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DOT Awards SkyWest Barkley's EAS Contract; Chicago Flights Begin February 2026

WEST PADUCAH, KY (October 1, 2025) —The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has awarded SkyWest Airlines, operating as United Express, the Essential Air Service (EAS) contract for commercial air service at Barkley Regional Airport (PAH).

Under this four-year agreement, SkyWest will operate CRJ-200 aircraft to Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD). Passengers at Barkley Regional Airport will benefit from United Airlines' codeshare network, which maintains convenient one-stop connectivity to numerous destinations nationwide and globally.

Barkley Regional Airport Executive Director Dennis Rouleau remarked, "Congressman Comer's support throughout this process has been invaluable to our community. Having worked with many federal elected officials over the years, I can attest that Congressman Comer and his team are consistently excellent partners and highly effective in their efforts."

Rouleau said, "Our proposal included both Chicago and Houston, and we have been assured by SkyWest that they will service both markets utilizing a CRJ-550 within the approved subsidy. We are working diligently to finalize these arrangements. We appreciate the DOT's decision and our partners' support, and we will continue to work to confirm both Chicago and Houston air service. We remain confident that the DOT will allow this change."

We encourage travelers and community members to follow our social media channels for the latest updates as plans move forward.

SkyWest, operating as United Express, is anticipated to begin service from Barkley on February 1, 2026.