

The Airport Operators

Official publication of the Alberta Airports Management Association



2023



**The Alberta Air
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exposure to
aviation and
rural Alberta**

**AHS suspends
air ambulance
service in three
rural Alberta
communities this
past winter**

**Alberta's
aviation industry
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shortage**



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

Hello fellow Alberta airport professionals! The Alberta Airports Management Association (AAMA) has put another year in the history books and what a year it's been!

The topic that seems to have demanded the most time from the board has been in regards to the continuing inability for Alberta airports to deal with deer and other ungulates at airports. As of the time of writing, this issue remains outstanding and to say that I am frustrated is an understatement. The AAMA has had numerous meetings with the office of the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, the Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas, as well as the Ministry of Forestry, Parks and Tourism, all with absolutely nothing to show for it. The next step is approaching the premier's office directly.

The unfortunate reality is that all it will take is one major accident due to a deer that was known about but unable to be dealt with for things to move forward. The AAMA would much prefer to be proactive and avoid this impending catastrophe and will continue to push wherever we can to fix this problem.

With that being said, things are not all doom and gloom as work has started on a study to assess the economic impact of small airports across Alberta. This study will enable the AAMA to show just how much these small airports help drive local economic development and support their communities. The fruits of this project will be provided free of charge to our members.

Lastly, I would be remiss to not comment on the steady recovery from the impacts

of COVID. While impacts at smaller sites may not have been so drastic, sites with scheduled traffic have seen a drastic surge towards pre-COVID flights. It pleases me to no end to see things returning to where we were.

The AAMA will continue to support our members through governmental lobbying and province-wide studies. Small airports in Alberta are quite the niche, but this small, tight-knit community can continue to work together to drive large change and I am honoured to be at the helm working with all of you to make it happen.

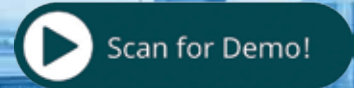


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GROUNDING

Alberta's aviation industry struggles with a severe pilot shortage

By Shayna Wiwierski

Aviation is an essential component of Alberta's transportation infrastructure, and it plays a critical role in supporting industries, such as tourism, agriculture, and oil and gas.

Alberta, as well as the rest of Canada, is facing a critical shortage of pilots.

The pilot shortage currently taking place in Canada's aviation industry has far-reaching consequences for the economy and public safety. Not only has it been affecting the commercial flying industry (and the trickle-down effect into airports, economic development, and tourism) but it has also affected aircraft for other usage as well.

The shortage of pilots in Alberta can be attributed to several factors. Ken Zachkewich, director representing Alberta and the Northwest Territories with the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA), says that the COVID-19 pandemic threw a monkey wrench into the whole industry. With areas being shut down, pilots were unable to fly into airports and had to socially distance from others. The airlines also made changes to make their businesses more profitable, which meant having a decline in pilots and ground crews.

Perhaps the largest impact on the shortage of pilots, however, is the aging workforce in the aviation industry.

"General aviation, the people that fly Cessna's and Pipers and smaller aircraft for fun in aviation, they are getting to the point where retirement is upon them and there isn't a lot of new aviators coming up, unfortunately," says Zachkewich. "Aviation is getting more expensive to stay in and be involved in, so a lot of people who are new to the workforce don't have the means at their disposal to take up the hobby and do it like they did in the '60s, '70s, '80s, and even through the '90s."

The pilot shortage has far-reaching consequences for the aviation industry in Alberta. Airlines and other aviation companies are struggling to fill pilot positions, which is impacting their ability to operate and grow their businesses. Smaller regional airlines are particularly affected as they are unable to compete with larger airlines for experienced pilots.

The Alberta economy is also being impacted. Aviation is an essential component of the province's transportation infrastructure, and it plays a critical role in supporting industries, such as tourism,

agriculture, and oil and gas. The shortage of pilots is impacting the ability of these industries to transport goods and people, which is affecting the overall growth and profitability of the province, especially at airports in smaller, more rural communities.

Zachkewich mentions a study that COPA performed in 2017 that looked at the economics of airports. Pre-COVID numbers, what they found is general aviation brings in \$9.3 billion to the economy (direct, indirect, and induced) and the equivalent of 35,000 full-time jobs.

"When you see those sorts of numbers, small municipalities might look at the airport as a small line on their overall budget and see it as something where they don't see a direct return on investment. They need to keep in mind that the return on investment happens indirectly," he says. "Whether it's an airport operator that lives in a community, an aviator taxi's in that community, they buy their groceries in that community... the trickle-down effect is really quite large."

COPA was founded in 1952 as the unified



The pilot shortage has far-reaching consequences for the aviation industry in Alberta. Photos courtesy of COPA.

Pre-COVID numbers, COPA found that general aviation brings in \$9.3 billion to the economy (direct, indirect, and induced) and the equivalent of 35,000 full-time jobs

voice for general aviation in Canada. They represent over 15,000 members in every province and territory in Canada, and also have a scholarship program that helps to offset the costs of flight training, for both piloted and remotely piloted aircraft. Zachkewich, who sits on the COPA Scholarship Committee, says that when they first started offering the scholarships, they would have 60 to 70 applicants. Now he says they get over 130 applicants, so the interest in aviation is still there.

Sky Wings Aviation Academy Ltd., which is

based at the Red Deer Regional Airport, has an intake of around 10 to 15 commercial students every fall. Sherry Cooper, director of student services and chief flight instructor at Sky Wings Aviation, says that because they have a continuous intake of students throughout the year, they are running 30 students in total at different stages of their careers.

Sky Wings offers both recreational and professional flying programs. She says they offer a recreational pilot permit, as well as the private pilot license. For students to

attain a commercial multi-engine industry rating and instructor ratings they have to first get their private pilot license. She also mentions that they have the Aviation Diploma Program as well, which is offered with Red Deer Polytechnic.

“We offer an aviation diploma, which includes not only the aviation training and licensing, but also business courses which simply help our grads understand the industry a little better and what it’s like to be in charge of a person’s business,” says Cooper. “In other words, flying the airplane



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is not just flying the airplane. You are also taking care of customers, you are managing the flight to make sure they are happy, on time, and the flight is running efficiently. It all connects together. That's why we have the business course, as part of the aviation diploma."

Cooper adds that they are flying as much as they did pre-pandemic, however, it did take a while for student intakes to bounce back. She says that some of their grads and staff are being hired by some of the larger commercial airlines like WestJet, Air Canada, and Swoop. Flight schools are feeling the pinch of staff transitioning to other aviation industry positions, such as instructors getting hired at larger carriers. Add to that, operators are competing with other industries to get young people interested in aviation careers. As a result, aviation operators need to collaborate to address how to attract more people into aviation.

As for getting people into the industry, Cooper says that Sky Wings Aviation attends a number of career fairs to talk to people about what it's like working as a pilot. She mentions the flexibility of the job and the fact that it's not routine in terms of having a nine-to-five workday.

"You're not doing the same thing every single day. It's a people industry and that's why it's a little more intriguing," says Cooper. "That's why I became a flight instructor since I like working with people, and any time you work with people one day to the next it isn't necessarily going to be the same. . . . There is also the added appeal of being able to work with people and watch somebody go from not understanding, or not ever being in an airplane, and sending them on their first solo flight. For me, that's the best reward of all." ✈

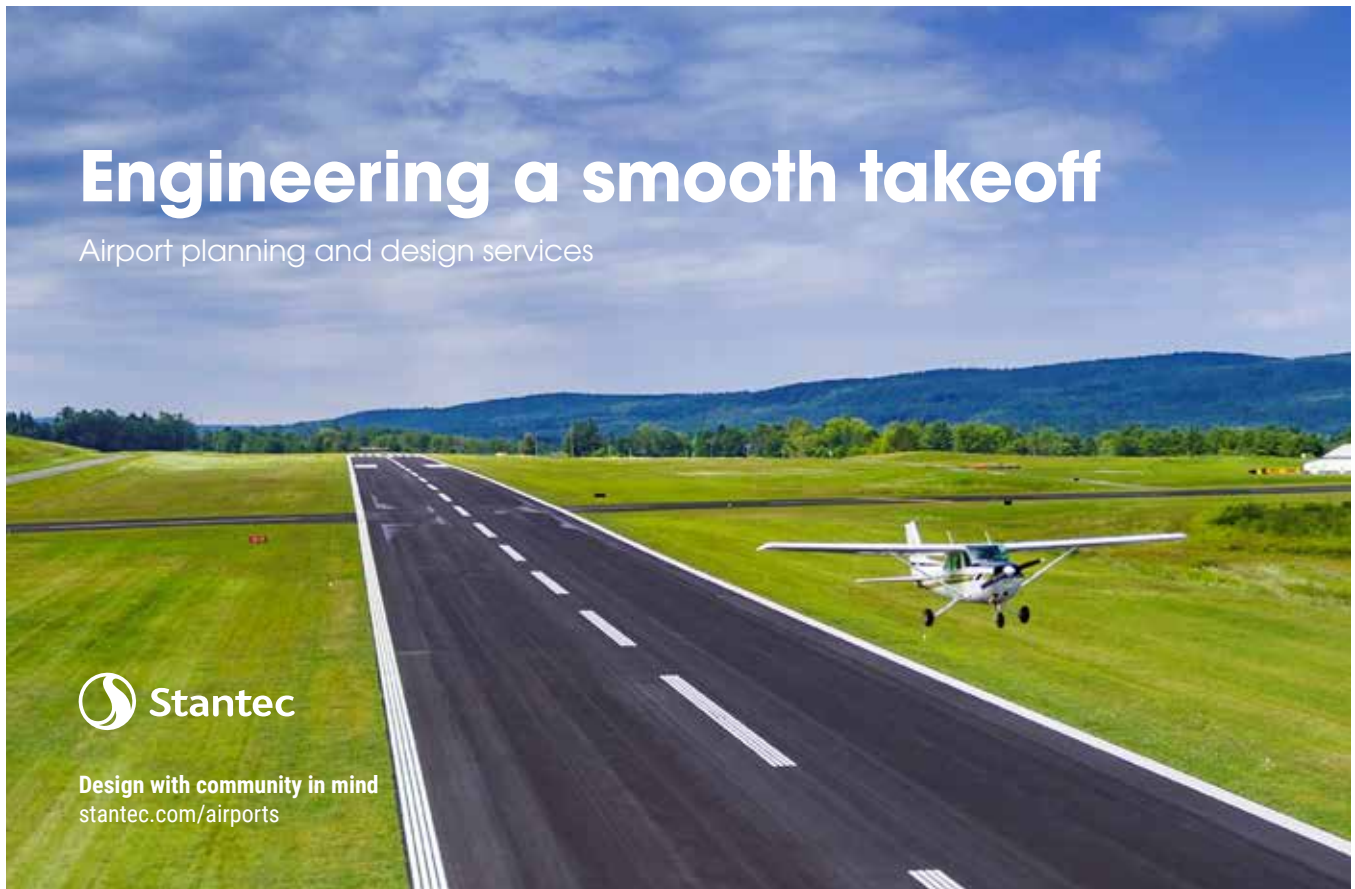
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
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INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

The Alberta Air Tours brings exposure to aviation and rural Alberta

The Alberta Air Tours started with a group of like-minded aviation enthusiasts brainstorming ways to bring together pilots after the pandemic grounded all flights.

A group of pilots from across Alberta are bringing enthusiasm back into the local aviation industry after the COVID pandemic grounded all flights.

The Alberta Air Tours is an event that has been happening every summer in Alberta since 2020. The event started with a group of like-minded aviation enthusiasts brainstorming ways to bring together pilots after the pandemic grounded all flights.

“We were trying to figure out a way to resume aviation activities when everything was shut down and we were not allowed to group together,” says Dina Jammaz, president of the Alberta Air Tours. “By flying in our airplanes in a group, we were able to social distance while still enjoying aviation as a group. In a time when all airshows and fly-in breakfast and other summer flying events had to be cancelled due to COVID, we wanted to keep the aviation spirit alive.”

Once the restrictions were lifted in communities, the project evolved, and the

group saw the potential that the event had to not only inspire a love of aviation with the public, but to also bring attention to the economic importance of community airports.

The Alberta Air Tours is now a full-day event where a maximum of 40 pilots fly to three airports in a day, bringing awareness to the aviation community, as well as the local communities and airports they fly into. For 2023, the Alberta Air Tours will see the group fly into three different communities on three different days. On June 3 they will be flying to Brooks, Olds-Didsbury, and Stettler; and on July 1, to celebrate Canada Day, they will fly to Grande Prairie, Fairview, and Slave Lake. The third tour will take place on August 26 and will focus around their home base area. They will start in Rocky Mountain House, then fly to Josephburg, before ending in Villeneuve.

In planning which communities to visit, Shane Getson, one of the founding members of the Alberta Air Tours and MLA for Lac Ste. Anne- Parkland and

parliamentary secretary for Economic Corridors for the Government of Alberta, says that they plan to visit all areas of the province. They will usually pick one larger airport, one that is more supported by the community, and then others that need more exposure.

“[We look for airports] that communities maybe don’t know about. The town councils of these smaller airports aren’t usually that familiar with aviation or the economic benefits that they bring,” says Getson. “We want to open up those conversations.”

Another big draw of the tours are the community benefits that they bring. The pilots and their passengers are introduced to the communities by the local businesses and chambers of commerce to promote their towns and increase tourism. Elected officials are also invited to come and see the airports and learn about what a viable asset that have, as well as ways to support local aviation.



The Alberta Air Tours is a full-day event where a maximum of 40 pilots fly to three airports in a day, bringing awareness to the aviation community, as well as the local communities and airports they fly into.

The pilots spend three hours in each community before moving onto the next one. Besides getting up close and personal to the aircraft and the pilots, there are often other events such as farmers markets, live music, flight simulators, and more.

“Not only do these events increase tourism within the community, but they also allow rural municipalities to learn about aviation, up close and personal,” says Jammaz.

“With the massive pilot and other aviation

personnel shortage, this is a wonderful opportunity to inspire our rural youth towards careers in aviation.”

Travis Gladue-Beauregard, social media and communications for Alberta Air Tours, adds that the tours have been an inspiration to Alberta’s youth, who can come out and see the planes on display, see them taking off and landing, and some have even had the opportunity to use flight simulators at the event to see what it’s like to fly an aircraft.

“You have these kids practicing who have never maybe been on a plane before or had the advantage to be a part of anything to do with aviation,” says Gladue-Beauregard. “It’s nice to see the reaction from a lot of people and the fact that they have never been able to see how these things are up close and seeing them take off, it’s been a very positive reception from the locals and a great local support from the leaders as well. It was a great way to bring all the aviation community together.”



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The pilots and their passengers are introduced to the communities by the local businesses and chambers of commerce to promote their towns and increase tourism.

With a mission of covering all areas of the province, Jammaz says that they will try to touch on every airport they can.

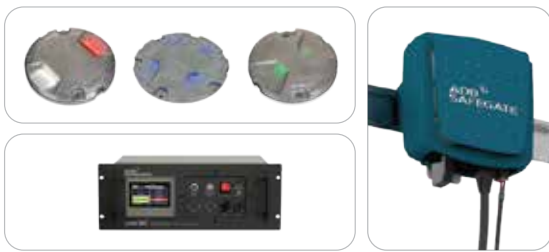
“We want to give those airports that are trying to develop, like Olds-Didsbury and Bonnyville, some exposure. I’ve worked with

some wonderfully driven people that are very keen on developing aviation in their community,” she says. “In places like that, we like to come and try to bring attention to the airport and to the people around there. Every airport needs a little bit of attention to show how important it is. We are trying

to cover all of Alberta and then invite those communities that would like to do something to reach out to us.”

For more information on the Alberta Air Tours, please visit www.albertaairtours.ca. ✈

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FROZEN OUT

AHS suspends air ambulance service in three rural Alberta communities this past winter

By Shayna Wiwierski

The Two Hills Airport features a 2,900-foot runway. In total, they average around 60 to 70 flights a year for all types of aircraft. An average of about four to six of those flights being conducted by AHS air ambulance. Photo courtesy of the Vegreville News Advertiser.

Air ambulance service in three rural Alberta communities was grounded this past November.

Winter air ambulance service is critical for saving lives in remote and rural areas of Canada, where ground transportation can be slow and difficult due to heavy snow and ice. In November 2022, residents of Ponoka, Spirit River, and Two Hills were left without this vital service as Alberta Health Services (AHS) ceased winter air ambulance operations in those communities due to safety concerns.

"These communities were identified by the pilots flying into them as having additional risks during winter months that required mitigation. Aviation risk assessments are usually completed when the flight crew raises a safety concern, where there has been a change in practice, process, or condition (i.e. pilot experience, runway deterioration, etc.), or where the safety reporting system has flagged a number of hazards, close calls, or incidents," says a spokesperson with Alberta Health Services. "It was a combination of the pilots identifying these airports as not conducive or safe for winter operations, increasing air

ambulance volume, and an overall decline in pilot experience that led to a closer look at risks for these airports."

Pilots have always had the responsibility to accept or decline flights based on airport conditions or lack of information received. In this case, AHS formalized their concerns in an effort to provide service without added delays, allowing quicker access to STARS to land during weather checking phase, and to reduce exposure to risks identified by the pilots, keeping the patients safe in an aviation environment. The AHS air ambulance program ensures Albertans have timely access to emergency and tertiary hospital care no matter where they live.

The grounding of air ambulance service was a significant concern for residents of these areas, as it meant that critically ill or injured patients could not be transported to hospitals or medical facilities by airplane. In many cases, time is of the essence when it comes to emergency medical care, and delays in transportation can have serious consequences for patient outcomes.

The impact of the grounding of air

ambulance service was highly felt in Spirit River, which is located in northern Alberta and has a population of around 1,000 people. According to Brent Potter, superintendent of public works for the Town of Spirit River, the town averages 40 air ambulance flights a year.

"It's always life or death flights, it's not for something simple," says Potter. "We have had quite a few residents writing in to the local paper and saying how it saved their life. We also have an aging community around here, so you end up with a lot of heart problems and stuff like that."

Potter adds that with the absence of air ambulance service in Spirit River, they are having to use ground ambulance to Grande Prairie, which is around 40 minutes away, and then potentially flown to Edmonton depending on the severity of the case. As a result, patients are having to go through two transfers, rather than flying straight to Edmonton.

The Spirit River Airport features a single-strip, 3,000-foot-by-75-foot runway with a 2,100-foot elevation. The airport has been in the community for the past 40



Two Hills is around 150 kilometres from Edmonton, so patients in critical conditions have to be taken to either at St. Paul, which is around 60 kilometres away, or Vegreville, which is around 40 kilometres away, to catch the fixed-wing aircrafts.



The impact of the grounding of air ambulance service was highly felt in Spirit River, which is located in northern Alberta and has a population of around 1,000 people.

years and recently updated their lighting system last summer. The unmanned airport accommodates mostly private jets, as well as aircraft working in the oil fields, AHS King Air Ambulances, and in the summer, spray planes. Potter says that AHS gave them no warning in pulling the service, but the community has been trying to spur some political help to get the planes back.

"I have been looking after the airport since 1998 and we have never had a complaint about [it]," says Potter. "In fact, pilots phone [the airport phone] for the runway conditions when they land and often I talk with the same pilots and they praise us about how good of a job we do."

AHS say that there were a variety of factors that went into consideration when it came

to the decision to pull the service from these communities. They mention that small, rural airports may have higher risk than others for any number or combination of reasons, such as short runway length, narrow runway with a higher likelihood of a cross-wind landings required (due to prevailing winds), limited ramp and taxiway access, limited water maintenance available at the airport including timeliness to clear the runway ice, limited access to after-hours snow clearing and runway condition reporting, absence of navigation (approach) system, absence of on-site weather reporting, insufficient runway safety areas for landing or take-off emergencies, and timely access to runway condition reporting at all times of the day and night.

They add that STARS continue to be available to those communities for life-threatening situations, such is the case in Two Hills. The Two Hills Airport features a 2,900-foot runway and Pat Gordeyko, director of utilities for the county and matters for the airport, says that, in total, they average around 60 to 70 flights a year for all types of aircraft. An average of about four to six of those flights being conducted by AHS air ambulance.

Two Hills is home to the Two Hills Health Centre, which is a Stroke and Geriatric Empowerment (SAGE) unit that recently reopened at the start of this year. Patients

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from all over the province come to the community for stroke rehab and physical therapy, which also features a heliport for STARS to land.

Gordeyko says that the community felt blindsided by AHS' choice to suspend service of their fixed-wing King Air ambulances.

"They basically called and informed us that at that point in time they felt because of the risk assessment done, they would no longer be landing any of their planes during the winter months," says Gordeyko. "They decided it was a short runway at 2,900 feet and they require 3,000 feet that has to be within completely dry conditions. Now further to that, we provide snow removal, but we don't have any ability to take ice off the runway, we don't have the equipment, etc. We don't de-ice and that's a main concern for them as they need 3,000 feet of dry runway and we can't provide that."

Two Hills is around 150 kilometres from Edmonton, so patients in critical conditions have to be taken to either at St. Paul, which is around 60 kilometres away, or Vegreville, which is around 40 kilometres away, to catch the fixed-wing aircrafts.

The spokesperson for AHS mentions that the suspension of service in these three Alberta communities was just for the winter season and services were only suspended after alternative modes of transportation, such as STARS, were confirmed. AHS uses a combination of fixed wing and helicopter resources to support patient care and works with STARS, and other helicopter resources such as HALO, when a high level of care and rapid transport is required.

When temperatures are above zero it is unlikely to see snow accumulation again and normal operations will resume. AHS says that this can be anywhere from mid-April to near the May long weekend, however, the aviation providers will update

when they can safely resume operations again.


Going forward, AHS says that they are working on a more robust communications process that will allow for better communications with communities, including ensuring AHS is notified of planned airport infrastructure closures, upgrades or modifications, and ensuring communities are better informed of challenges observed at their airports. It is intended to help with community airport planning with respect to services, maintenance, and access, now and in the future.

"Alberta maintains an excellent safety record, vital to the sustainability of air ambulance access in Alberta," says the spokesperson for AHS. "The pilots want to fly to where they are needed, but need the support to do it as safe as possible every day." ✈️

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PEACE RIVER REGIONAL AIRPORT GOES PRIVATE

By Harold Thorin

It's not a regular occurrence for an airport to change hands. It's even more rare for ownership to be transferred to a private entity, but that's exactly what's happened in Peace River, Alta., and the results have exceeded everybody's expectations.

When the ad went out in 2019 asking for expressions of interest in the airport, nobody was sure just what to expect.

"We really had no idea what was out there," explained Chris Parker, then CAO for the Town of Peace River. "Town council and our surrounding municipal councils were pleasantly surprised with the options that we received."

When the process closed and the submissions were evaluated, the suggestion of a transfer of ownership was brought forward and approved.

The ultimate result was the creation of the Peace River Regional Airport Association, a

private not-for-profit established specifically to run the airport with a board that is made up of local business owners and aviation enthusiasts.

"We saw an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and keep the airport running," says Matt Gannon, board member, adding that the board has successfully kept things running, and then some. New private and commercial tenants, as well as a steady increase in airport usage all point to the airport's success since the transfer.

However, it wasn't all smooth skies.

"Taking over in a pandemic was a challenge," says Gannon. "The first year was nervous, the second was getting better, and now we're seeing it all come together and signing new long-term tenants."

Board member Brett Smyl points to the needs and desires of the surrounding communities as a notable driver of the airport.

"A big concern is living up to peoples' expectations," says Smyl. "Everyone on the board has entrepreneurial spirits and we want to put the public's mind at ease that we're approaching this in a methodical fashion with business in mind."

Following initial successes, the board is excited for the future.

"We're open for business!" says Smyl. "We are looking forward to new hangar lots coming online this summer. We are also planning an information engagement tour with surrounding community groups and municipal councils later this year."

While private ownership of a community airport may not be the norm, the success story of the Peace River Regional Airport may set the stage for other locations to follow in their footsteps. Seeing the positivity and excitement shown by the board in Peace River that may be a very good thing indeed. ↗



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An advertisement for DEL Communications Inc. The top part features the logo 'DEL' in large, bold letters, with 'Communications Inc.' written below it. Below the logo is the address 'SUITE 300, 6 ROSLYN ROAD, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA' and the website 'www.delcommunications.com'. The background is a photograph of an oil pumpjack in a field at sunset. The text 'DEL Communications Inc. your key to success.' is prominently displayed. Below this, it says 'WE OFFER OUTSTANDING PERSONAL SERVICE AND QUALITY IN THE AREAS OF...' followed by a list of services: Creative Design, Advertising sales, Trade Publications, Video Production & Editing, and Qualified Sales & Editorial Team.



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ALBERTA'S LOW-COST AIRPORT

What once was known as a small airport on the outskirts of Red Deer is now a ground-zero opportunity for major aviation brands and businesses looking to expand into the Western Canadian market.

The Red Deer Regional Airport is a great choice for ULLC

Nested halfway between Calgary and Edmonton, the Red Deer Regional Airport is ramping up to undergo big changes, positioning itself as the ideal location for growing aviation businesses. With remarkably low user fees and lease rates, this Central Alberta transportation hub has access to a population of over 2.8 million within a 90-minute ground commute. The Red

Deer Regional Airport (YQF) is a controlled airport that proudly offers efficient service and low-cost amenities for all.

Like many regional airports, YQF has experienced the costly maintenance of existing infrastructure. Through innovative thinking, the airport balances those expenses by fostering a healthy and sustainable business model.

“Over the past six years, YQF has undertaken a significant amount of infrastructure upgrades and developed key business relationships that have supported the growth of the airport,” says Graham Ingham, CEO of the Red Deer Regional Airport. “Red Deer Regional Airport’s mission is to operate an affordable and sustainable airport that serves the community and stakeholders responsibly, by carefully managing each infrastructure and expansion project, while at the same time maintaining a strict no debt strategy.”

Owned and operated by the Red Deer Regional Airport Authority since 1999, YQF services the Central Alberta region 24/7/365 days per year. NAV Canada provides ATC services from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. It supports both fixed and rotary wing operations, and is home to over 20 aviation tenants including flight training, fire suppression units, aircraft maintenance, and air ambulance connectivity for all residents in the region.

What once was known as a small airport on the outskirts of Red Deer is now a ground-zero opportunity for major aviation brands and businesses looking to expand into the Western Canadian market. The Red Deer Regional Airport’s three-phase



The Red Deer Regional Airport (YQF) development plan.



The Red Deer Regional Airport's three-phase expansion project will offer a regional air transportation alternative for larger aircraft that will create resilience and increase capacity for the transportation system and industries in the region.

expansion project will offer a regional air transportation alternative for larger aircraft that will create resilience and increase capacity for the transportation system and industries in the region.

Phase 1, which consists of the widening of the main runway from 30 metres to 45 metres, and the refurbishment of a main taxiway and apron began last year. It's expected to be completed in the spring of 2023. Additional upgrades include the installation of LED lighting and new signage.

Phase 2 is expected to begin this year, and includes the construction of a new low-



Owned and operated by the Red Deer Regional Airport Authority since 1999, YQF services the Central Alberta region 24/7/365 days per year.

cost terminal, and the expansion of the main parking lot in order to support new passenger service opportunities, and build capacity through diversified economic growth in the region.

Phase 3 consists of providing access to more than 800,000 square metres of valuable runway-adjacent airside land for development. Target aviation sectors include aircraft manufacturing, heavy aircraft maintenance and repair facilities,

and cargo operators who will continue to grow and support the fluidity of our national trade and supply chains. A rare gem of an opportunity to develop airside business awaits at YQF.

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WHY ARE EVENTS AT COMMUNITY AIRPORTS IMPORTANT?



Airports provide a lot of value to the communities they reside within. However, this value is often through indirect economic impacts for smaller, often general aviation, community airports. Sure, indirect economic impacts can be measured for these airports, and those in the aviation industry or who provide emergency services certainly should be able to attest to the value airports have for their surrounding communities. But, for airports that aren't in a remote location or don't offer passenger flights, the reality is a vast majority of people within the surrounding communities don't even know the airport exists.

The same community airports are often run or heavily subsidized by the municipalities they reside within, as municipalities often have the resources needed to provide airport maintenance, and the airport

provides their communities with access to vital services like medevac flights and wildfire suppression.

So, what does this have to do with having events at the community airports? Airport events get the local community involved and they provide the community with activities that get the airport noticed in a positive way in the community. This couldn't be more important in today's economic situation where costs have increased and municipalities struggle to fund, or maintain and repair infrastructure, without drastically raising taxes for the people within their communities. With all the competing demands for already limited resource and funding sources, municipalities are in a position where they can't provide everything that is needed in their communities and must prioritize spending on items that provide the largest impact for their community.

The loss of services and economic benefits that airports create has a huge impact to the community. This impact, however, is often realized after the loss of the airport or some of its services in the community, and understandably so. If most of the community doesn't even know the airport exists, how can it be expected that the municipality could justify spending tax dollars on something that isn't seen by the community to provide any value, like fixing a traffic light or repairing the pothole up the street provides? Events at the airport positively engage the community, starting a cycle in which the airport is viewed as a valued part of the community. People also become more visibly invested in the airport, which fuels an increase of the airport's economic impacts to the surrounding communities, further adding to the community valuing its airport. ✈

170 ACRES OF AVAILABLE INDUSTRIAL LANDS WITH AIRFIELD ACCESS

Since the establishment of the Wetaskiwin Regional Airport in 1974, Wetaskiwin has been home to a growing aviation sector, offering opportunities for a variety of industries that support aviation and logistics companies. A certified airport with no landing or runway fees, the airport features a newly paved taxiway, apron and Certified AGN II runway (3,888' x 100').



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RISK MANAGEMENT

The investment and tools we need to keep our coworkers and clients safe



Since its inception, safety management systems (SMS) has endeavoured to provide a framework for airports and air carriers to build and maintain a healthy safety culture for their operations. The goal is, naturally, to reduce the likelihood of dangers on the airside and within their operation, as well as to move beyond that of reactive response to a state of proactive prevention.

To ensure a healthy safety culture, our industry has had to learn to manage the potential risks that threaten the operation, organization, and most importantly, the person, and to invest in these practices, whether it be in a well-structured SMS, policies around Occupational Health and Safety, implementing new systems and technology, or ideally all of the above.

When we look at how easily COVID-19 brought our industry (and others) to a screeching halt, we see that the investment of most organizations in their risk management did not meet the demand placed on them by the pandemic. Planes were grounded, jobs were cut, and businesses were put under.

What is left are the lingering hazards that have further increased the risk. Those who could be retired, taking with them a wealth of industry and corporate knowledge. Others left the industry for other employment opportunities, and we now see lowered expectations of the experience required to fill the many job vacancies. And,

in an attempt to compensate for these vacancies, demands are being put on staff to work harder with an increased number of duties.

While we could not have predicted these outcomes, we can learn from them to better understand the full range of factors that should be considered for successful risk management.

The long-term success of any organization depends on appropriate investment in the process, tools, people, and training to reduce risk and prevent disaster. Unfortunately, we often sacrifice these long-term investments to give as many resources as possible to output, product, and financial gains. When this happens, the argument is often that the company must make money to stay in business. While this is true, not enough investment in risk management can only increase the likelihood and potential magnitude of disaster.

This disaster can appear in many forms. It can be financial, a major stop in operations, or damage to equipment. First and foremost, however, it can come in an event or incident that jeopardizes human health and human life. This outcome, in which the safety of people is threatened, must permanently remain the focus on why it is so important to manage risk—to protect human health and human life. This is no easy task, and to perform the duties

that ensure appropriate risk management requires investment, both financially and in the workforce.

Investing in people has been and must continue to be good business practice for any organization, although it is easy to argue how difficult that has become in our post-pandemic reality of high turnover, job vacancies, and the loss of corporate knowledge. Not only is our current employment reality hurting our ability to manage risk in a daily sense, but our ability to maintain continuity has been reduced as well. The departure of so many of our industry co-workers, along with a lack of up-and-comers to take on the mantle, has made succession to the next generation of aviation professionals that much more difficult.

Thus, airports (registered and certified), as well as air carriers, must make use of the already existing tools that will support their operations while continuing to find ways to hire and keep staff. These include establishing clear, effective operating procedures, finding easier ways to record and store documents and reports, and taking advantage of the technology we now have to help staff be more efficient and reduce their workload. These actions will better enable smaller operations and management teams to perform their duties, achieve their operational and regulatory requirements, and better ensure successful risk management. ✈

DYNAMIC VISION, DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES



Coming in summer 2023, aviators can expect to utilize a new 24/7 fuel cardlock for added convenience and to support their operations and planning.

There's something going on in Woodlands County. It's not only the natural playground welcoming its visitors to the multitude of all-season recreation opportunities, or the expansive local economy that is catching the eye of industry and commercial operators, but something more strategically planned with a forward-looking focus.

Recognizing the number of benefits and opportunities its region has to offer and hearing the needs from local and visiting aviators, CYZU Airport has a renewed outlook for its future. Guided by an Airport Master Plan that was finalized in 2020 and an upcoming 2023 Airport Vicinity Protection Area Plan, the time has come to leverage everything this distinct airport has to offer.

Already utilized by Alberta Health Services and STARS air ambulance, CYZU supports the valuable oil and gas industry, forestry, and is an integral piece of wildfire operations as it's home to a permanent base. Children and adults alike are proudly pointing to the skies as a Cessna tours the area, a Canadian Armed Forces Griffin helicopter does a flyover, and waterbombers make their way to save land and lives. This active airport is paving the way for more activity and new airside development.

The Airport Master Plan dove deep into the current status of the entire airport property, but more importantly, and excitedly, what options and opportunities can be created to serve existing operators, potential users, and the surrounding community. Woodlands County has a lot to offer and CYZU provides enhanced services in comparison to its neighbouring airports, and the Master Plan made clear that competitiveness will keep CYZU in the line of sight of the right operators. While inflation continues to drive costs across the board, new in 2023, CZYU dropped its rates on both private and commercial leases, encouraging new businesses to enter the area and innovative development to take root.

While keeping fees competitive, enhancing services was also identified in the updated Master Plan. Coming in summer 2023, aviators can expect to utilize a new 24/7 fuel cardlock for added convenience and to support their operations and planning. During the same timeframe, CYZU begins the process of a full taxiway reconfiguration set to improve the use of the airport for leaseholders and visitors.

Without fear of sounding like an infomercial... but wait, there's more! Woodlands County, CYZU's owner and operator, has invested



Already utilized by Alberta Health Services and STARS air ambulance, the CYZU Airport in Woodlands County supports the valuable oil and gas industry, forestry, and is an integral piece of wildfire operations as it's home to a permanent base. All photos by Nicolas Bilodeau.



Woodlands County has a lot to offer and CYZU provides enhanced services in comparison to its neighbouring airports.

funding, time, and resources into developing an Airport Vicinity Protection Area (AVPA) Plan, which intends to layout the strategy for the future of CYZU. The AVPA is set to identify lands that will be preserved for the future of enhanced operations, specifically for airport use and airport-related development opportunities.

CYZU is setting up for long-term planning and viable solutions that cater to the masses, and is ready to welcome industry and business, including civilian and general aviation. As noted by global site selectors who visited CYZU in 2022, this airport and its encompassed property has the ability to develop all types of airside opportunities, and the use of the upcoming AVPA is creating the biggest prospect – space!

Whether you're looking at stopping over in Woodlands County and taking in its vast recreation; hiking, fishing, river tubing, camping, or snowmobiling, or if your business is geared towards taking a piece of the \$13+ million in added local GDP from airport operations, CYZU is ready to serve innovative projects, inspiring business, and all their fixed wing and rotary operations. ✈

WE'LL CYZU AT THE AIRPORT

WHAT'S TOUCHING DOWN AT CYZU

Woodlands County is committed to growing its airside development.

- lowered airport lease rates
- encouraging new civilian and commercial development
- land available to meet all needs

Supporting industry: energy, forestry, and civilian aviation.

NavCanada flight service onsite.
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COMING IN 2023

- 24/7 Fuel Cardlock - Summer 2023
- Taxiway Reconfiguration
- Airport Vicinity Protection Plan to support future development



Located 6km from Whitecourt, AB, CYZU is certified, servicing fixed wing and rotary operations.

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majority owner, Ken Lett, and continues through our organization, motivating our mission; "Built with passion, inspired by aviation".

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EFC Developments applies the principles of asset management, maintenance management, and operations management, which are scaled



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EFC Developments (2020) Ltd. has firsthand working knowledge of the requirements and processes needed for airport construction.

appropriately to the scope. The goals and objectives of these principles are to ensure assets are managed to extend their full life cycle, gain maximum capacity of facilities, equipment, and related utilities through a planned reliability approach, at optimal cost

and under satisfactory conditions of quality, safety, and protection of the environment.

CONSTRUCTION

EFC Developments has assembled a team of dedicated and knowledgeable

construction professionals who have the proven experience and capability to manage projects of any size and complexity.

Construction development demands a very specific set of skills, processes, and requirements. EFC Developments continuously works and tests these applications, thereby ensuring the most efficient of operations on every project. With over 160 combined years of construction expertise and over \$100 million of successfully completed projects, EFC Developments is considered as a front-runner on any construction project.

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High Level, Alta., is a community of nearly 4,000 people in the middle of northern Alberta's glorious boreal forest. This open, welcoming town is the service hub for the region. Visitors can enjoy a number of amenities, from fine dining to fast food, hotels, nightlife, and activities unavailable anywhere else in northern Alberta.

More than just a place to have all your service needs met, this bustling community is known for its outstanding community spirit and family-friendly events throughout the year. The Town of High Level is a short 10-minute drive south of the High Level Airport, along the iconic Mackenzie Highway.

Whether its February Frostival celebrations, summer concerts in the park, busy Canada Day events, or great facilities, there is so much to do in this community!

Take in a round of golf at the Fox Haven Golf Course, enjoy fishing at one of the many northern lakes within driving range of High Level, or take in a nature walk on one of our many paths and trails throughout the community. High Level boasts a gun range, motocross track, and Saturday farmers' markets in the summer. Stop in and check out High Level's history at the Mackenzie Crossroads Museum and Visitor Centre, or fly in for the long-running High Level Rodeo!

High Level also has plenty of opportunities for winter activities. The town boasts outdoor skating paths, sledding hills, a sports complex for hockey, figure skating,

Whether its February Frostival celebrations, summer concerts in the park, busy Canada Day events, or great facilities, there is so much to do in High Level.



High Level also has plenty of opportunities for winter activities.



For air travellers, the High Level Airport boasts many features intended to make your stay in the north easy and enjoyable.

and curling, and an active snowmobile group. There are plenty of places to explore on your cross-country skis or snowshoes.

High Level is a fantastic place to view the Northern Lights. Grab a warm drink and watch them light up the sky in the fall and winter months or pull out a lawn chair to watch them in the spring and summer!

Why not join us in autumn when the leaves change, and community is haloed in glorious golds, reds, and oranges of the northern boreal forest? A walk on one of our pathways surrounded by all the colours nature can muster is something that shouldn't be missed.

For air travellers, the High Level Airport boasts many features intended to make your stay in the north easy and enjoyable.

The airport has AV gas and Jet A fuel on site with 24/7 service available. That means when you need it, we've got it.

Our terminal has always been a visitor-friendly place, but has been upgraded to create a more relaxing environment. Make use of our pilots' lounge, baggage, and ground-handling services, as well as de-icing services. And we also have free Internet!

The facility is a Transport Canada-certified aerodrome with daily scheduled flights to Edmonton and parts north and west. And the airport is surrounded by easy-to-access services, such as car rentals, hanger lots, parking with plug-ins for lease or daily rental, and more!

So why not make High Level your next destination for adventure?

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