

American Eagle not exactly soaring

Most of the excitement about American Eagle beginning service between Cheyenne and Dallas-Fort Worth belonged to the insiders who consider flight a glamour business and all airlines attractions.

Sure, it's nice to have at least one other destination by air. Dallas-Fort Worth wouldn't have been many people's first choice but it was all the insiders could attract. All they could afford to buy. And once the subsidy payments dry up, air travelers out of Cheyenne will be back to Denver as the sole destination.

American Eagle's introduction to Cheyenne travelers has been a rugged one. There is a website where you can follow American Eagle's departure and arrival times. And how close they are to being on schedule. It would not be as important to those who are headed for Big D as for those who are making connections. To them, being on time is critical.

I watched the takeoff of American Eagle Flight 2992 on both the first day of service (Thursday, July 15) and the fourth day (Sunday, July 18). I wanted to see how much of the runway was being used on takeoff. I got to see the plane take off in each direction. The controversy about trees on the west end, well beyond the end of the runway, is overblown in my opinion. Not only did American Eagle not use anywhere near the length of the runway when taking off to the west but a few days ago, due to bad weather in Denver, several large commercial jets landed in Cheyenne to wait out the weather in Denver and none of them had any length problems taking off to the west on departure.

Just like no one who should know knows where the economic impact figures from this airline flying in and out of Cheyenne twice a day came from, no one knows for sure who is insisting our trees be taken down. They just make up the figures. The airport manager said the chamber guy made them up and he doesn't know what they represent. But, he is parroting them as though they're valid and they're his.

Back to American Eagle.

Through Friday, August 6, AE has served the Cheyenne market for 23 days. Flight 2992 is the one that is supposed to depart Cheyenne at 2:15 - changed to 2:30 - each afternoon. For the first three days of service, they departed on schedule.

Then it got a little dicier.

The second day I watched the plane load and leave, there were 38 passengers including a non-rev baby being carried. The takeoff to the east was uneventful. I journeyed out to Kmart for some Coke and when I returned, I could see a plane's tail from Yellowstone and that aroused my curiosity so I went back to the airport and saw an American Eagle plane back on the tarmac, with the ramp down and (re)fueling taking place. I did not wait until that plane took off again and wasn't even sure it was the same plane. It was.

I found out a couple days later that the plane had taken off on time - at 2:23 pm - but had returned almost immediately because a red light had come on in the cockpit. American Airlines said, "the cargo light indicator came on showing it was open but it was the vent door that was not sealing properly and was sent in for maintenance." AE probably didn't want to dump passengers luggage onto a corn field in Kansas so thought it wise to come back and check on the potential problem.

Passengers on that flight got the added thrill (and risk) of an extra takeoff on the same flight and were off once again to DFW at 2:45 - the first day of a late takeoff. A BOGO day. Just like Sooper's.

Which reminds me, I have had multiple reports of American Eagle selling tickets to passengers, then not taking them on the flight they had booked and paid for. In fact, I've been told that all passengers beyond the first 20 have been told they would be considered "standbys" then not all were boarded. There is no "next" flight after that 2:15 - 2:30 departure so evidently those passengers are on their own until a future day. Makes Denver look pretty good, no? At least down there, there are multiple flights to major destinations and multiple airlines serving major cities so you'd have a chance for another flight on the same day.

American Eagle now has the Flight 2992 departure time at 2:30 pm. Using that time, 15 minutes later than the original scheduled departure, AE has been at least a half hour late on departure six times after that two-for-one departure adventure on July 18. July 21 (3:10 pm), July 24 (3:19 pm), July 27 (3:29 pm), July 29 (3:45 pm), July 30 (3:31 pm) and August 2 (3:26 pm). It has departed between 2:45 and 3:00 pm three other times. The flight is supposed to arrive at DFW at 5:14 pm but has arrived after 6:00 pm several times already. One third of scheduled departures have been late by at least a half hour.

AND WE DON'T EVEN HAVE SNOW OR ICE YET!

By the way, when we first inquired of the airport manager about the flight that left, returned and left again, he was unaware of the incident. He knew nothiiiiinnnnng!

I personally don't have a big objection to removing some trees if there is a legitimate reason. But, based on these early results, I think my suggestion that we need to make this airline prove its commitment before such an action is taken makes sense. I will remind the City that I have experience falling trees and I might be available to fall those for them. NOT!

It bothers me that the military was conscripted to make statements in support of removing the trees. Had it been a safety issue to them, or had they been departing light on fuel, they should have spoken up years ago. To join the chorus now is undignified of them.

DREAMS

We all have dreams in life. College for the children, retire comfortably, vacation homes. What are your dreams and how are you planning to get there?

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Contact Brian Lenell, CLU, ChFC
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Another UW men's BB player from Stoneridge

There he goes again.

UW's Brylcream Boy has ballyhooed the signing of another basketball player who will not play for the University of Wyoming for at least one more year, if ever.

It isn't that the guy is a recent high school graduate with grade problems. Au contraire. He is a high school grad of a few years ago who had grade problems then and could not enter USC when he was supposed to so after graduating high school, he went to Stoneridge Prep for a season of post high-school ball. Then he entered USC. Then he was dropped.

One might think that Schroyer would have

learned by now that Stoneridge Prep and other after high-school programs aren't a good place to get players. But, he also knows that he is on a short leash - with attendance likely to drop to embarrassingly low levels for the 2010-11 season.

The latest mercenary Schroyer has given a scholarship can play. So could others from prep schools. But, they are nomads. Leonard Washington had academic problems getting into USC when Tim Floyd was recruiting misfits like O.J. Mayo to ruin the USC program. L-Wash is not a quality addition to the UW men's program and he was dumped by USC. Buchanan should have worried less about Bill Ayers and more about Schroyer and Burman.

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Jim and his wife Judy are long-time residents of Cheyenne and are both retired real estate agents, business owners and NRA instructors. Jim was born at Fort Francis E. Warren and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy. Jim and Judy have been married 37 years and have 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.

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