

ULUNDI SET TO FLY

Federal Air announced as the preferred airline of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Airport

Business people and government officials who currently travel by road between the cities of Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg will now be able to fly.

Zululand District Municipality announced Federal Air as the preferred airline for the new route at a launch event in Ulundi on Friday, 14th October 2011. Daily scheduled flights between Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg are due to commence early next year. At the same event, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Finance, Ms Ina Cronjé announced the rollout of a R30 Million infrastructural grant to transform the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Airport into a first world facility. This follows her inspection of the airport in April this year and her commitment to ensure that the regional airport functions to its full potential and helps grow the provincial economy.

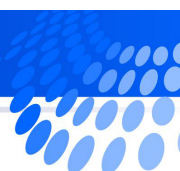
The airport has been under-utilized since the termination of government subsidised flights in 2003. It is located 1km south west of Ulundi, one of the fastest growing population centres in South Africa. The planned upgrades to the airport will open up new opportunities for business, tourism and inter-governmental travel.

The Zululand District Mayor, Councillor Zanele KaMagwaza-Msibi said:

“This partnership between our district and provincial government will make a dramatic change in the economic landscape and bring real change to our people. For us, the airport is critical for growth and that is why we have invested money and resources in getting the airport operational again. We have one million people living here but without an airport, we will remain a backwater. Our research shows that thirty thousand people from Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg are driving through Ulundi each month. But our roads make travel difficult and no matter what tourism and industry we have in Zululand District, without a sophisticated transport system people won't come here because it takes too much time and too much money. Passenger flights mean that people will bring money and resources into our district every day and this will make a huge impact on the local economy.”

The Federal Air flight will take between 35 to 40 minutes. The Zululand District has opted to initially use a twelve seater caravan for the daily flights and anticipates that the demand will require a twenty seater plan within months of starting operations. While the immediate need is from business and government passengers, the district are optimistic about the tourism spin offs. Zululand is the only district in the province of KwaZulu-Natal that is home to the King and it is the very heart of authentic Zulu Culture. The Ulundi airport's close proximity to the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, the Emakhosini Opathe Heritage Park, and important Zulu cultural-historic attractions make it an ideal entry and exit point for travellers on a limited time schedule.

KaMagwaza-Msibi said that the funds from Provincial government would be used to modernise the infrastructure and equipment at the airport. Upgrades which will start in November 2011 include recovering the runway, remodelling the terminal building, and updating of rescue and fire equipment.



She said: “We want our passengers to know that we have the equipment, the personnel and the training to make our airport on par with standards in the international aviation community.”

Potential providers of commercial services to the airport will be able to submit expressions of interest and tenders on a variety of commercial activities at the airport. There is also land, office and hangar space available for lease. These will be advertised and posted on the district website.

About Federal Air: Federal Air has over 20 years of experience in aviation across Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands. With the largest and most flexible private air charter fleet in Southern Africa; taking guests to the most beautiful and remote parts of Africa is their specialty. Federal Air offers guests a unique and seamless travel experience; where every guest deserves first class treatment. Partnering to build new destinations and provide access to areas not currently serviced by the aviation community is part of Federal Air’s core expertise. The range of specialist Aviation Services offered are:

- Air Shuttle Services to Premium Safari Destinations;
- Scheduled Services to remote destinations; and
- Executive Charter and Contract Services.

For more information and 24-hour online bookings visit www.fedair.com, Email info@fedair.com or call +27 (0) 11 395 9000.

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