

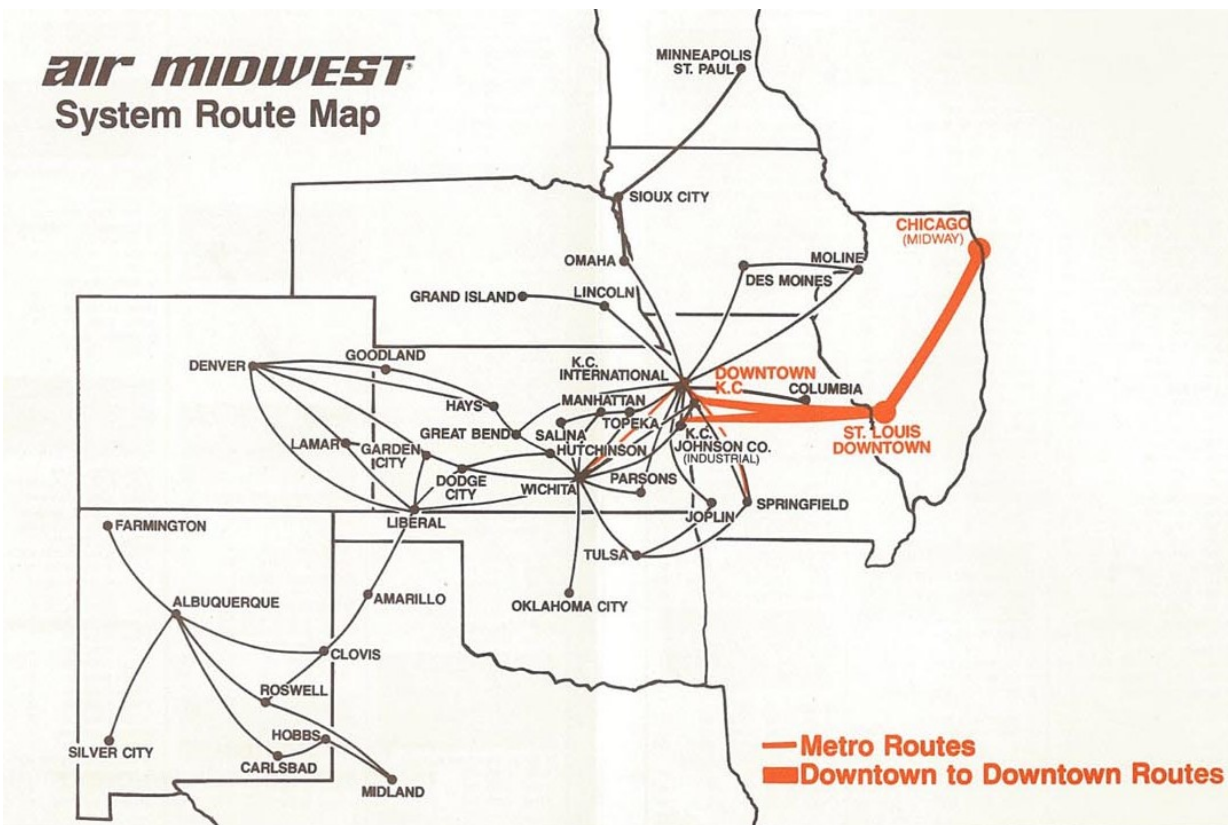


Air Midwest

Air Midwest was a commuter airline founded in 1965 and based in Wichita, Kansas. The carrier had a route network primarily linking small communities throughout the state of Kansas to hubs at Denver, Kansas City, and Wichita, using a fleet of 17-passenger Swearingen Metro II aircraft. On March 1, 1979 Air Midwest created a new operation in New Mexico by taking over the former routes of Texas International Airlines from Albuquerque to Clovis, Carlsbad, Hobbs, and Roswell. Direct service was also extended from these eastern New Mexico cities onto Amarillo, Lubbock, and Midland/Odessa, Texas and from there onto Oklahoma City and Wichita. Texas International had initially held onto their service at Roswell with one flight per day from Albuquerque using a 100-seat Douglas DC-9-30 jet but discontinued it later in 1979 prompting Air Midwest to increase flights on the route to eight per day and making the Albuquerque-Roswell route the busiest market in their system. In 1980 and 1981 Air Midwest took over the former routes of Frontier Airlines from Albuquerque to Alamogordo, Silver City, and Farmington, New Mexico and the Farmington flights were extended to Phoenix during the year of 1983. All service in New Mexico was guaranteed by the federal government under the Essential Air Service Act (EAS) established with airline deregulation in 1978. Some markets, including the service to Alamogordo, Clovis, and Silver City, saw very little traffic and required a subsidy. The Alamogordo service ended after one year as the EAS contract for that city was awarded to another carrier. A direct flight from Clovis to Denver was briefly operated in 1983 as Air Midwest had entered into a marketing agreement with Frontier Airlines which had a hub in Denver. The Air Midwest hub at Albuquerque thrived for several years reaching a peak of 18 departures per day by 1984 until intense competition from Mesa Airlines had emerged. Mesa acquired the EAS contracts for several of the subsidized cities forcing Air Midwest to scale back and ultimately discontinue their entire New Mexico operation on January 31, 1986.



Air Midwest Swearingen Metroliner at the Clovis, New Mexico airport.



Air Midwest route map from September, 1984.

Air Midwest continued to operate a large hub at Kansas City and expanded with new hubs at St. Louis and Nashville by way of code-share alliances with major carriers. At St. Louis, Air Midwest began operating as Ozark Midwest which later became Trans World Express on behalf of TWA. Air Midwest also became an American Eagle affiliate at Nashville on behalf of American Airlines. The Kansas City hub saw several code-shares including Eastern Express, Braniff Express, and USAir Express. In 1991 Air Midwest was bought out by Mesa Airlines and its fleet of Metroliner's was transitioned to Mesa's standard 19-seat Beech 1900D aircraft. In 2001 Mesa transferred all of its own flights operating with Beech 1900D's to the Air Midwest certificate which included all routes Mesa was operating in New Mexico. These flights however operated as a code-share with Mesa and therefore kept the Mesa Airlines name and image. At the time Mesa was also performing an America West Express feeder operation at Phoenix on behalf of America West Airlines and the America West Express flights from Phoenix to Farmington and Santa Fe were included in the transition to Air Midwest. The Santa Fe flights ended later in 2001 and an independent route from Farmington to Denver with a stop in Pueblo, Colorado was briefly operated as Mesa Airlines in 2005. Routes from Farmington to Las Vegas with a stop in Cedar City, Utah, and from Farmington to Salt Lake City with stops in Moab and Vernal, Utah, were briefly added as America West Express in 2007 when Air Midwest/Mesa obtained Essential Air Service subsidies to serve the smaller Utah cities. Due to a decline in commuter airline traffic during the 2000's decade, Air Midwest/Mesa scaled back their independent operations in New Mexico until all routes from Albuquerque were discontinued by the last day of 2007. America West Airlines merged into US Airways in 2007 as well and flights on the last remaining Air Midwest/Mesa routes from Farmington to Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City were changed from America West Express to US Airways Express. These routes all ended by May 30, 2008 at which time the Beech 1900D fleet was completely retired and the Air Midwest division was shut down.



Air Midwest Beech 1900D at Albuquerque operating as Mesa Airlines.



Air Midwest/Mesa Airlines route map in the early 2000's.