

# Cascade planes 'in good shape for fuel'

By Jim Schick  
of the Union-Bulletin

"We are in pretty good shape for fuel," Phil Guidice, vice president of administration and sales for Cascade Airways said yesterday.

"Our suppliers say we will get 100 per cent of the fuel we got last year. This rules out any expansion temporarily, unless fuel reductions can be made in other ways," he said.

Guidice, in a two-hour session with Doug Winn, Walla Walla City-County Airport manager and other Walla Walla businessmen in Spokane Wednesday, outlined some of Cascade's plans involving Walla Walla and some of the commuter airlines' problems.

"We had firm plans to return to the Portland market by next April before the fuel situation hit," the vice president said. "And we still might make it."

"Feeding into the Portland, Seattle, Spokane markets from the central area is the logical thing for a commuter airline to do, he said.

Guidice said the fuel shortage

perhaps gives the major carriers a chance to do something they have been wanting to do — eliminate some financially unhealthy runs.

He noted that United Air Lines is eliminating 100 flights by Jan. 7, including two to Pendleton, and Hughes Air West will probably reduce service to Walla Walla.

"We are going to expand into such points as Portland, Boise and perhaps other Eastern Oregon cities but right now we'll have to wait until the fuel situation straightens out," he said.

"As far as Walla Walla is concerned," he said, "we do have some plans. We have already talked to Winn about space requirements for eventually doing some maintenance work on aircraft. We will always base one or more planes in Walla Walla. We already base three of our 10 crews in Walla Walla and may add to that as our service expands."

Frequency of flights is an important factor in the commuter airline business, Guidice said.

"It is better to have four flights carrying 25 persons than to say we'll get larger planes and reduce it to two flights of 50 persons."

He said the airline has no plans to curtail service because of the fuel shortage.

November has been a great month with a 58 per cent load factor. Normally the factor is in the low 50s and 51 per cent is the break-even point for the carrier.

Cascade receives no subsidy. He said the airline has one post office contract, carrying mail from Spokane to Pasco and Portland and return five nights a week. The airline also carries 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of air cargo a month.

He said the airline had a good charter business and recently signed a contract to carry the Idaho State University basketball team for away from home games. The line has similar agreements with the University of Idaho and Boise State.

Cascade has four Beech 99 planes. He said the Beech is costly to maintain but it is a reliable, safe plane.

"We are looking at the 30-passenger Hawker-Sidley prop-jet and are seriously considering getting this plane. The initial cost is much greater, but maintenance is cheaper," he said.

He said the new planes are at least a year away.

The present aircraft is leased from the Pepsi air leasing organization, one of the largest of its kind.

Cascade has 68 employes including the corporate officers. Maintenance work is handled in Seattle but Walla Walla is a good place to have such an operation, he said.

Besides the three crews based in Walla Walla, the company employs six persons in the station at the terminal.

Nearly all crew members have had previous experience in flying in the Northwest. Captains must have 2,500 hours of flying time, an Air Transport Rating, 1,500 hours of multi-engine time and at least 100 hours in a turbine powered aircraft.

The company has a chief pilot, director of training and director of operations and 20 pilots and co-pilots or 10 crews. They fly about 85 hours a month.