible counter. The airport will be working closely with American Airlines representatives to install all necessary electrical and data feeds for a new podium, information screens and ticket scanners.

The starting of American Airlines service means upgrades for passengers, aiming to make the customer experience as stress free as possible at Laughlin/Bullhead. The airport offers free parking, free Wi-Fi, fast security lines, an outdoor seating area after security and an airport café. The airport experience should revolve around convenience, and at Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport, it does just that.

The passenger experience at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas can be much different than the local experience at Laughlin/Bullhead. The journey begins with a nearly two hour drive through the police riddled towns of Cal-Nev-Ari and Searchlight on Nevada State Highway 95. After your drive to McCarran, be prepared to pay \$10 to \$16 per day for parking, then a long walk to the terminal.

Once inside the main terminal, passengers can expect long lines at both the airline ticket counters and TSA security checkpoints. With all factors involved, the average passenger starts his or her travel approximately four hours prior to their departure time.

Flying American Airlines out of Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport is a great option to avoid the hassle of a large airport, while taking advantage of big amenities right here locally. The airport has advertising opportunities available in both terminals on property.

For more information, please call the airport Administration at (928) 754-2134 for more information or to purchase a ticket, visit: AA.com.