

# The Airport Operators

Official publication of the Alberta Airports Management Association



# 2021

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# IN THIS ISSUE



- 6** MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AAMA, WILLIAM STEWART, AAE
- 10** ON THE FRONTLINES:  
AIR AMBULANCE CHALLENGES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
- 11** RICH WITH OPPORTUNITY: THE EDSON AIRPORT
- 12** AN INDUSTRY GROUNDED: HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS  
AFFECTED AIR TRAVEL AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR ALBERTA AIRPORTS
- 14** MORE THAN JUST FLIGHTS:  
WHY SMALL, REGIONAL AIRPORTS ARE IMPORTANT  
TO THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
- 18** GLOBAL REPORTING FORMAT:  
ARE YOU READY AT YOUR AIRPORT?
- 19** LIFE SAFETY AND FIRE PROTECTION RETROFITS:  
PLAN CAREFULLY FOR SUCCESS
- 20** NEW ADVENTURES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE  
WHITECOURT AIRPORT
- 21** THE MINDFUL LEADERSHIP PARADIGM
- 22** THE CAMROSE AIRPORT:  
FLY IN TO FIRST-CLASS DINING, SHOPPING, AND ENTERTAINMENT

## INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

City of Camrose – Airport.....	IFC, 3
High River Regional Airport.....	15
Highmark Mechanical.....	11
ICC Distribution Group LLC .....	17
iFIDS.....	OBC
LRI Engineering .....	IBC
Marshall Lines .....	7
Millard Towers Ltd. ....	19
Operations Economics Inc. ....	21
Pavement Stencil Co. ....	11
The Loomex Group.....	8 & 9
Town of Edson – Airport.....	5
Vermilion Airport .....	16
Woodlands County Airport .....	7

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE ALBERTA AIRPORTS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION WILLIAM STEWART, AAE

**A**fter the online 2020 AGM, I am pleased to once again step into the role of chair of the board. 2020 was not an easy year for the aviation sector and frankly 2021 is looking to be even more difficult.

In order to address the significant changes that have occurred in our industry, the board met on January 21, 2021 to establish a set of goals that will set a clear path for the AAMA. These three goals can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The AAMA will be a liaison between our members and government, other organizations, and regulators.
- 2) The AAMA will be a conduit connecting members to other members and members to vendors.
- 3) The AAMA will provide information, guidance, and mentorship to its members.

The board feels that these three goals best encapsulates the meaning behind the AAMA. We believe that by directing our time and resources to successfully delivering on these goals we will successfully serve our membership.

Since the AGM, the board has been working on a suitable method to deliver information and training to our members. There are a number of online platforms available and we are exploring all of the options out there. One of the newer items being rolled out are webinars hosted by some of our corporate members.

Work continues on important items such as airport wildlife control, airport regulation, as well as federal and provincial airport funding. These are all ongoing files that the AAMA has been dealing with for quite some time. We will continue to march forward with our members' best interests at heart.

I am quite looking forward to working with the dedicated group of volunteers that run the Alberta Airports Management Association to fulfil the needs of our members. As we deal with this monumental blow to our industry, the AAMA will be here to continue to serve our members and help where we can.

William Stewart, AAE  
AAMA, Chair ✈️



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*Since air ambulances are a necessary service for smaller and remote communities, they weren't impacted too drastically in terms of the amount of flights they were doing during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

# ON THE FRONTLINES

## Air ambulance challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic

**A**ir ambulances are a necessary service for Albertans, especially those who live in rural communities and are unable to access immediate hospital care. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit last year, these services became even more important to supply residents with medical help in an emergency manner.

Since air ambulances are a necessary service for smaller and remote communities, they weren't impacted too drastically in terms of the amount of flights they were doing. From April 2020 to February 2021, Alberta Health Services (AHS) Air Ambulance Operations reported 6,820 patients, whereas from April 2019 to March 2020 they transported 8,094 patients. AHS EMS Air Ambulance provides medevac services to patients who require medical monitoring or care during long-distance transport.

Prior to the pandemic, AHS EMS Air Ambulance coordinated efficiencies by performing multi-patient transports. Jamie Huckabee, manager of AHS Provincial Air Ambulance Operations, says that they can accommodate up to three patients on a fixed-wing aircraft considering the level of care required and their pick up and destination routing. Since the pandemic

requires the need for specialized PPE use and social distancing, patients are now being cared for in a single-patient environment.

In addition to the flight loads, the pandemic has also changed the daily work routines of paramedics and pilots in terms of the personal protective equipment (PPE) they wear, as well as the added cleaning procedures that are currently in place.

"EMS throughout Alberta, including air ambulance, have cared for many patients who are COVID-19 positive, and our paramedics pride themselves on the high standard of care that they provide," says Gordon Bates, associate executive director AHS Provincial Air Ambulance Operations and IFT Strategy, adding that at the initial onset of the pandemic, they assigned two of their resources to respond to all suspect COVID or COVID-positive patients. "We demonstrated that medevac transport with proper PPE of a COVID patient is safe and we have since allowed all of our medevac resources to transport this patient population."

During the onset of the pandemic, AHS EMS initiated the EMS Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC), which is set up to be the source of truth for information sharing, equipment procurement, and resource

allocation for ground and air ambulance. The PCC is typically only put in place during emergency events such as the Fort McMurray wildfires or the Calgary floods.

On the ground, in-person training for their paramedics had to pivot with the need for social distancing. This included online Zoom training and simulation videos, which replaced face-to-face interaction. Huckabee says that they hope to resume in-person training soon.

As for flight simulation training, pre-pandemic, their pilots travelled to the U.S. for this training, however, with border closures and travel restrictions in place, they have switched to on-wing training for their pilots.

Now that there has been a vaccine approved in Canada, Bates says that since early January 2021, paramedics and medevac pilots have been eligible for receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and many have already been vaccinated.

"We are very pleased to say that many of our frontline paramedics and pilots have already received both doses of the vaccination," says Bates. "PPE use and social distancing rules continue to apply, but there is an added layer of protection for our frontline workers." ✈

# RICH WITH OPPORTUNITY

## The Edson Airport



The Edson Airport boasts a 6,000-foot runway, certified 3C NP, which is maintained to a high standard year-round.

**T**he Town of Edson Airport continues to boom. With more and more traffic each year, and scheduled public events, the airport is quickly becoming a hub of activity in the community.

Edson's transportation services manager Sam Shine says he is excited about the growth happening at the airport.

"There are plenty of exciting opportunities to explore with the airport being so close to the mountains and the city of Edmonton," says Shine.

Edson, Alta. is located 200-kilometres west of Edmonton and 165 kilometres from the municipality of Jasper within Jasper National Park. The region is rich in tourism opportunities including mountain bike parks, hiking, fishing, rafting, culture tourism, and much more.

Shine says the Edson airport is a busy place, but they are more than up to the task.

"We have a lot of private charter passenger aircrafts making use of our facility, helicopter operators, and flights servicing local industry for crew moves," says Shine. "There's a large forestry base at the airport as well so it's always buzzing with activity."

The Edson airport boasts a 6,000-foot runway, certified 3C NP, which is maintained to a high standard year-round. There is also an opportunity to lease lots and build hangars, making it a great base of operations for private aircraft owners. Commercial space is also available for lease.

For more information on the Edson airport people are encouraged to visit [www.edson.ca/departments/airport](http://www.edson.ca/departments/airport) or call airport manager Sam Shine at 780-723-4010. ✈



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# AN INDUSTRY GROUNDED

## How the COVID-19 pandemic has affected air travel and what it means for Alberta airports

By Shayna Wiwierski



*Left: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Grande Prairie Airport has had to restrict access to the airport to air passengers only inside the terminal.*

*Right: In 2019, the Grande Prairie Airport moved over 422,000 passengers, whereas by the end of 2020 they had only 125,000 pass through.*



**A** lot of industries were hit hard when COVID-19 spread throughout the world early last year. One of the hardest-hit ones? The airline industry.

According to Statistics Canada, the number of passengers enplaned and deplaned at Canadian airports reached 162 million in 2019, which was an increase of 1.0 per cent compared with the previous year. 2019 was also the 10th consecutive annual increase in air passenger traffic following the economic slowdown of 2009. And then 2020 happened.

In 2020, Statistics Canada says that the number of travelers to Canada from both the U.S. and overseas was down 93 per cent compared to December 2019. According to the Canadian Border Services Agency, from the last week of March 2019 until mid-February 2020, they counted 35.6 million travelers arriving on international flights in Canada, including from the United States. That number dropped to 1.9 million between March 2020 and February 2021.

Of course, air passenger traffic wasn't the only thing that changed in the aviation

industry. The way that airports are now run have been modified to allow for proper social distancing, enhanced cleaning practices, and more.

The Grande Prairie Airport, located in northwestern Alberta, services a catchment area of 275,000 people. They have a two-runway system and a 24/7 airport operation with scheduled service from both WestJet and Air Canada as their two main carriers.

Brian Grant, CEO of the Grande Prairie Airport Commission, says that there has been a significant drop over the course of the last year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The first three months of 2020 were pretty good months. They gave us about 56 per cent of our overall revenue for the entire year before the pandemic kicked in," says Grant. "In 2019 we moved about 422,000 passengers and in 2020 at year end, even though we had three really good months at the beginning, we ended up with around 125,000. So, it was a significant drop over the year, about 70 per cent."

Aside from the decrease in air traffic, they have also seen a major reduction in

service and access in the building. They have reduced staff by nearly 54 per cent in airport operations itself, not including the airlines and rental cars, which also had to lay people off. They also restrict access to the airport to air passengers only inside the terminal. Their restaurant operation has also been closed since the middle of 2020, and they went from 14 flights a day in 2019 down to three flights a day, with some days only having one flight a day. Currently, for those travelling from Grande Prairie, the only place they fly is Calgary. They previously flew to Edmonton as well, but that service was stopped in early 2020.

Aside from scheduled service, the airport is also home to a firefighter base for forestry, as well as medevac traffic. They also get some corporate traffic and charters for work crews in oilfield activity, both of which have declined in the past year.

Although the airport has seen a significant decline in traffic, Grant says that they still see a reasonable amount of activity when it comes to the workforce because of their location in the province and the industries they serve.



*The Medicine Hat Regional Airport has seen a 32 per cent drop in movements from 2019 to 2020, which could have been a lot worse if they didn't have the flight training school.*

"I believe that here in Grande Prairie we will pick up quicker than some other places, not a whole bunch, but I would hope we will be within a target range of 200,000 to 210,000 passengers when we get into 2022, but it all depends," Grant says. "What we've seen, which has affected us in January and February of this year, were the restrictions from international and trans-border U.S. travel that the federal government put in."

Grant says that he hopes to see recovery come along in the next 12 to 18 months, but adds that a lot of his colleagues are saying it will look more like the next 24 to 30 months.

The Medicine Hat Regional Airport has also been hit hard by the pandemic and actually got their scheduled air service suspended due to COVID-19. The airport, which services 90,000 people in the area, has 20 land tenants, with their largest one being a flight training school. WestJet previously flew to Calgary a couple times a week, but the service was landed in March of 2021. The airport also has a fixed wing and helicopter medevac air ambulance base as well.

Logan Boyd, airport operations supervisor at the Medicine Hat Regional Airport, says that the hit to their airport has been significant. He says that they have seen a 32 per cent drop in movements from 2019

to 2020, which could have been a lot worse if they didn't have the flight training school. Passenger numbers on the other hand he says have been decimated.

"We are in a situation similar with the rest of the industry, which is the proverbial rock bottom. We are about 90 to 95 per cent below what we were a year ago at this time," says Boyd. "You look at WestJet and they have reduced their schedule 90 per cent [from 2019 to 2021], so it's just something that is happening everywhere. It's because of the government health regulations. We understand that they are meant to restrict travel and control the spread, but it's a very challenging operating environment and that's why those numbers are so low."

Boyd mentions that of course, with a significant drop in activity there is a huge loss in revenue, so the lack in financial uncertainty is causing airports to operate differently. Not only does he mention the closures and lack of foot and air traffic at the airport, but getting financial assistance from senior levels of government has also been a challenge. Grant mentions that at the Grande Prairie Airport, they have received some funding from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program for wages and wage subsidies. Outside of that funding though, they have had to use their cash reserves and holdings to operate. Grant also mentions that the smaller and regional

airports have been hit just as hard as their larger counterparts, such as Calgary and Edmonton since they rely solely on traffic-based revenues from passengers. Larger airports still have cargo operations and distribution centres, industries that have still seen steady traffic through the pandemic.

Maintaining and having these regional airports are very important for the community, and although both Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie both only fly to Calgary (with Medicine Hat's service stopped earlier this year), it's still a need that is essential to the community since the driving time is three hours and nine hours, respectively.

Unfortunately, until the vaccine is fully rolled out to all Canadians, as well as to international travelers, it doesn't look like the industry will be changing anytime soon. Boyd also mentions that other restrictions need to be loosened as well for air traffic to take off again.

"The vaccine is obviously really key to the greater demand, but for air travel to really start recovering, the border restrictions have to be loosened. I'm not saying it should be right now, but it's the restrictions that are hurting the demand," says Boyd. "The mandatory quarantine, the mandatory testing, the U.S. border closure... those restrictions need to loosen for air travel to grow." ↗

# MORE THAN JUST FLIGHTS

## Why small, regional airports are important to the province of Alberta

*The Slave Lake Airport is home to a tanker base for wildfires and medevac and forestry are their biggest users.*

**R**egional airports provide a lot to the community aside from just being a place to fly in and out of.

According to the Canadian Airports Council (CAC), Canada is home to 570 certified aerodromes, as well as many unregistered aerodromes. In a typical year, around 126 million passengers pass through Canada's many airports, 18 million of which go through small- and medium-sized ones.

Although there are many airports in Alberta, only a handful actually deal with scheduled service. The majority of airports in the province are there for services like medevacs, charter flights, flight schools, and tanker bases, such is the case with the Slave Lake Airport. The airport is a certified airport (as it is located within the town limits) and is one of 10 airports in the province that has a medevac base. The airport is also home to a tanker base for wildfires, and Pierre Gauthier, airport manager for the Slave Lake Airport, says that medevac and forestry are their biggest users.

"For us, forestry is number one. We are surrounded by trees and forest," says Gauthier, adding that the airport is also used by private planes, corporate jets, charters, and helicopters. "Slave Lake forest area is always a hot spot for fires. There are four mills that count on the forest and trees to be standing, so by protecting it and stopping these wildfires before they get out of hand, we create jobs and keep the jobs going, as well as keep the mills operating."

Although the airport does not track passengers, they do track landings, and last year was very low due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Typically they have around 3,500 landings a year and in 2020 they only had 2,500 or so, says Gauthier. Although COVID didn't really affect them on the passenger side of things, it affected the number of wildfires they had in the area. Since there were less wildfires, there was a significant decrease in landings.

"We had a reduction of over 2,000 landings just related to forestry last year. Is it because in early springtime, which is typically when



*The Slave Lake Airport is a certified airport (as it is located within the town limits) and is one of 10 airports in the province that has a medevac base.*

the fires start, COVID started? So is that attributed to that because everyone stayed home and no one was going out into the bush and purposely or accidentally creating fires?" says Gauthier, adding that they also had a wet year last year with lots of snow the year before, which could have also added to the decrease in forest fires.

Aside from air tanker traffic, medevac is a very important service to the airport, which operates year round with multiple landings daily. Since Slave Lake is located in northern Alberta with lots of surrounding communities, having the medevac station based at the airport is vital for those needing emergency care. Kenneth Launchbury, airport operator for the Manning Airport CFX4, which is owned and operated by the County of Northern Lights, says that medevac is also important to their airport and the number-one reason why their doors are open.

Like Slave Lake, Manning also has a tanker base at their airport for forest fires. In addition, Launchbury says that they have a lot of surveyors that come through their airport, such as helicopters and fixed-wing for patrolling pipelines, reading power metres, caribou counters, and more. In a typical year they get around 6,000 movements, with last year only receiving approximately 4,500.



*Manning also has a tanker base at their airport for forest fires and they have a lot of surveyors that come through their airport, such as helicopters and fixed-wing for patrolling pipelines, reading power metres, caribou counters, and more.*



*These smaller regional airports, like the one in Manning, seen here, are typically drivers for economic activity as they help bring profits to local businesses, not to mention the amount of jobs they create.*

Since the nearest major airport is Edmonton, which is a six-and-a-half-hour drive away, Launchbury says that having the medevac service locally is vital for the community.

“For us it could mean life or death for our smaller health-care system here to be able to get somebody up and out,” says Launchbury. “Our hospital doesn’t deliver babies, so if there are complications it could be very serious, not to mention accidents or other health-care concerns.”

Aside from medevac and forest fires, the airport also brings in an economic advantage since people who fly in typically come and spend a few nights at a local hotel, eat at local restaurants, and shop locally. These smaller regional airports are typically drivers for economic activity as they help bring profits to local businesses, not to mention the amount of jobs they create.

According to a CAC report from 2016, Canada’s airports directly contribute a total of \$19 billion to the national GDP, and including indirect and induced impacts, Canada’s airports contribute an estimated \$35 billion in total GDP.

The High River Regional Airport, located about an hour away from Calgary, is home to both private and commercial hangers and also doesn’t offer scheduled service. The airport features 38 private hangers, around 10 commercial hangers, one air cadet hanger, and an additional business that isn’t on the taxiway specializing in noise abatement devices to scare away wildlife. They also have two additional hangers coming up in spring 2021. The airport is jointly owned by the Town of High River and Foothills County and their main source of income is lease revenue.

The airport is an unregistered aerodrome since they are located about three kilometres south of the town of High River. They are home as well to Kanata Aviation Training, which brings in economic activity to the area.

“They have around 40 students at this venture and are planning to apply to become a designated learning institute,” says Nico Meijer, chair of the High River Regional Airport Board. “What that means is they will be able to bring in international students on a two-year graduation visa and that would entail a significant increase in their

activity. Right now all of the students are mostly coming from Calgary, but they buy lunches and spend money in the High River Foothills area, so it’s an economic benefit.”

Aside from the flight school, the airport also employs around 30 people, 50 to 60 per cent of which live in the High River or Foothills area, says Meijer. With roughly 50 buildings on site, they get a large activity of private owners who end up buying gas, going for lunch, buying materials, etc. when coming to the airport. He also adds that most of the hangers have been built by local labour, so construction companies have seen a benefit too.

“With the number of hangers and activity here, there is a lot of





*With roughly 50 buildings on site, the High River Airport gets a large activity of private owners who end up buying gas, going for lunch, buying materials, etc. when coming to the airport.*

money spent in High River,” says Meijer. “I haven’t been able to quantify to what the benefit would be, but I know from a personal perspective we are in for lunch four, five days a week in High River, we buy things at the hardware store, Canadian Tire, we get gas there... There are several people that work in businesses here that have moved into the High River area, or the foothills area. I think with the flight school, with currently 40 students on a regular basis, the visibility of the area will improve and a lot of people will consider either investing in a hanger here or perhaps moving down here.” ➤



*The High River Regional Airport, located about an hour away from Calgary, is home to both private and commercial hangers and also doesn't offer scheduled service.*

## The Vermilion Airport

spanning 3,378 feet, has many attractive features for the aviation and business community. Being located within town limits and with commercial and recreational real estate available on the field, the Town of Vermilion offers a great place for affordable yet convenient aviation related business.



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*The completely revamped GRF reporting system will have massive implications for airport operations.*



*GRF brings with it many new considerations for airport operators. The new rule dictates anything over 25 per cent coverage is equal to 100 per cent coverage and it will certainly change how airports manage their snow removal.*



*The drastic changes from the established runway condition report to GRF will require some significant training for all parties involved.*

# GLOBAL REPORTING FORMAT

## *Are you ready at your airport?*

*By William Stewart, AAE*

**A**fter years of consultation and development followed by a delay due to a global pandemic, Global Reporting Format (GRF) will finally be here this August. The completely revamped runway condition reporting system will have massive implications for airport operations.

When looking at this new system, the first thing to consider is what part of the regulation applies to your specific airport. Are you required to report in thirds, or issue a runway condition code? Or, can you continue to report full length and ignore the new runway condition assessment matrix? The answer will depend on a number of factors and is airport specific, so before you head down the rabbit hole that is GRF, give the advisory circular and associated regulations a careful read.

With the simplification of a complete runway report to a number ranging from zero to six, one would expect that some of the nuance included in a typical runway condition report may be lost. You would

be right; however, the industry has spoken and the desire for a go- or no-go number is clear. By eliminating the interpretation of the report, decisions can be made instantly, reducing cockpit workload during flight and eliminating the desire to use a runway despite poor conditions.

GRF brings with it many new considerations for airport operators. The new rule dictates anything over 25 per cent coverage is equal to 100 per cent coverage and it will certainly change how airports manage their snow removal. But there are some tips and tricks to be considered. Reducing the cleared width of a runway may improve the Runway Condition Code to an acceptable level. The ability to upgrade certain contaminant codes based on friction readings is another tool for the toolbox. These tricks of the trade will continue to develop as implementation matures and airports have some hands-on experience.

The drastic changes from the established runway condition report to GRF will require some significant training for all parties

involved. For airports, this means a trip to the classroom (physical or virtual) to review the new regulations and exactly how to implement them. The impact to the established norm is clearly visible in GRF with notable changes to reported depths, reported percentages, and reportable contaminants. Add on top of those items the all-new Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) and Runway Condition Code (RCC), suddenly things seem overwhelming. Transport Canada has clarified the training requirements right in the advisory circular and has left the implementation of training up to the individual airport. This means that the training program is versatile and can be done online, in person or even in-house, so long as the required subjects are covered.

In the end, GRF is another new normal that airport operators must accept, adapt to, and embrace. So long as airports are ready with suitable training and an open mind, GRF will become as entrenched in the airport world as our current runway condition reporting processes. Who knows, airports might even like it! ✈️

# LIFE SAFETY AND FIRE PROTECTION RETROFITS

## Plan carefully for success

By Eric Pepers, C.E.T., Associate –LRI Engineering

**N**early 100 years ago, controversial architect Le Corbusier famously likened buildings to machines. Le Corbusier was correct in this respect: machines require regular inspection, maintenance, and upgrading by well-informed individuals to continue operating properly.

Building expansions, major renovations, or system obsolescence often requires life safety and fire protection systems to be modified, updated, or replaced. As a result, airport facility managers are left to weigh the benefits of upgrading a life safety system against the cost, planning requirements, and potential downtime while running a facility that never sleeps. Airport managers must deliver positive experiences for passengers and tenants, maintain security, and facilitate other daily operations during periods of construction.

Life safety retrofit in an airport, whether in a terminal building or a hangar, has many challenges. Renovation can involve unfamiliar building activities resulting in periods of increased risk. Continuous fire protection and life safety is essential.

Localized intensive building renovations, such as architectural alterations, typically necessitate isolating the area for renovation and redirecting occupants, such as passengers, from the affected area. Consideration must be given to the temporary shutdown of fire protection systems in the work area. Sprinkler, standpipe, and fire alarm systems typically enable selective isolation of portions of the system to be shut down while maintaining normal operation elsewhere. Systems shut down is typically augmented with fire watch procedures. Inaccessibility of exits within the construction area

must be examined. The loss of exits is to be evaluated for its impact on timely emergency egress from occupied areas adjacent to, or otherwise adversely affected by the construction.

Complex buildings such as terminals often have two-stage fire alarm systems and may include emergency voice communication systems. Their inherent system zoning and operations can be beneficially utilized to manage evacuation strategies, limit security breaches, and normalize operations in unaffected building areas during an emergency.

Fire protection and life safety systems sometimes require repair, upgrading, or complete replacement due to malfunction or obsolescence independent of other renovations. Fire alarm systems in particular offer a number of options to implement system retrofits. Depending on building operation and existing fire alarm system age, technology and infrastructure, options may range from limited field device replacement, to control equipment upgrading, to wholesale system replacement. Additional factors such as available construction time and budget also influence retrofit methodologies ranging from incremental installation of a new system integrated with incremental decommissioning of an existing system to complete parallel installation of a new system prior to decommissioning an existing one. Systems to be replaced should be thoroughly audited to understand opportunities and limitations. Regardless of scope and methodology, system upgrades should consider both short-term and long-term facilities management objectives. An attractive

short-term solution may not always reap long-term economic or operational benefit.

Tools at the disposal of the designers, airport manager, and construction manager to safely manage building fire protection and life safety system retrofits include egress and fire modelling to confirm temporary evacuation efficacy, defined system shutdown procedures including fire watches, and sound emergency planning with coordinated fire response procedures between construction sites and occupied portions of a building. Collaboration of all stakeholders is necessary for a successful retrofit program.

Retrofitting fire protection and life safety systems requires careful planning to identify and overcome obstacles to economically achieve system renewal while minimizing operational disruption and maintaining occupant safety throughout construction. ↗

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# NEW ADVENTURES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT WHITECOURT AIRPORT

*Whitecourt Airport is a great place for aspiring helicopter pilots as the runways and area is clear and routinely maintained by a dedicated group of staff throughout the year.*

**T**he Whitecourt Airport (CYZU) is a gateway to various adventures and exciting opportunities in northern Alberta. Located six kilometres southwest of the town of Whitecourt, along Highway 32, CYZU is a diverse airport operated by Woodlands County.

Pilots access the airport easily in all kinds of weather with navigation help from NAV Canada, who operates a flight service station on-site from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, and PAPI lighting services.

The 5,795-foot runway supports a variety of aircrafts; from military C130s and STARS Airbus helicopters, to flights from local energy and forestry industries and recreational flyers supported by the local chapter of the Canadian Operators and Pilots Association.

Once landed, car rental service is available at the airport year-round for visitors wanting to travel to their next destination or explore the natural recreation spots in the region as soon as they touch down. Short-term and long-term tie-down spaces are available, along with aircraft overnight locations. A visitor rest area is available inside the terminal.

During the summer, visitors enjoy local fishing and hiking spots in many of Woodlands County's outdoor playgrounds, such as Schuman Lake and Hard Luck Canyon. In the winter, the surrounding region is home to the Golden Triangle Trail, providing snowmobilers with 350 kilometres of trails to explore during the sledding season.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry plays an important role in keeping the region and these natural areas safe, and uses CYZU as a base in their wildfire suppression activities.

The airport is also home to several helicopter operations such as flight training services and site seeing. Whitecourt Airport is a great place for aspiring helicopter pilots as the runways and area is clear and routinely maintained by a dedicated group of staff throughout the year.

Helicopter maintenance and emergency repair services are available on-site at Whitecourt Airport by contacting Northwest Helicopters. Serviced lots are available on airport grounds and near the runway.

The airport offers AVGAS and Jet Fuel Monday to Friday and has call-out services on Saturdays and Sundays. While existing fuel service is available, Woodlands County is pursuing growth to expand by establishing 24/7 fuel service and setting new standard operating procedures, ensuring the best flying experience for its tenants and visitors.

CYZU became certified by Transport Canada in 2017 and it plays an important role in the regional economy by supporting energy and forestry for pipeline patrolling and through charter flights for transporting people across Alberta and B.C.

As one of the 10 busiest airports in Alberta, CYZU supports a variety of organizations and recreational aircraft operators looking to get out into the wild. Whether it is for leisure or business, Whitecourt Airport is a diverse airport ready to meet the needs of its users.

For more information, visit the county's website, [www.woodlands.ab.ca](http://www.woodlands.ab.ca), or contact the Whitecourt airport manager at 780-779-9948. ✈

# THE MINDFUL LEADERSHIP PARADIGM



By Amelia Valenti



**T**he balancing act of being both a driven and comforting leader during these tumultuous times is a challenging, yet important call to action. Airport leaders face significant challenges today; with the declining passenger numbers, the staffing considerations, and the need to develop new business strategies to remain competitive, it is evident how much mindful leadership is required for management professionals during these difficult times.

What does it take to be a mindful leader?

A mindful leader is self-aware and has effective ways to manage stress. When leaders actively engage in mindfulness practices, the "psychological capital" of an organization rises. There are four principles of psychological capital that a mindful leader demonstrates:

**Hope:** "A positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to meet goals)," according to Positive Psychology expert Rick Snyder.

**Optimism:** Expecting good things to come and "reacting to problems with a sense of confidence and high personal ability," according to Positive Psychology expert Martin Seligman.

**Self-efficacy:** "Task-specific self-confidence, the belief that you are able to accomplish something effectively," according to psychologist Albert Bandura.

**Resiliency:** "The ability to bounce back and beyond when faced with adversity," according to resilience expert Ann Masten.<sup>1</sup>

By modelling and applying the principles of mindfulness, airport leaders can improve their personal well-being while also creating a culture in their organization where staff feel more confident, present, and, therefore, more creative.

For those of you who have no interest in yoga and meditation, fear not. There are a variety of ways to engage as a mindful leader. Here are a few of my personal favourites you can try:

**Give people time to dream:** Cultivating mindfulness and a sense of peace, even through daydreaming, can lead to more creative (and

potentially revenue-raising) ideas.

**Ask challenging questions:** Getting people curious activates parts of the brain that reduce stress hormones.

**Promote and model 'gap times' between meetings:** Putting a short break in between scheduled meetings helps keep the body and brain alert. The break only needs to be five minutes long, but this time will allow the opportunity to refocus the brain and move the body.

**Incorporate mindfulness into meetings:** At the beginning of a meeting, allow a couple of minutes to engage in set intentions, ask everyone to take one minute and rid themselves of any negative feelings, and take a few deep breaths.

While mindfulness is not a direct solution to many of the challenges airport leaders face today, it is still a great way to promote wellness, allowing for the ability to cultivate resiliency and approach problem-solving to make sound decisions.

*Amelia Valenti is the director of education, training, and organizational wellness at The Loomex Group.*

<sup>1</sup>"Harvard Research Reveals How Mindful Leaders ... - Inc.com." 28 Feb. 2018, <https://www.inc.com/marissa-levin/harvard-research-reveals-how-mindful-leaders-develop-better-companies-happier-employees.html>. Accessed 30 Mar. 2020. ↗

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# THE CAMROSE AIRPORT, FLY IN TO FIRST-CLASS DINING, SHOPPING, AND ENTERTAINMENT



*The Camrose Airport has over 4,500 feet of paved runway and parallel taxiway access which supports a range of aircraft, from privately owned pleasure crafts to corporate jets and medical flights.*

**T**he Camrose Airport (CEQ3) is a surprising hub of activity in the city of Camrose. An hour's drive from Edmonton and a short flight to the Edmonton International Airport, this community-owned airport is a convenient landing spot for visitors to the region.

This airport has over 4,500 feet of paved runway and parallel taxiway access which supports a range of aircraft, from privately owned pleasure crafts to corporate jets and medical flights. Many industry owners in the community utilize the airport for efficient access to their facilities in the city.

The airport is a gateway to the vibrant city of Camrose. Travelers come through the airport for small conferences, sport and recreational events, and of course, to the Big Valley Jamboree, North America's longest running country music festival.

The Camrose Airport has seen a recent increase in hangar builds at the airport, but still has some space available with paved taxiway access. The city offers long-term, secure lot leases with easy access to municipal services.



*The Camrose Airport has seen a recent increase in hangar builds at the airport, but still has some space available with paved taxiway access.*

Once pilots have landed in the city, they have access to both taxi and rental car service. The city boasts incredible natural recreation opportunities, including 25 kilometres of maintained walking trails, groomed cross-country ski trails, and a major recreation complex.

Many visitors chose to walk the historic downtown and visit the unique boutique shops, or fly in to attend first-rate entertainment at the Joanne and Peter Lougheed or Bailey Theatres. It is also home to the Camrose Flying Club (COPA Flight #137), the host of one of the longest-running (since 1955) annual fly-in

breakfasts in the province of Alberta with an annual attendance of between 2,000 and 3,000 people.

The airport is easy to access year-round with NDB and WAAS approaches currently available, a 24-hour, self-serve fuel station at competitive prices, and with full access to a newly renovated air terminal building, washrooms and pilot's lounge. Located in an aviation-friendly community, and recipient of the Certified General Aviation Friendly designation by the Canadian Owners & Pilots Association, this professionally owned and operated airport is a fly-in favourite in Central Alberta. ✈

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