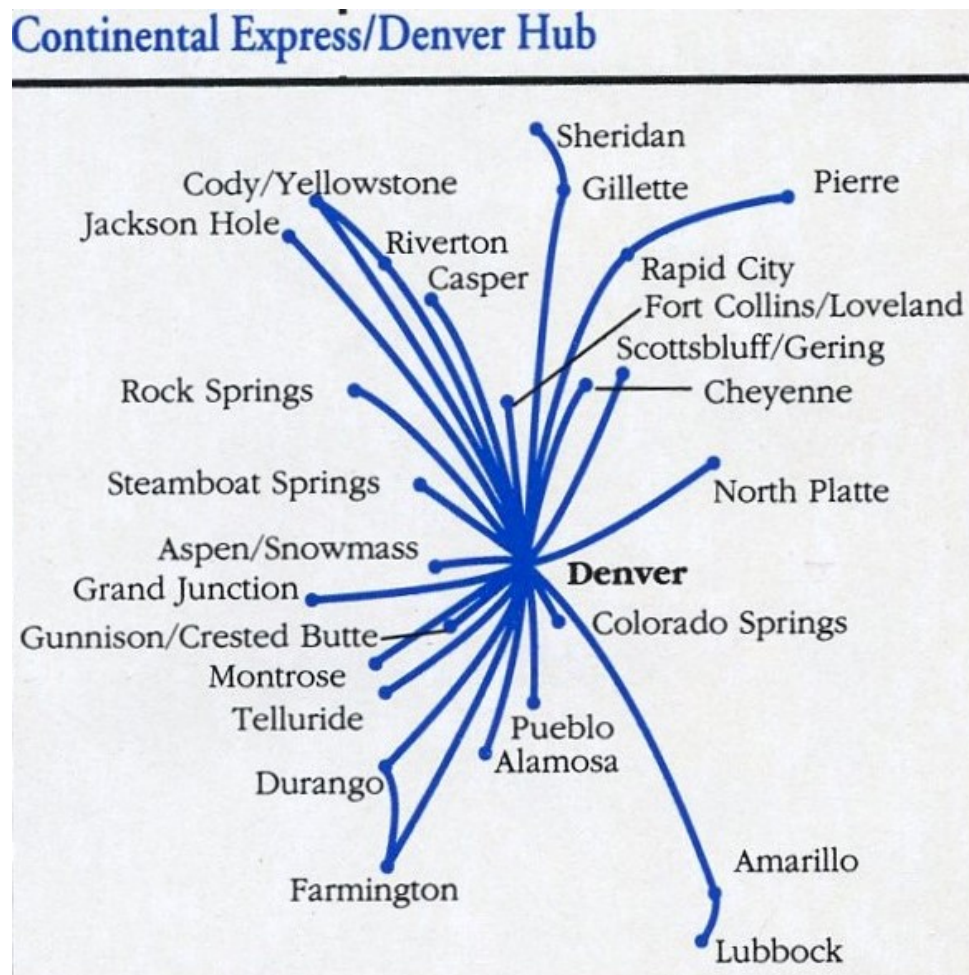# ExpressJet

ExpressJet was a regional airline established in 1986 when four commuter airlines owned by Texas Air Corporation began operating as Continental Express, the feeder carrier on behalf of Continental Airlines. By mid-1991, the four carriers were all merged into one, called Continental Express, operating under the F.A.A. Part 121 certificate of Britt Airways which was established in 1964 at Terre Haute, Indiana. In 1996 the company was incorporated as ExpressJet Inc. and later moved its headquarters to the Greater Atlanta area after a merger with Atlantic Southeast Airlines. ExpressJet was bought out by SkyWest Airlines in 2010 and operated as a wholly owned subsidiary under SkyWest Inc. In 2011 ExpressJet was merged with Atlantic Southeast Airlines (ASA), another subsidiary of SkyWest, keeping the ExpressJet name. SkyWest then sold ExpressJet to Mana Air Inc. in late 2018. Rocky Mountain Airways, one of the four carriers involved in the merger to become Continental Express in 1991, was serving Farmington, New Mexico from Denver at that time which made for the official beginning of ExpressJet service in New Mexico. The carrier used Beechcraft 1900C, ATR-42 and De Havilland Dash-7 aircraft before the Farmington service ended later in 1991.

Continental Express Aerospatiale ATR-42.

Continental Express Denver hub route map from June 14, 1991.

ExpressJet returned to New Mexico on January 7, 2003 serving Albuquerque with Continental Express flights to Houston using 37-seat Embraer 135 and 50-seat Embraer 145 regional jets. A weekly flight to Cleveland, Ohio was operated from 2005 through 2009 on a seasonal basis. Service to Hobbs, New Mexico began on July 1, 2011 with two daily flights to Houston using the Embraer 135's and 145s. Continental merged with United Airlines on April 1, 2012 and all ExpressJet flights at Albuquerque and Hobbs were switched to operate as United Express. The carrier later added flights from Albuquerque to Denver and began service from Santa Fe to Denver on May 1, 2013 also using Embraer 145's. United Airlines frequently changes its schedules using different United Express carriers on many of its routes at any given time and, as a result, United Express flights operated by ExpressJet typically saw interruptions in its service at Albuquerque. Flights to Hobbs had been consistently operated by ExpressJet since they started in 2011 however all service to Hobbs was changed to SkyWest on October 27, 2019. Some flights reverted back to ExpressJet on the Hobbs-Houston route in early 2020 but ended again on September 14, 2020, replaced by SkyWest. The Santa Fe-Denver service was switched to Trans States Airlines in mid-2015. ExpressJet introduced the larger Embraer 175 on United Express flights at Albuquerque in 2019 before ending their Albuquerque service on August 2, 2020.

Continental Express Embraer 135 operated by ExpressJet at Albuquerque.

Continental Express Embraer 145 operated by ExpressJet at Albuquerque.

UNITED
EXPRESS

Operated by ExpressJet Airlines

United Express Embraer 145XR (extended range) operated by ExpressJet at Santa Fe.

United Express Embraer 175 operated by ExpressJet in United's latest livery at Albuquerque.

ExpressJet/United Express route map from May, 2014.

Atlantic Southeast Airlines, ASA

Atlantic Southeast Airlines, ASA, was founded in 1979 and based in Atlanta, Georgia. The carrier became Delta Connection on behalf of Delta Air Lines in 1984 and was the primary feeder for Delta at the carrier's hubs in Atlanta and Dallas/Fort Worth. ASA was bought out by SkyWest Airlines, another Delta Connection affiliate, in 2005 but continued to operate separately however some of its Delta Connection flights began operating at Delta's Salt Lake City hub alongside with SkyWest. ASA briefly served Albuquerque under the Delta Connection banner during the fall of 2005 with Canadair CRJ-700 flights to Salt Lake City supplementing SkyWest Airlines at the time. ASA was merged into ExpressJet in 2011 and continued operating separately from SkyWest.

Delta Connection Canadair CRJ-700 at Albuquerque operated by Atlantic Southeast Airlines in 2005.

ExpressJet supplemented Delta Air Lines as a Delta Connection affiliate by operating flights from Albuquerque to Salt Lake City for a brief seven months in 2008, also using the Embraer 145 regional jets. Delta Connection service to Santa Fe, New Mexico was due to commence in December, 2007 with flights to Los Angeles and Salt Lake City however this service was delayed due to environmental concern issues at the Santa Fe airport. With the downslide of the economy and skyrocketing fuel prices at the time, this service never began. Atlantic Southeast Airlines (ASA) had also served Albuquerque with flights to Salt Lake City under the Delta Connection banner briefly during the fall of 2005. ASA was merged into ExpressJet in 2011.

Delta Connection Embraer 145XR operated by ExpressJet at Albuquerque in 2008.

In 2012 ExpressJet added a new affiliation with American Airlines becoming an American Eagle operator. Service began with flights from Santa Fe to Dallas/Fort Worth in early 2015 followed by flights from Roswell to DFW later that year. Both routes supplemented Envoy Airlines, another American Eagle operator, and began with CRJ-200 regional jets acquired when ExpressJet was merged with ASA. Additional Embraer-145 regional jets were obtained from Envoy Air and added on both New Mexico routes in 2016. ExpressJet took over all American Eagle service at Santa Fe later in 2016 and upgraded all three DFW flights to 65-seat Canadair CRJ-700 regional jets in early 2017. Two of three flights from DFW to Roswell were also upgraded with CRJ-700 jets beginning in April, 2017. All American Eagle service to Roswell and Santa Fe operated by ExpressJet was replaced by parent company SkyWest Airlines by the end of 2018. ExpressJet then ended all flying as American Eagle in 2019.

American Eagle Canadair CRJ-200 operated by ExpressJet at Santa Fe in 2016.

American Eagle Canadair CRJ-700 operated by ExpressJet at Santa Fe in 2017. American Airlines introduced their latest livery in 2013.

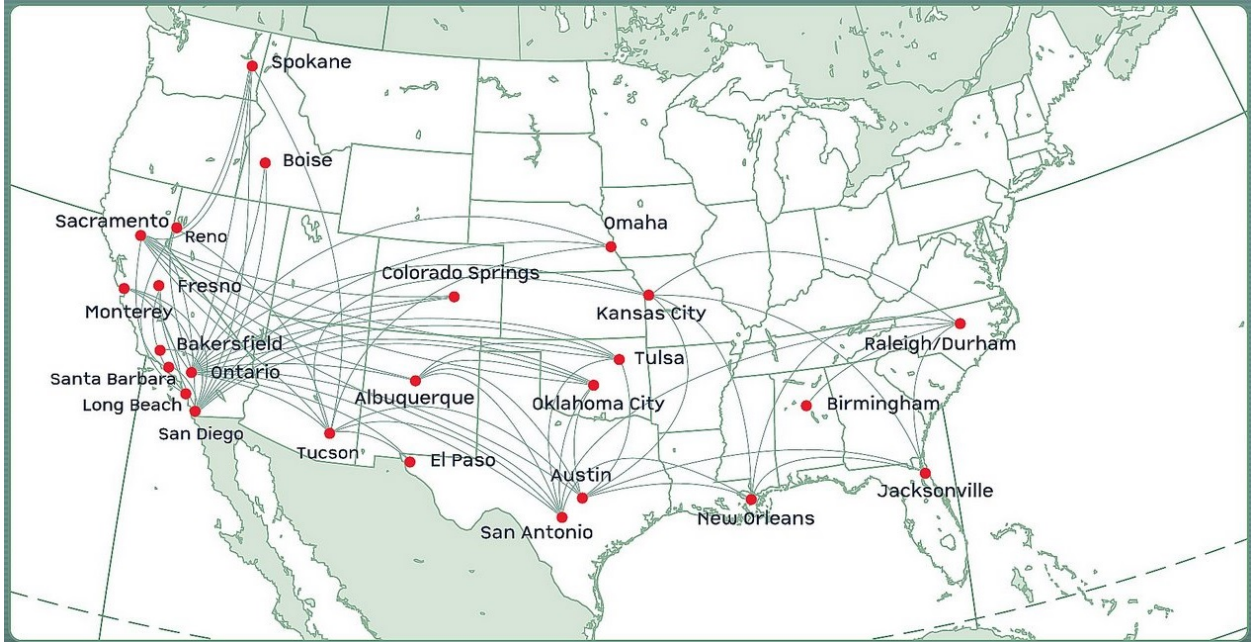ExpressJet/American Eagle route map from December, 2017.

Independent Airline Operation 2007-2008

In 2005 Continental Airlines elected to contract with other carriers under the Continental Express brand and greatly reduced contract flying by ExpressJet. This action freed up a number of aircraft which prompted the carrier not only to begin new alliances with Delta and American but also to create its' own independent airline and use its 50-seat Embraer 145 regional jets. Their goal was to service point to point routes where no other carriers were operating. ExpressJet began its new services on April 16, 2007 with nonstop flights from Albuquerque to Austin and San Antonio, Texas, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma, and to Ontario and Sacramento, California. ExpressJet was soon faced with an economic recession in the United States along with steeply rising fuel prices causing the carrier to abandon its independent operations. All independent flights at Albuquerque were discontinued by August 30, 2008 however the company continued to perform their flying as Continental Express. For about two weeks in November of 2007, ExpressJet also operated flights from Albuquerque to Denver on behalf of Frontier Airlines while Frontier was transitioning between feeder carriers.

ExpressJet Embraer 145XR at the Albuquerque Sunport flying its independent flights.

ExpressJet route map from Summer, 2007 showing the independent flying routes.

Some ExpressJet CRJ-200 aircraft were painted in the company's new livery introduced in the mid-2010's so they could be used for either American Eagle or United Express flights as needed.

ExpressJet Canadair CRJ-200 in the companies' final house colors.

ExpressJet was shut down on September 30, 2020, reportedly a victim of the COVID-19 pandemic. All service within New Mexico had ended two weeks prior after their final route between Hobbs and Houston was replaced by SkyWest.