



PRESS RELEASE

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FORT NELSON AIRPORT SETS ALL TIME TRAFFIC RECORD; BUSIEST SMALL AIRPORT IN CANADA

FORT NELSON – This August, the Northern Rockies Regional Airport (YYE) was the busiest small (Tier 2) airport in Canada, with more aircraft movements than were experienced in much larger centres. YYE services the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (with a population of less than 6,000 people) and the Horn, Liard and Cordova Shale Gas developments. Even with the extremely low natural gas prices, YYE recorded its busiest season ever with 4,053 movements in July and 3,875 movements in August.

According to aircraft movement statistics recorded by NAV Canada, YYE had more air traffic than any other Tier 2 airport (airports with flight service stations) including Fort St John, Grande Prairie, Prince George, and even Ottawa Ontario. YYE also tallied more itinerant movements, composed mostly of Scheduled and Charter Aircraft, (flights from one airport to another) than 13 of 42 Tier 1 airports (airports with Air Traffic Control such as Abbotsford, Whitehorse and Hamilton International Airports), ranking it as the 29th busiest airport in Canada.



Picture: Three 737 aircraft parked outside of the Northern Rockies Regional Airport Terminal.

The airport has seen dramatic climb in traffic in the past decade: an increase of 59 percent in the last six years alone. Upgrading and expansion is now crucial to bring YYE's aging infrastructure to a level at which current activity can be sustained. Both the terminal and aprons often operate beyond their designed capacity during peak times.

"The latest statistics support the case the Regional Municipality has been making to senior governments for some time now about the need for additional infrastructure investment to keep the airport in-line with activity", said Mayor Bill Streeper, "Without our airport, the natural gas

industry in the Northern Rockies, the main employer in our region and significant contributor to government revenues, would be greatly reduced.”

Much of YYE infrastructure was built in the 1940’s and is in need of significant modernization to allow the airport to continue to fulfill its crucial roles of serving the region’s community and industry. YYE’s capital needs are, at a minimum, \$51 Million dollars; \$32.9 million of which are projected as immediate capital needs.

Despite these challenges, the continued growth in aircraft traffic and its resiliency through the global recession and slower natural gas market clearly reflects the many economic opportunities for the community and airport related businesses.

The Northern Rockies Regional Airport offers a vital and integral service to the residents and economy of the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. Accommodating the growth in traffic at YYE is a key focus of the development strategy for the airport, as plans are made to expand the current terminal in a phased approach, upgrade airfield electrical capacity, and expand and repair World War II infrastructure.

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