

Cascade to introduce new planes, schedule

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Starting Feb. 1, Cascade Airways will have more flights out of the Tri-Cities and more seats available on newer planes, the company announced Thursday.

The increased service will be almost entirely from the Tri-Cities Airport in Pasco, said Mark Nilson, marketing vice president for the company. There won't be increased service from Richland because the Richland runway can't handle new aircraft being used by Cascade.

But Nilson said Richland will have nonstop flights to and from Spokane, with daily connections to and from Missoula and Butte, Mont.

Cascade is starting service to Missoula also on Feb. 1 and expanding service to Butte. Missoula is to become the 19th city get-

ting Cascade service, he said.

Beech 99s, Cascade's older planes, will continue to fly out of Richland.

Pasco will get service from the new 48-seat, pressurized British Aerospace HS-748s, he said. Cascade will have its first flight attendants on the 748 flights. Also flying into Pasco will be the Embraer Bandeirantes, which are 18-passenger planes and some Beech 99s.

Cascade will also be using Swearingen Metroliner IIIs from Spokane to cities in Montana, Idaho and Utah, Nilson said.

Cascade now has a fleet of 18 airplanes. As of Feb. 1, the company will operate two 748s, three Metro IIIs, three Bandeirantes and four Beechcraft.

The remaining six Beech planes will be used for

charter flights and will be up for sale, Nilson said.

The other four Beech planes will be replaced later this year, he said. The replacement of the Beech planes could mean the end of service to Richland, since the Metro and Bandeirante planes are not certified for landing there.

Cascade is preparing a formal report for the Port of Benton telling what the company needs to continue operating there. No other action has been taken, however. Port of Benton commissioners have said they will seek another airline to provide service to Richland.

Pasco is being used as a service hub by Cascade, Nilson said. Flights from Walla Walla, Pullman and Lewiston will come into Pasco so passengers can make connections to Portland and Seattle.