Horizon's Q400 Plane Debuts in Kodiak

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The Alaska/Horizon Air Q400 aircraft, which will offer one flight a day between Anchorage and Kodiak starting in March, visited Benny Benson State Airport Tuesday. The Bombardier Q400 is a modernized version of the deHaviland Dash 8 which Era Aviation serves Kodiak. Brianna Gibbs/KMXT photo

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Alaska Airline’s Boeing 737 jets has served passengers flying between Kodiak and Anchorage for many years, but in March, a new aircraft will step up to the plate and cover half of those daily flights. Horizon’s new Bombardier Q400 won’t be flying paying passengers for another few months, but yesterday it made its debut visit to Kodiak.

Marilyn Romano is the regional vice president for Alaska Airlines in Alaska and made the trip to Kodiak on the Q400. She spoke on the tarmac at the Kodiak Benny Benson State Airport about how the plane differs from Era Aviation’s Dehavilland Dash 8, which also frequents Kodiak multiple times daily. The more modern Q400 is based on the same design as the Dash 8.

“Well if you can look at it, for one thing, it’s bigger. This is a 76 seat aircraft. And it’s a faster airplane, flies at about 414 miles per hour. This is what we call our Q400 next gen aircraft, which is probably one of the most technologically advanced aircrafts in the world in this size category.”

One of the advanced technology features is the active noise vibration system, a special feature that helps reduce noise and vibration while in flight.

Glenn Johnson is the President of Horizon Air and said the plane will only fly seasonally, between October and April each year. He said its one daily trip to Kodiak will replace one of the two 737 jet flights typically flown during that time of year. While the Q400 is smaller

than the 737, Johnson said it’s still quite comparable in terms of features.

“So it’s got the same low visibility capabilities as the 737. It uses about 30 percent less fuel. So that should actually allow us to bring cost down and ultimately, as we get more of these airplanes deployed in the state that should help us bring fares down. There’s two-by-two seating so there’s never a middle seat on this airplane, which is one of my favorite things. And then it’s got a little bit better handling in the wind than the 737 in terms of performance capabilities so it should be able to be more reliable.”

Because of the size of the Q400, passengers will be required to go through TSA security before boarding. Likewise, since the plane sits more than 50 passengers, two flight attendants will be required to provide the in flight service between Kodiak and Anchorage.

The Q400 is expected to start shuttling passengers to and from Kodiak on March 3.