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Reardon works to land direct Etihad flight at Sea-Tac

Work with fastest growing commercial airline builds on Boeing relationship

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, while traveling through the United Arab Emirates on a trade mission, has met with Etihad Airways officials to discuss establishing a direct flight between Abu Dhabi and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac).

The company, one of the fastest growing airlines in commercial aviation history, has plans to expand to 70 locations by 2010. Reardon wants Sea-Tac to be a destination under consideration.

Etihad, set up as the national airline of the United Arab Emirates in July 2003, already flies to 37 worldwide destinations. The airline currently flies to the North American cities of Chicago, New York and Toronto.

“Etihad is a solid Boeing customer with a great future in the commercial aviation industry,” Reardon said. “A direct flight to Seattle enhances the incredible service it already offers and further promotes its relationship to Boeing and planes such as the 777 and 787.”

The airline spent about \$8 billion in 2004 ordering new aircraft, which included five Boeing 777-300ERs.

Last year, it agreed to purchase 35 Boeing 787s and 10 more 777-300ERs with options for 25 additional 787s and 10 more 777-300ERs in addition to purchase rights for another 10 Boeing 787s and five 777s. The new aircraft are scheduled for delivery through 2020.

“We want to promote Sea-Tac as a viable option for Etihad Airways,” Reardon said. “Increasing our region’s exposure as an international destination and gateway underscores our ability to compete for business worldwide.”

Reardon currently is co-leading a trade mission sponsored by the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle and the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce to the United Arab Emirates. His costs have been paid in full by the sponsor organizations.

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