

14 June 2018

## **New Canadian ULCC Jetlines firms A320 leases, eyes 2019 launch**

By Sean Broderick

Aspiring Canadian ultra-low-cost carrier (ULCC) Jetlines has firmed up a deal to lease two 12-year-old Airbus A320s from Dublin-based AerCap and plans to use them to launch operations, likely in early 2019.

“Through my experience with Airbus, I believe that these planes are the right aircraft to commence operations with,” incoming CEO Lukas Johnson said.

Vancouver-based Jetlines, which had planned to launch this month, has not announced a new startup date. But the carrier said its first aircraft are slated to be delivered “before the first half” of next year, suggesting an early 2019 startup.

Johnson was named Jetlines CEO last month after more than eight years at Las Vegas-based ULCC Allegiant Air, where he helped the carrier introduce its first A320s and established a plan to become an all-Airbus carrier by the end of this year.

“The majority of ultra-low-cost carriers worldwide operate with the Airbus A320 fleet based on its fuel-efficient narrowbody framework that supports a high-density seat configuration,” Johnson said.

Jetlines signed a tentative deal to lease the two A320s on April 23, one month before Johnson’s hiring was announced. The carrier originally planned to launch with Boeing 737-800s. It also has a letter of intent and has made at least two pre-delivery deposit payments on an order for five 737-7s and options on 16 more, including conversion rights to 737-8s. The Boeing agreement, announced in December 2014, remains in place, but given Johnson’s history with sourcing used Airbus aircraft and the benefits of a single fleet type to a ULCC, it seems unlikely Jetlines would fly a mixed fleet.

“Jetlines plans to use the Airbus planes to support its startup operations and is not limited from securing a Boeing fleet in future, should the company decide to do so,” the carrier said. The first new MAXs are not slated to arrive until January 2023.

Jetlines plans to launch out of Hamilton, Ontario and add both Canadian and other North American destinations, focusing on leisure markets such as Las Vegas, Florida, and Mexican resort cities such as Cancun.