

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

Palmdale flight plans starting to shape up

BY JIM SKEEN, Staff Writer
LA Daily News

Article Last Updated: 03/02/2007 10:36:11 PM PST

PALMDALE - United Airlines will schedule flights between Palmdale and San Francisco to connect to 60 destinations worldwide under its agreement to begin service in June in the high desert.

The airline and the city of Palmdale have set a goal of generating \$4.4 million with the new commercial service out of the newly renamed L.A./Palmdale Regional Airport.

"This is a great, great thing for our valley," said Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford.

On Monday, the City Council is expected to approve an incentive plan that will provide \$2 million to underwrite any loss incurred by United. The agreement covers a three-year period beginning June 7, the target date for the start of United's service between Palmdale and San Francisco.

Under the agreement, United is required to provide a minimum of 26 flights weekly - 13 departing and 13 arriving. There will be twice-daily departures except for Saturday when there will be just one.

United has agreed to schedule flights to maximize access to connecting flights for passengers. The schedule will allow for connecting flights to approximately 60 destinations on flights offered either by United or its Star Alliance partners.

The flight schedule is to be available no later than April 1.

The agreement does not set fares. However, there is a statement that the fares "shall not vary significantly in price levels or terms and conditions" from those offered for routes of similar distance and in similar-size markets.

The financial underwriting is part of a \$4.6 million incentive package put together by a coalition of supporters of Palmdale's airport to lure in an airline. The coalition, called Wheels Up Palmdale, was successful in landing a \$900,000 federal grant to help underwrite airline service.

Initially, Los Angeles World Airports, the city of Los Angeles' airports department, was to provide \$1.1 million of the financial underwriting, but that obligation has shifted to Palmdale.

Constraints in federal regulations on the use of airport revenues prompted the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation to ask that Palmdale pick up that financial obligation.

LAWA, however, will provide \$1.1 million for marketing the service.

"It's really an accounting issue," Ledford said. "The money is still the same."

A LAWA spokesman said the change was an administrative reallocation of financial responsibilities and that the commitment to the effort remains the same.

LAWA is also providing more than \$1 million to the package in the form of rent waivers for the terminal at Palmdale.

james.skeen@dailynews

(661) 267-5743