

Airport Management Council of Ontario

May/June2024

Volume 13, Issue 3

The Airport Environment and You



Representing Ontario's Airports





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From the Desk of the CEO

Next Up at AMCO

Spring has sprung. April showers have given way to May flowers. The sun is out and teasing the beautiful summer ahead. Scotty is looking forward to his first "summer off", certainly one of the better childhood perks. Best of all, AMCO was hosted by the Earlton-Timiskaming Regional Airport for our 11th Annual Spring Airfield Workshop.

The Workshop was a great one day event where over 30 people attended and heard from great speakers, participated in some great round table discussions and had the opportunity to network and connect with colleagues from around the province. This event was made possible by our sponsors and we would like to thank each of them:

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Thanks as well goes out to Jamie Smith, Airport Manager in Earlton-Timiskaming, our many fantastic speakers and to everyone who attended and participated.

As we begin to look ahead, AMCO is excited to be once again participating in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in August. This is a great opportunity to meet and connect with your local politicians and to provide understanding about the value of local airports and all of the critical work that is made possible through these facilities. We also look forward to continuing to meet with MPPs to share with them the value of local airports and how they can best be supported.

Finally, AMCO is excited for this year's 39th Annual Convention and Trade Show which will be taking place in London, ON from Oct. 6-9[.] Please visit the AMCO website for more information and to register. The early bird deadline will be here before you know it!

So while Scotty and his friends are looking forward to an exciting summer, we at AMCO have many things to look forward to as well. We would like to thank you for your continued support and readership – and stay tuned for more exciting things to come!

Sincerely,

Laura McNeice CEO, AMCO

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Capacity and capabilities can lead to incredible opportunities

Original Article by Bryan Avery, Airport Manager at North Bay Jack Garland Airport, May 30, 2024

Sometimes they are brief, rather small or short lived, while other times they can be big opportunities that have the potential to change an airport, community and even the industry long term. The North Bay Jack Garland Airport (YYB) is not new to these opportunities. Throughout the years YYB has worked with numerous businesses and agencies to provide a facility that allows for a convenient and uncongested operational environment.

While Canadian manufactures such as Bombardier, DeHavilland Canada, Airbus Canada, and others have realized the benefit of using YYB for certification of newly built but yet to be delivered aircraft others have been attracted to North Bay for many different plans.

In fact, NASA, the FAA and Canadian agencies worked at the North Bay Airport to develop airport surface friction testing research in the 1990's to develop a system to provide invaluable data for winter operations, while Volga Dnepr and their IL76 and AN124 aircraft came to North Bay to efficiently conduct heavy lift cargo operations around the world. While undoubtedly the airport's 10,000ft long runway and related air navigation systems were critical for these operations, so to was the airport's willingness to adapt and work with stakeholders to develop customized solutions for each new venture.



Most recently in May 2024, and after nearly 6 months of planning, Airbus arrived in North Bay to test flight systems using an A350-900 Flightlab flight test vehicle (FTV). It was by all metrics a big deal; the second largest aircraft currently produced by Airbus and the second largest aircraft to ever utilize the infrastructure and capabilities at the North Bay Airport in its nearly 90 year history of operations. Coming direct from Toulouse, France it had everyone's attention.

It was a unique challenge to say the least; where could an aircraft of that size and weight park while still ensuring they had convenient access to the runway and the offices the test crew needed during their several weeks long program, what equipment is needed and where is it sourced if not available from the airport or onsite service providers, what special considerations or requirements are needed from Airbus to ensure that the testing program is successful (ARFF, fueling, deicing, cargo loading, etc.)?

After first proposing the idea in the fall of 2023 everyone got to work immediately. World Fuels and Voyageur Aviation Corp organized the logistics of ground support equipment, CBSA in North Bay assisted with clearances for everyone coming from France with the aircraft, and airport operations determined how to safely park the aircraft while providing access to all other users of the airport; even planning the rerouting of all Airside Vehicle Operators during the test program and the assembly of extremely heavy tugs and loaders once they arrived onsite. There's obviously a lot that goes into a single opportunity, supported by and for the benefit of the community, hotels, tourism, etc. while they're here. The list of important partners is seemingly endless. Thank you to all of them.

After a successful test campaign the A350 departed back to France but the opportunity they left in North Bay remains. Lessons learned are applied to the next challenge and custom solutions tailored to future requirements.

Farewell, for now.



Got thoughts on flying in Canada? The Competition Bureau wants to hear from you

Original Article by Anis Heydari, CBC, May 28, 2024 For full article click here

The federal Competition Bureau says it's going to look at the domestic air travel industry in Canada, and it's looking for input from Canadians as it prepares to study the market in the coming months.

The agency, which is tasked with enforcing competition law in Canada, said in a press release listing the reasons for its study that domestic airfare in Canada "appears to be relatively high" and that Canadians are filing more complaints about air travel recently.

The bureau also noted that domestic air travel is "concentrated" with only two major airlines — Westjet and Air Canada — and that new airlines seem to have difficulties joining the industry here.

"What we're trying to do here is study how competition is working in the sector, really with a view to making recommendations to government," said deputy commission Anthony Durocher.

"Why this matters is because we know that competition means lower prices, more choice, more innovation."

The Competition Bureau has asked Canadians to weigh on the upcoming study's terms of reference, essentially requesting public comment on the scope or potential limitations of the upcoming study.

The tentative, draft terms of reference mention that the bureau wants to answer questions, such as, "How can policymakers further support airline entry and expansion?" and, "How can policymakers further support consumers when shopping for airfares?"

The public has until June 17 to submit feedback, after which the bureau will finalize terms of reference and officially launch the market study, which is planned to be completed by summer 2025.

The report would make recommendations to government, but is not looking at any specific allegations of wrongdoing.



Airports drop in on Temiskaming Shores

Original Article by Darlene Wroe, The Temiskaming Speaker May 16, 2024 For full article click here

The Earlton Timiskaming Regional Airport Authority hosted the eleventh annual Airport Management Council of Ontario (AMCO) Wednesday, May 8.

Airport manager James Smith was on hand at the Holiday Inn in Temiskaming Shores to greet representatives of airports from across Ontario, from as far away as Red Lake and Windsor.

He explained that AMCO moves its annual conventions to different areas from year to year "and this year we were selected to host and we were happy to do so.

"The purpose of the convention is to highlight some of the challenges that airports are facing, in particular funding, and AMCO has taken a lead on that federally and provincially to be a voice for airports to help with the funding." [...]

AMCO chief executive officer Laura McNeice was also on hand. She explained that AMCO is "advocating to the provincial government for a capital assistance program to help small airports and registered aerodromes who have no access to funding through the federal government or through any other means to have a program that can assist them in maintaining their airports for safety and things like that."

Airport hosts active training exercise

Original Article by Justin Hardy, TB NewsWatch, May 15, 2024 For full article click here

Air travellers may have caught a glimpse of quite the commotion at the Thunder Bay Airport as their flights were arriving and departing. The airport held an active exercise on Wednesday to assess its emergency response and preparedness protocols.

"The primary objective of this exercise is to appraise the coordination and communication effectiveness among airport personnel, airlines and emergency responders," said Ryan Brading, manager of airport services.

"The intricacies inherent in the exercise really underscore how important it is to collaborate and communicate among our various agencies and provide an important opportunity to become familiar with the people and processes we have in place today."

Brading said the exercise involved structuring a response to an unplanned disruption inside an aircraft, mid-flight. "We have experienced a lot of incidents over the past few years at the airport and we really take our planning and training and procedures very seriously, most of which far exceed regulatory requirements," he said.

"We consider ourselves leaders within the airport industry and, through advanced consultation with our participating agencies, we've included realistic events that intentionally stress test our established procedures."

Multiple organizations participated in the exercise alongside airport crews including the OPP, RCMP, Thunder Bay Fire Rescue, Superior EMS, and the Thunder Bay Police Service.





Region of Waterloo international Airport testing new Air Canada motorcoach service

Original Article by Josh Goeree, CityNews, May 2, 2024 For full article click here

Air Canada is testing a new motorcoach pilot program to connect their customers from the Region of Waterloo International Airport to Toronto Pearson International Airport. The service is in collaboration with The Landline Company and will run out of both Waterloo and the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport. If successful, the program could be used across the country.

It works with Air Canada passengers checking in at Waterloo and receiving all boarding passes for their trip. When they arrive at Pearson, they are taken directly to the departure level. Each motorcoach can take 36 passengers at a time and runs six non-stop trips every day from 5 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. [...] In case of coach or flight delays, Landline says they will rebook customers like those who travel on air-only itineraries.

See a military army plane over London? There's training at the airport and Victoria Hospital

Original Article by CBC News, May 18, 2024
For full article click here

Londoners may spot a military aircraft above the city on Saturday, but it's just a drill.

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces and a Royal Canadian Air Force CC-130J Hercules will be doing training at the London International Airport. Soldiers will be working with the Special Operations Team from Ornge, along with a team at Victoria Hospital. [...]

"The training exercise will involve the transportation of a simulated highly infectious patient between the London International Airport and Victoria Hospital."

Cliche said the Hercules aircraft is expected to land at the London airport sometime in the morning and the local training exercise will happen shortly thereafter.

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Air traffic and passenger movements up at Timmins airport

Original Article by Thomas Perry, The Daily Press May 15, 2024 For full article click here

While numbers still have not rebounded to pre-COVID-19 levels, Timmins Victor M. Power Airport is seeing an increase in air traffic and passenger movements. Airport Manager Dave Dayment provided an update on the facility during

Tueday's city council meeting, noting they are estimating aircraft movements will reach 20,000 this year, up significantly from 18,000 in 2021. Currently, Air Canada offers two flights per day, seven days a week, using 78-seat Dash 8 Q-400 aircraft, to Toronto's Pearson Airport. A third return flight is scheduled to be added effective June 2, with a 5:10 a.m. departure and a 10:20 p.m. arrival. In addition, Porter Airlines offers one flight per day, seven days a week, using 78-seat Dash 8 Q-400 aircraft, to Toronto's City Airport.

"We have talked with Air Canada and Porter (Airlines), but both of them still have staffing availability issues, aircraft availability issues," Dayment said, regarding lobbying efforts to increase the number of daily flights in and out of Timmins.

"One of the problems in the network is they are flying 70- or 50-seat airplanes, so our seat capacity to Toronto and back is about 400 seats per day when Air Canada starts its third flight in June. It's higher than it was, but there are no new carriers in the market."

In fact, the opposite is true following the loss of service to communities in Northwestern Ontario. "Last weekend was the last scheduled service into Kenora, Dryden and Fort Frances in Northwestern Ontario," Dayment said.

"So, there are still reductions in services out in the marketplace, but we are holding our own. We are doing better than some other regional airports."

Air Creebec operates more than 70 flights a week to Moosonee, Fort Albany, Kashechewan and Attawapiskat, using Dash 8-100 aircraft, while Thunder Airlines services the same communities, with more than 60 flights a week [...]



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Hamilton airport passenger numbers climb in 2023 despite industry upheaval

Original Article by Matthew Van Dongen, The Hamilton Spectator, May 13, 2024 For full article click here

Passenger traffic at Hamilton's international airport rebounded to more than 820,000 travellers last year despite the loss of budget carriers in a major airline consolidation.

But ongoing "volatility" in the airline industry makes it hard to predict if the climb will continue back to pre-pandemic numbers of close to one million passengers.

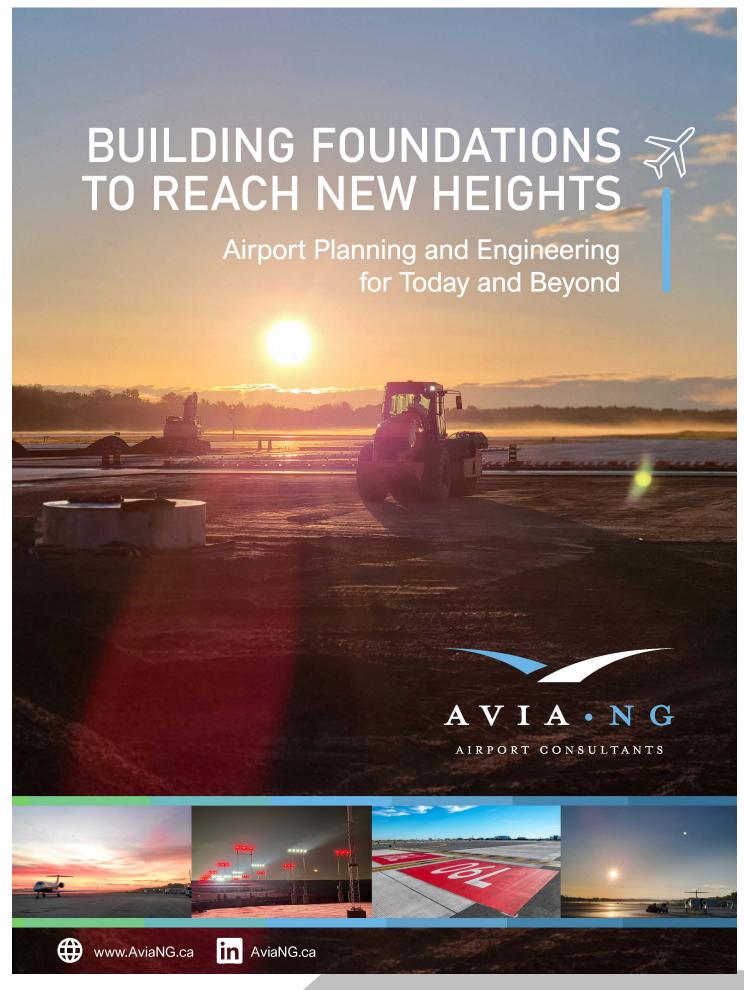
Passenger levels at the city-owned, privately run airport plunged as low as 250,000 during the COVID pandemic in 2021 — despite soaring cargo numbers — before bouncing back past 645,000 the next year.

The recovery continued in 2023, including 820,000 passengers and "the busiest summer we've had in the last 20 years," airport head Cole Horncastle said in an interview Thursday.

That total represents the second-highest number of passengers travelling to and from the Mount Hope airport in at least a decade, trailing only the pre-pandemic peak of around 955,000 in 2019.

But Horncastle, who presented a 2023 airport review to a city committee Thursday, also warned "volatility" remains a challenge in a contracting airline industry and will likely remain so for at least the next year.

"Every regional airport in Canada is feeling (these) pressures," he said.



Future of Saugeen Municipal Airport under discussion

Original Article by Scott Dunn, Owen Sound Times, April 19, 2024 For more details click here

Saugeen Municipal Airport's municipal owners are considering the airport's future.

It could be sold or carry on under a new funding agreement between its three municipal partners, Brockton Mayor Chris Peabody said Thursday, who presented three options to councils of Brockton, Hanover and West Grey at a joint meeting Wednesday.

Each mayor presented an opening statement and they agreed to consult with their councils and submit their preferred option to each others' chief administrative officers, then reconvene in a couple of months at a date to be picked.

"West Grey council and Brockton council were especially interested in exploring selling the airport because of the success that Owen Sound and Wiarton had, the amount of revenue they brought in," Peabody said. "Hanover, though, is a little bit reluctant to do that so we had joint meeting to explore the options." [...]

Saugeen Municipal Airport is in Brockton, just northwest of Hanover and is owned through a corporation. Brockton contributes 42.07 per cent or about \$65,000, towards its operations, West Grey, 26.74 per cent or about \$42,000, and Hanover, 31.19 per cent or about \$48,000, the 2022 audited financial statements show.

Peabody said he wasn't sure what they would do if the parties can't agree. He suggested that the existing agreement would have to be renegotiated, with the other two paying more. The airport agreement allows any partner to exit the agreement, pay their share two years' worth of airport expenses and forgo any claim to the assets, a clause Brockton doesn't like, Peabody said.





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'Somebody's got to pay' for air travel: WestJet makes pitch to Ottawa

Original Publication by Kathy Le and Luca Caruso-Moro, CTV News, May 23, 2024

For more details click here

WestJet is asking the federal government to put measures in place to lower ticket costs for travellers, but questions remain on who would foot the bill.

The WestJet Group's CEO, Alexis von Hoensbroech, is asking the federal government to review the fees added on top of tickets that pay for airport maintenance and projects. He also wants the fees frozen while the review is underway.

On top of the base price of their seat on the plane, flyers have to pay extra fees for airports, navigation and government taxes. Airports charge Airport Improvement Fees (AIFs), which vary depending on where you fly. Generally, those costs amount to around \$35. Government fees include GST and PST, in addition to costs for air navigation, which are variable depending on the distance you fly and the cost of the ticket. "The general consensus is that the fee structure is comparatively high," said Hoensbroech during a conference in Calgary on Wednesday.

Aviation management expert John Gradek says he believes the user-pay model should be looked at again, but finding a replacement is a complicated ask. "If it's not user-pay, what is it? Somebody's got to pay for the airport, somebody's got to pay for the runway, somebody's got to pay for parking lots and expansion of the terminal. Who pays for that?" asked Gradek, a faculty lecturer at McGill University.

Canadian airports pay about half a billion dollars in rent to Transport Canada every year. WestJet says that should stop, and the money should be redirected. "They can reinvest this into infrastructure. Some of the airports in Canada need investments into infrastructure," said Hoensbroech.





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"Or, they can use it to lower fares."

CTV News reached out to the federal transport ministry for response. A spokesperson said the responsibility goes both ways.

"We'll continue to work with our partners to attract more investments in our airports, so that millions of passengers can continue to pass through their doors every year," wrote Laurent de Casanove, spokesperson for Transport Minister Pablo Rodriguez, in an email.

"Canadians work hard and save up to travel. They expect to leave on time, and they expect good service standards. Airlines should make improving their services a top priority and do a little bit better for Canadians."

Chris Dinsdale, the Calgary Airport Authority President and CEO, said the Calgary airport took a serious hit during the pandemic.

"We've got \$3.3 billion in debt. We added \$300 million in debt during COVID-19. These numbers are difficult hurdles," he said.

Opening northeast Pickering for development in conflict with future airport flight path

Original Publication Glenn Hendry, inSauga, May 23, 2024 For more details click here

Mayor Kevin Ashe wants long-standing zoning restrictions in northeast Pickering revoked to allow for development, a move that would come in conflict with a future airport the federal government has been considering for more than half a century.



Ashe insisted in his letter to Housing Minister Paul Calandra (issued through Strong Mayor Powers and not from a Council directive) that opening up development in a 3,445-acre chunk of land north of Seaton is "separate and independent" from the airport issue, which has been debated and considered since the airport lands were expropriated in 1972.

"The Regional Official Plan does not limit an airport nor depend on one," Ashe said in his letter. "In fact, planning and developing Northeast Pickering will help inform the federal government's decision making on whether or not to site an airport in Pickering."

Pickering Councillor Maurice Brenner, however, said it would be "ludicrous" to revoke the Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) without considering the consequences. The problem, he said, is not the future airport but the flight path planes would use to get there.

The MZO was put in place to keep housing and airplanes separate – "they didn't want conflict between the flight path and housing" – and until Ottawa makes a determination on an airport it would make zero sense to revoke it. Brenner noted.

"This could be a real problem."

The federal government would need to be consulted before Queen's Park made any decision on Ashe's request, as would the nearby Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, he added. "Chief LaRocca has been very clear that Strong Mayor Powers do not cancel the obligation to consult with Indigenous communities."

Ashe wants the lands re-zoned to meet housing obligations set out by the provincial government, which has set targets for each municipality to build 1.5 million new homes over the next decade.

The Airport Environment and You is distributed to AMCO members and the airport industry at large.

Contributions can be sent to: amco@amco.on.ca

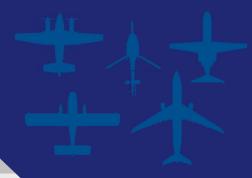
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