

Cascade may get improved aircraft

Cascade Airways will have 30-passenger, pressurized aircraft within two years, according to Mark Chestnutt, president of the Spokane-based commuter airline.

Chestnutt told the Walla Walla City-County Airport Board Friday that it is difficult to make money with the airline's present 15-passenger, Beech 99 aircraft.

Although Cascade's number of boardings has doubled since it shifted its Seattle operation from Boeing Field to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, the firm's profit margin has fallen from 10 per cent to 5 per cent.

He said the new aircraft would be economical to use. He said the aircraft would either come from a West German or French manufacturer.

Cascade will begin its new computerized reservation system in March, he said. The airline has also

begun a program to spruce up its planes and to train its new personnel, he said.

He said since the airline added planes, flights and new cities to its schedule it has had some growing pains, but the airline now is undergoing a crash program to correct the problems.

Boardings averaged 5,000 persons a month a year ago, but last month boardings were 11,800, he said. Adding new routes to Portland and Boise helped the increase, he said, but the major factor was the move to Seattle-Tacoma International. There, passengers are able to connect with other flights, he said.

Cascade has issued a new flight schedule which will go into effect Feb. 1. It adds flights between Walla Walla and Seattle and Walla Walla and Spokane, and it changes times on other flights, Chestnutt said.