

History

1944

July 4th - Gordy Newstrom founds Mesaba Airlines in Coleraine, Minn. Takes name from American Indian word for "soaring eagle";

Mesaba has one plane, purchased for \$1,300 and used to shuttle employees of the Blandin Paper Company from Grand Rapids, Minn., to the Twin Cities.

1950

Coleraine hangar burns; Newstrom relocates two airplane fleet to Grand Rapids.

1970

The Halverson family of Duluth buys Mesaba from Newstrom.

1973

February 4th - Mesaba starts regularly scheduled airline services serving rural Minnesota communities.

1978

Mesaba is sold again to the Swenson family of Thief River Falls; begins scheduled service to ND, SD and IA using a fleet of Beech 99s.

1982

The Swenson family takes the company public.

1983

Mesaba begins first codeshare agreement with Republic Airlines, flying turboprop aircraft from small regional communities to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

1984

December 1st - Mesaba begins codeshare agreement with Northwest Airlines.

1985

Mesaba moves its operations from Grand Rapids to Minneapolis/St. Paul.

1986

After Republic Airlines and Northwest Orient Airlines merge, Mesaba's codeshare partnership evolves and the airline begins operations as a Northwest AirlinK carrier.

1988

Mesaba begins feeder service from Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport to small airports across the East and Midwest using Fokker F27 and Fairchild Metro aircraft. Maintenance bases are established both in Detroit and Wausau, Wisconsin.

1991

Mesaba begins adding the first of 25 De Havilland Canada Dash 8 aircraft (leased from Northwest Airlines) to replace the Fokker F-27's.

1995

In 1995, Mesaba and Northwest reach an agreement to provide service with Saab 340 turboprop aircraft. By 1996, Mesaba's fleet consists of 55 aircraft and the company employs 1,540 employees.

1996

Mesaba begins leasing its first 34-seat Saab 340 aircraft. In June, Mesaba began taking delivery of the Saab aircraft at the rate of two per month.

Mesaba enters into a separate agreement with Northwest for the operation of 69-passenger Avro RJ85 aircraft, which allowed the company to be the first regional airline in the United States to offer a First Class cabin.

1997

Mesaba starts service from Northwest's Memphis hub, operating the Avro RJ-85. Mesaba operates as Airways Corporation at that time.

1998

Mesaba named "Regional Airline of the Year" by Air Transport World.

1999

September - Paul F. Foley becomes president and CEO of Mesaba.

October - Mesaba opens new 126,000 sq. ft. maintenance facility in Cincinnati.

2000

Mesaba takes delivery of its 36th and final Avro RJ, along with eleven new Saab 340 aircraft. This makes Mesaba the operator of the largest fleet of Avro BAe 146/RJ aircraft in the world, and the second largest operator of Saab 340's.

May 9th - The DTW hangar and Saab aircraft #142 are severely damaged by what DTW Air Traffic Controllers believe was a tornado. A dozen employees are inside the hangar when the storm hit, but amazingly, no one is killed. The DTW maintenance team continues to operate out of a triple-wide trailer and a pop-up tent while the hangar is rebuilt, opening 13.5 months later in July of 2001.

2002

February - Mesaba expands flying from Memphis, Tenn., hub, taking delivery of 11 additional Saab aircraft from Pinnacle Airlines.

Mesaba's Detroit operations move to new Midfield terminal, with 25 gates designated specifically for regional aircraft.

June - Mesaba moves to new regional terminal in Minneapolis/St. Paul, with 36 gates designated specifically for regional aircraft.

September - John Spanjers is named president and chief operating officer of Mesaba Aviation.

Paul Foley assumes the role of CEO for Mesaba Holdings.

2003

Mesaba moves its headquarters from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport to nearby Eagan, Minn.

2004

Mesaba reaches agreement on a new pilot contract, narrowly averting the airline's first-ever strike.

Mesaba reaches an agreement with Northwest Airlines to continue flying the Avro RJ85 through April 2007.

2007

January - Mesaba Airlines announces that it has started the Federal Aviation Administration process to begin operating 36 Bombardier Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ) 900s for Northwest Airlines. The first aircraft is to be delivered in May 2007, while approximately two aircraft per month are expected to be delivered through December 2008 when the 36th aircraft will arrive.

2007

April 24 - Mesaba Airlines emerges from bankruptcy protection and is officially acquired by Northwest Airlines as a wholly owned subsidiary of the longtime partner. The successful restructuring, brought about by the dedication of the airline's employees, competitively positions Mesaba for future growth in the industry.

April 26 - Northwest Airlines reassigns 15 CRJ200 aircraft to Mesaba. Two years earlier, Mesaba geared up to operate 15 of the CRJ200s, but Northwest halted delivery of those planes during bankruptcy. Mesaba will eventually operate 17 CRJ200 aircraft to be delivered in 2007 and through 2008.

2007

June 7 - Mesaba Airlines completes its first revenue flight with the new 76-seat Bombardier CRJ900 regional jet aircraft. The CRJ900 returns Mesaba to a dual-class service airline, with 12 seats in first class and 64 seats in coach class.

"Today's launch of the CRJ900 marks a new beginning for the people of Mesaba Airlines and our customers," said John Spanjers, Mesaba's president. "The Mesaba team has worked diligently over the past five months preparing for this day and we look forward to introducing this state-of-the-art aircraft to cities throughout the Heartland of the U.S."

2007

August 7 - Mesaba Airlines announces plans to build an aircraft maintenance facility at Des Moines International Airport. The \$11.8 million maintenance facility, to be completed in 2008, will include four aircraft bays and handle scheduled maintenance for the carrier's fleet of 50-seat Bombardier CRJ200 and new 76-seat CRJ900 aircraft.

2007

November - Mesaba begins to take delivery of 15 CRJ200 aircraft from Pinnacle Airlines.