



BY RYAN WATERFIELD

Eric, his wife Susan, and their children Anton and Hayden moved to the valley in 1998 from the Bay area leaving behind a brutal commute and gaining beautiful views. Susan opened Fox Creek Interiors and a few years later they bought Sun Valley Shutters and Shades. As an active community member and a business owner, Eric understands the importance of ample air access to the valley and the role the airport plays in the economic health of the community. Because of this, he has put his efforts to work behind the Fly Sun Valley Alliance—a group working to secure better air access for the valley.

ERIC SEDER CHAIR, FLY SUN VALLEY ALLIANCE

SVPN: Why did you move to Sun Valley?

ERIC SEDER: I love that this area is such a great combination of idyllic rural life and near-urban sophistication. We love to ski, bike, hike, backpack, golf, etc., but I think it would feel a bit empty for me if it weren't for the great restaurants, the theater companies, the symphony, the bookstores and all the other things that make this area more interesting than many larger cities.

SVPN: Why should SV area citizens be concerned with air service to the valley?

ES: There are at least three significant employers in Blaine County who are leaving or shifting operations due to lack of air service. Retail businesses are pretty uniformly suffering from lack of business. The approved new hotels can't get financing. Our competitors all have far better air access than we do and are aggressively pursuing more. Basically, if we stand still, even with the very welcome addition of the SFO flight, we are going backwards and our economy will reflect that.

SVPN: What do you think the impact of the newly added United flight from SFO to SV will be for the valley?

ES: There will be several different short- and long-term impacts. Fly Sun Valley Alliance projects that direct spending from additional visits by tourists and second homeowners will be in the range of \$10 million per year initially and will grow after that. This figure comes from research and analysis and is in line with what Aspen has figured as the result of their new non-stop service from Atlanta, so I'm pretty comfortable with it. This spending will be with restaurants, bars, ski shops, guides,

clothing stores, events, art galleries, and the like. Any spending, of course, has a multiplier effect as the money gets recirculated, so the actual benefit to our economy will be greater.

SVPN: What is the best-case scenario for the future of air service in Sun Valley?

ES: My dream scenario is for the LOT to pass in Ketchum and Hailey in November and over the course of the LOT's five-year life, to add flights from three additional non-stop cities via regional jet while giving the Sun Valley Marketing Alliance significant new resources to make all of the flights (existing and projected) successful.

SVPN: What can the rest of us do to support air service to the valley?

ES: Support the LOT increment in November by voting for it if you live in Ketchum or Hailey, by talking to your friends, neighbors, family, and others about the importance of it regardless of where you live, by letting all elected officials know that air service is the most important issue in our community, and by giving time and/or funds to the campaign.

We can all also heed the Check SUN Fares First campaign that is just getting going through the efforts of the FMAA. It is surprising how often the fares from Friedman are about the same or even lower than the Boise fare to a destination. In those cases we are shooting ourselves in the foot by driving to Boise.

SVPN: And what do you consider the biggest asset to the economic vitality of the valley?

ES: The things that make people want to visit and live here. The ski area, the trails, the beauty of the mountains, the fishing, the symphony, the theater companies. We have better assets than most of our competing resort areas, and we combine it with a community that seems more real than most. We simply need to give people the desire and the means to come here, and this asset will pay dividends to all of us.

SVPN: What will you do in San Francisco when you take your first non-stop flight to SFO?

ES: Having lived in the Bay Area for 15 years, I'll certainly see old friends and visit old stomping grounds. I've also got a long list of hip new restaurants I'd like to try and I'm interested in what is developing on Treasure Island and in seeing the new Bay Bridge. I'll probably spend some time in bars convincing people that they need to visit Sun Valley.

To see the full interview with Eric Seder, check the **SVPN** blog:
www.sunvalleypropertynews.com/blog

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