

Passenger service returning

- By DK McDONALD The Daily News

BULLHEAD CITY — Elite Airways will begin twice-weekly nonstop jet service to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport on July 19, Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport officials announced Thursday.

“We are happy to welcome Elite Airways’ scheduled service to Laughlin/Bullhead City,” said Jeremy Keating, Mohave County Airport Authority airport director. “We know there is significant demand for service to Phoenix and we think Elite will be an excellent partner with the community.”

Flights will depart LBIA on Sundays and Thursdays at 1 p.m., arriving into Phoenix at 2 p.m. Return flights, also on Sundays and Thursdays, will depart Phoenix at 10:45 p.m. and land at Laughlin/Bullhead at 11:45 p.m. Elite will operate same-plane service to Rochester, Minn., in which passengers can buy a single ticket and stay on the aircraft during a short stop at Phoenix.

Daily nonstop jet service from Laughlin/Bullhead City to Phoenix Sky Harbor ended in February after American Airlines did not renew its one-year service contract with LBIA due to underuse of the service.

Keating noted at the time the airport would continue to seek out scheduled service, but cautioned that daily service would be difficult to find without the minimum risk guarantee grant money that underwrote the American Airlines contract.

“Our air service consultant and I were in the process of discussing air service strategy moving forward and Elite actually contacted us to gauge our interest,” Keating said. “We obviously were extremely excited to learn more about what they wanted to do and here we are.”

Officials of the full-service airline said they were pleased to launch twice-weekly nonstop jet service to Phoenix and return an important service route to passengers who want the convenience of flying directly in and out of Bullhead City/Laughlin.

“Laughlin has always been an important charter destination for Elite, and we’d like to thank airport and city officials for their support of our new scheduled service at Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport,” said John Pearsall, Elite Airways president.

Elite Airways will operate a CRJ-700 jet on the route, seating 70 people in a two-by-two seating configuration, according to a release from the company. Elite Airways passengers receive free onboard snacks and beverages, a free first checked bag up to 50 pounds, and no ticketing change fees.

Fares and schedules information is available online at eliteairways.com, or by calling 877-393-2510. Trips can be booked through most travel websites or a travel agent.