

## Shanghai-Chicago B747F flights to take off soon

Polar Air Cargo is targeting China as its next major scheduled freighter service market with the planned introduction shortly of six B747F flights a week between that country and the USA.

Following its recent designation as a US scheduled all-cargo carrier on that sector under a new China/USA air service agreement signed in July, the company intends to start operating flights from Shanghai to Chicago, via its Asian hub in Incheon, South Korea, in the fourth quarter of 2004. Polar expects to be able to add a further three weekly scheduled freighter services to and from China from March 2005.

This development, explained Polar Vice President Asia Pacific Kersti Krepp, will enable Polar to offer China market customers same aircraft services to the US mid-west and east coast, and access to markets worldwide, including connections to the US west coast, Europe, and intra-Asia, via our Incheon hub.

In the meantime, said Krepp, we plan to serve Shanghai with regular charter flights during September.

"We already serve southern China through our scheduled services into and out of Hong Kong but the central region of that country is also now starting to see tremendous growth in manufacturing and export activity. So from our cus-



tomers' point of view, it is extremely important that we cover that market as well."

The rapidly increasing importance of Shanghai as a major air cargo gateway is highlighted in the annual figures for that gateway which show that it handled about 510,000 tonnes of international cargo and mail last year, compared with just 14,000 tonnes in 1980. Shanghai's average annual cargo volume growth rate over the last few years has been close on 20 percent and China's civil aviation authority is predicting a yearly increase of at least 10 percent through to 2010. Currently the Yangtze River Delta is responsible for 42 percent of China's airfreight.

In fact, Polar already has considerable experience of serving mainland China, having operated 23 cargo charter flights out of Shanghai last year, primarily to Columbus, Ohio, in the USA but also to the US west coast, during the end of year peak traffic season. It also operated around 10 livestock charter flights into China during 2003.

Commenting on the significance of adding Shanghai to Polar's scheduled freighter service network, Krepp pointed out that the company already offered "extensive coverage" of north Asia, with a total of 24 scheduled transpacific flights a week, including services to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

According to Krepp, "Adding China to this network which serves the USA, Latin America and Europe, Polar's services to and from North Asia are now truly second-to-none."

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