

## **For Immediate Release:**

### **Marathon Airport commercial service gains momentum**

**MARATHON, FL (June 26, 2026)** – Commercial service at Florida Keys Marathon International Airport (MTH) is not ready for takeoff just yet, but the wheels are in motion to bring back a commercial airline to the Middle Keys facility.

Monroe County Executive Director of Airports Richard Strickland gave an update on the Middle Keys facility to a crowd of 80 guests at the Marathon Chamber of Commerce luncheon on June 16.

The airport has applied for a Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) grant, a competitive program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, according to a press release from Airports Marketing and Communications Manager Katie Atkins.



The grant is designed to help communities reduce the financial risk for airlines considering starting service in a new market. It often requires a local community contribution or incentive package, Atkins said.

The Monroe County Board of County Commissioners, at its May meeting, unanimously approved a resolution supporting the growth of air service at MTH and to waive landing fees and terminal rent for the first two years of service from a commercial airline. This was one of the first steps in returning commercial service to the Middle Keys, according to the press release.

Community partners in bringing commercial service to MTH have contributed a total of \$1.53 million, Atkins said. Those entities included the Monroe County Tourist Development Council, Visit Florida, Greater Marathon Chamber of Commerce, EOS Hospitality, Marathon Two Hospitality Holdings LLC, Marathon Hospitality LLC, Key Largo Hospitality Group LLC, and OTO Hospitality.

Additionally, the airport will contribute \$100,000 for marketing. The federal SCASD grant and local funds work together as an airline recruitment package, Atkins noted in the release.

According to the airport's Air Service development consultant Michael Lum, service from American Airlines to Miami, United Airlines to Washington Dulles, or Delta Air Lines to Atlanta would work best for service at Marathon Airport.

"Hopefully everyone understands we are not looking for just a flight to Miami, Atlanta or Dulles. It's the 30 cities that connect with those hubs," Strickland said.

Additionally, the airport will need to make terminal modifications and start a security badging system for personnel, among other improvements, Atkins said.

The release noted, depending on which airline chooses to engage in a commercial service agreement, service could begin in late 2027.

MTH has a long history of scheduled commercial air service, dating back to 1959, when National Airlines first served the airport.

During the following decades, numerous regional and commuter airlines, including American Eagle, Delta Connection, Cape Air, and Gulfstream International connected Marathon to destinations throughout Florida and beyond. Scheduled service ended in 2009.

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