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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **New approach procedure set to improve flight reliability, helping reduce weather-related diversions at SUN**

**SUN VALLEY, Idaho**—Friedman Memorial Airport (SUN) today, in partnership with SkyWest Airlines, announced a new federally approved landing approach procedure that will be available at SUN this winter, which is expected to improve flight reliability resulting in fewer weather-related diversions.

“This news could not have come at a more critical time,” said Friedman Memorial Airport Manager Chris Pomeroy, “Tourism is vital to this community, and as we begin to ramp up for this ski season, the ability to reduce diversion means better service for our passengers resulting in higher overall confidence in the travel experience for customers coming to the Valley. This, in turn, should result in additional, positive economic benefit to our local businesses and residents.

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The result of a multi-year collaboration between the Federal Aviation Administration, Friedman Memorial Airport, Flight Tech Engineering LLC, and SUN commercial carrier SkyWest and their partner airlines, Delta, and United, the new proprietary approach procedure is expected to be in use by early December.

“SkyWest has provided reliable service to SUN for decades, and we understand its unique weather and operating challenges,” said Tracy Gallo, Senior Vice President – Flight Operations for SkyWest. “We appreciate our operations teams, our partners, and the support of Friedman Memorial Airport, who together have worked tirelessly to make this change a reality.”

Once in place, Embraer E175 jets, such as those operated by SkyWest and partner airlines Delta and United can land with much lower ceiling and visibility than permitted by SUN’s current approach procedures.

Alaska Airlines has used similar technology at SUN since 2016 and has seen a dramatic drop in their number of weather-related flight diversions.

“What makes this truly game-changing for SUN is that the technology is now approved for specific types of aircraft we see at our airport,” noted Pomeroy. “Our unique weather conditions, as well as our location in the valley, create interesting challenges for all aircraft, and the new approach procedure will certainly open up some new opportunities for our users – this in an accomplishment the Airport Board and our partners have strived to achieve for years. It is exciting to this become a reality.”

Landing approach procedures are a set list of minimum criteria, used by pilots and aircraft operators use to determine their specific minimum standards for landing at SUN. The data points drive safety and comfort of passengers and crew.

“It’s really quite simple,” said Pomeroy. “If the weather, wind, geography, and fuel numbers don’t add up, then the ‘landing equation’ directs them to divert.”

However, Pomeroy noted it is important to remember, this does not mean SUN is immune from weather-related diversions, but it does mean there should be fewer.

“Mother Nature still calls the shots,” he added. “Just because we have a new equation doesn’t mean we will never have another diversion. This airport is located in a challenging operating environment and there will still be times when the equation simply won’t add up.”

Friedman Memorial Airport will continue to offer busing services for any Delta, United or Alaska flights diverted from SUN. This service, provided by Caldwell Transportation Services, begins Nov. 1 and will continue through April 15, 2021.

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### **About Friedman Memorial Airport**

Located in the heart of the beautiful Wood River Valley, Friedman Memorial Airport (SUN) generates the second highest economic impact for commercial service airports in Idaho, second only behind Boise Airport. SUN offers scheduled airline service to Salt Lake City, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, and Chicago. SUN creates jobs and connects tourists from around the world with local businesses, generating more than \$290 million in economic impact each year for the valley.

### **About SkyWest**

SkyWest Airlines has a fleet of nearly 500 aircraft connecting passengers to over 250 destinations throughout North America. SkyWest Airlines operates through partnerships with United Airlines, Delta Air Lines, American Airlines and Alaska Airlines carrying more than 43 million passengers in 2019.

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