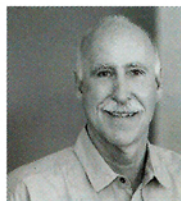


Q & A

REALTORS FOR AIR



JED GRAY
Broker/Sun Valley Associates
 Past President,
 Sun Valley Board
 of Realtors

Q: You had the vision to create the Realtors for Air (RFA) program in 2013, what was the impetus to do it?

A: It's simple. We need more visitors to the Sun Valley area to make the valley's businesses viable. We are lagging way behind other destination ski resorts in the western United States in our air transportation offerings. Geographically, Sun Valley is a destination that is not served by an air service hub and we need to improve and expand the availability of flights for people to get here. The Realtors for Air program allows real estate agents to invest in their business future. More visitors not only leads to new customers, but also strengthens the local economy for a stronger community. Isn't that what we would all like to see?

Q: What is your impression of the participation this past year?

A: The response from our local real estate offices this first year has been terrific! 21 companies responded with 100 percent participation by their agents. The program in its first year included over two-thirds of the local agents. We have raised over \$65,000 to date with monies still coming in. Some offices exceeded their original commitment. This is a tremendous success and has allowed Fly Sun Valley Alliance (FSVA) to continue to work toward retaining and improving air service into our resort area.

Q: Did you model program this after similar programs in other resort areas?

A: No, we actually created it, and I am proud to say that I have been contacted by real estate groups in other communities who are considering emulating our Realtors for Air program. I will say, however, that different resorts have various programs to support air service. Most resort area air service development programs are jointly funded between the local government, the ski resort operator, and the private business sector. This makes it even more important for local businesses to be involved. Our local real estate agents are trying to do their share.



DICK FENTON
Partner/McCANN DAECH FENTON
 Board member, Fly Sun Valley Alliance (FSVA)

Q: You have been involved with air service development efforts here for several decades; can you tell us why is it important that air service be supported by the community?

A: The numbers are there to prove that effective and reliable air service underpins virtually every aspect of an economy like ours—one heavily dependent on tourism and second home ownership, both of which in turn support the construction industry and local recreation, entertainment, and general retail businesses. Therefore, every dollar used to successfully expand air service should positively impact both community members directly involved in these industries, as well as those whose businesses benefit indirectly from increased air service based on the earnings of our neighbors who work in these areas. Increased support for air service by the entire Blaine County community is crucial in preserving our valuable relationship with Sun Valley Company, which has long been the major private sector contributor to this effort. Evidence of private sector investment in turn is a critical component of our ability to convince elected officials to add public funding into the air service equation.

Q: How are the efforts of FSVA helping improve our air service here?

A: Maintaining and expanding air service, especially to smaller or seasonal destinations, is an increasingly complex task as the airline industry consolidates and continues to seek higher yields on its investments. For communities like ours where air service is crucial in supporting our economy, having a dedicated organization focusing all of its attention on improving air service is the only way we can hope to be effective in earning a place at the table when routing decisions are made by air carriers. FSVA is in constant and direct communication with air carriers concerning maximizing service in our marketplace. Additionally, Fly Sun Valley Alliance serves as the go-to entity when elected officials need to understand how their air service-related decisions will impact their communities. Public support is an absolutely necessary part of the air service equation for us. The FSVA provides a single

point of contact for information, serving an extremely important role in the Blaine County community, both for elected officials and for the general public.



DAN GORHAM
Designated Broker/Windermere of Sun Valley
 President, Sun Valley Board of Realtors

Q: As the new President of the Sun Valley Board of Realtors, what role do you see RFA continuing to play in the future?

A: Realtors for Air epitomizes our members' determination to make a difference in their communities. We all know that air service drives a significant portion of our economy and that expanded air service will help all residents of Blaine County, most of whom are our friends and potentially our customers. As one of the largest organizations in the county, we feel that we need to show leadership by contributing to entities or causes that we know will benefit all of us. Through Realtors for Air we did just that; the vast majority of our members contributed a very significant amount of money from their own wallets to ensure continued air service to Blaine County. One of the roles that Realtors for Air plays, we hope, is that it will in turn cause other businesses or business organizations, as well as public officials, to show proportionate and increased support for crucial Blaine County needs such as expanded air service. Jackson Hole's dramatic success in increasing skier days after embarking on a sustained air service investment program is a tremendous example of what we can achieve here if everyone participates. So long as organizations such as Fly Sun Valley Alliance that are charged with implementing the action steps to improve our economy remain effective to the satisfaction of our members, we will continue to play our role in financially supporting their efforts and helping convince others to do so as well.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE AIR ACCESS ISSUE IN OUR MARKET OUTLOOK ON PAGE 209.

Have something civil and intelligent to add to the conversation? Give us your feedback at feedback@sunvalleypropertynews.com.