



## Zia Airlines

Zia Airlines was a commuter airline based in Las Cruces, New Mexico which began operations in August, 1972 as Associated Air Ambulance Service. Scheduled passenger flights began in 1974 with a Santa Fe-Albuquerque-Las Cruces-El Paso route. The carrier used Cessna 206 and Cessna 402 aircraft and flag stops could also be made at Socorro and Truth or Consequences upon request. Service to Taos was added the following year while the flights to El Paso were discontinued. New service from Albuquerque to Silver City was added in 1976 and to Alamogordo in 1978. As Frontier Airlines discontinued their service to Alamogordo and Silver City in 1979, Zia was awarded the Essential Air Service (EAS) rights for subsidized service to both cities. New service was also added to Farmington from Santa Fe and Albuquerque in mid-1978. 1979 was a very busy year for Zia as new service from Albuquerque to Roswell began when Texas International Airlines announced its intentions to end their service which included large Douglas DC-9 jets. Service to Denver was added from Santa Fe and the carrier also considered serving Gallup, Grants, and Crownpoint, New Mexico as well as Phoenix however none of these services materialized. In its earlier years, Zia had also proposed service from Albuquerque to Clovis and from El Paso to Carlsbad, Roswell, and Silver City. During this time of new opportunities and rapid expansion, Zia was in pursuit of larger aircraft. The carrier first considered the Swearingen Metroliner but settled with obtaining two British built Handley-Page Jetstreams. Unfortunately, the Jetstreams incurred significant maintenance issues causing a high rate of flight cancellations and a dark image for Zia. The flights to Denver were short lived and ended later in 1979. In early 1980 the company changed its name to Air New Mexico and new service from Albuquerque to Durango, Colorado was added however the carrier was overwhelmed with financial burdens and ceased all operations on May 12, 1980.

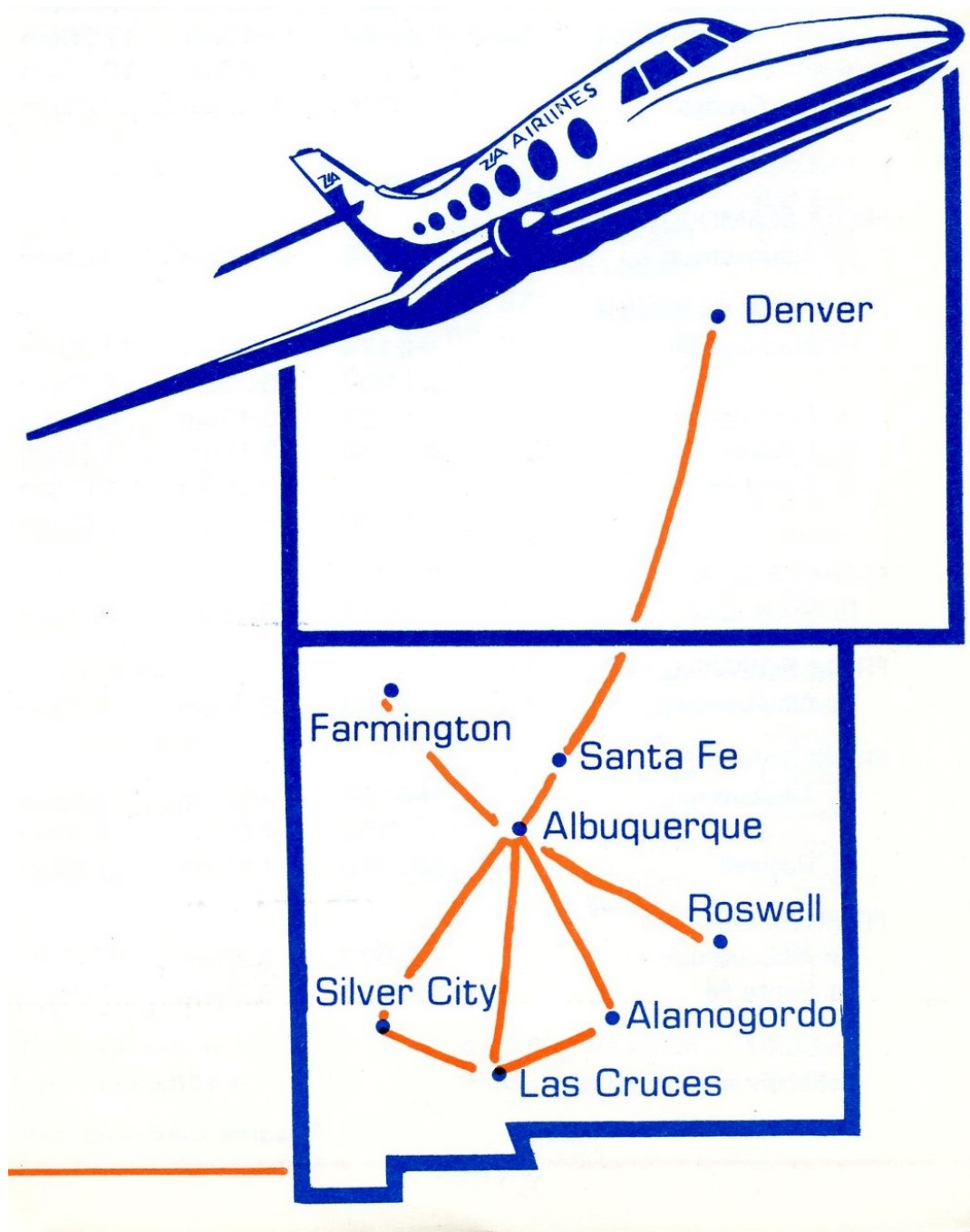
At its peak on the July 1, 1979 schedule, Zia was operating 16 flights per day to seven cities from its hub at Albuquerque.



Zia Airlines Cessna 402 at the Albuquerque International Airport.



Zia Airlines Handley-Page Jetstream at Albuquerque.



Zia Airlines route map from May, 1979.