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The Airport Environment and You

From the Desk of the CEO

Next Up at AMCO

There is always a flurry of activity at the beginning of the year. We are so grateful for all of our members who continue to support AMCO year after year in the work that we do regarding advocacy and training for Ontario’s airports and aerodromes. Personally, I look forward to working with each of you and connecting throughout the year – whether it be event attendance, postings on the job board, having your Airport is Asking questions answered or working on a strategy to make Ontario’s airports the safest and most efficient in the world. I appreciate every interaction I get to have with you.

2024 has started out with a burst of advocacy on behalf of Ontario’s airports. AMCO sent out a press release which led to news articles and radio show guest spots touting the importance of small airports and aerodromes to their local communities. We have also sent letters to every MPP in the province and have set up several meetings with MPPs. It is our goal to create awareness and understanding that small airports and aerodromes are vital to the local economy and are key players in health, fire fighting, policing, and so much more. Having said that, we are also making efforts to have it be understood that airports and aerodromes are infrastructure that require investment from all levels of government – including the province.

Additionally, AMCO has organized an upcoming training course on April 9th regarding Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Safety that you can register for on the AMCO website. Please let us know of any other training courses you need. **SAVE THE DATE** for the AMCO Workshop! May 7th will begin with a meeting of the Small Airports and Aerodromes followed by the Annual Airfield Workshop on May 8th in New Liskeard, ON hosted by the Earlton-Timiskaming airport.

Finally, as you read the Airport Environment and You, consider contributing an article. Everyone has something valuable to share that others can learn from, and we want to hear from you! Whether you have expertise in airport operations or an exciting story that led you to aviation – we want to share more stories from you and about you, our members and readers. Reach out to the companies whose services you find within these pages as needed or consider placing your own advertisement within this publication. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the AMCO Office at any time.

Have a fantastic end to this winter season and a wonderful 2024.

Sincerely,

Laura McNeice
CEO, AMCO

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Awareness campaign to combat smuggling, human trafficking at Hamilton Airport

Original Article by John Best, The Bay Observer, Jan. 25, 2024
For full article click here

TradePort International Corporation joined with Crime Stoppers of Hamilton and Hamilton Police Service to launch the Crime Doesn't Fly Here awareness campaign to further strengthen crime prevention at John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport (Hamilton International).

"The Crime Doesn't Fly Here campaign will increase attention on potential criminal activities that are known to occur in Canada's aerodromes, such as smuggling of drugs and illegal weapons, contraband tobacco, vehicle and property theft and human trafficking. Crime Stoppers plays a role by providing all citizens, including airport employees and partners, a means of reporting what they know anonymously, working to enhance the safety of our communities," said Lily Lumsden, Chair, Crime Stoppers of Hamilton.

The Crime Doesn't Fly Here Campaign originated with Toronto Crime Stoppers and was developed by a multi-party working group to target transnational and organized crime networks that exploit the transportation industry to facilitate criminal activities across borders and within Canada's provinces and communities. The campaign was designed to be shared and utilized by small, medium and large airports across Ontario and Canada.

The awareness campaign includes employee and partner engagement through presentations, posters and training initiatives, as well as public safety announcements, designed to raise awareness about criminal activities that may occur at an airport, how to identify those involved and options for reporting.

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From the municipal airport to tax rates, plenty of hot topics at city council in 2023

Original Article by Connor Luczka, Stratford Today, Dec. 31, 2023
For full article click here

The first full calendar year for the new city council is in the books. StratfordToday took a look back at some of the decisions and issues that council discussed and moved forward with.

Council voted to keep the Stratford Municipal Airport, even after an extensive study found that it is not financially sustainable and is unlikely to become sustainable.

Faced with a few options, council decided to keep the airport and to work to make it revenue neutral, something the study indicated may be possible with a proactive business approach.

Although some councillors believed that the airport was a luxury that the city could not support, and one that not many residents actually used, a few councillors spoke about its intangible benefits to the city, including Mayor Martin Ritsma.

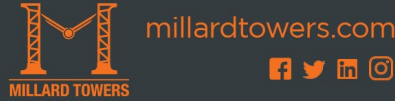
“I firmly believe that it is an asset that the city should retain,” Ritsma said. “I believe that there are opportunities out at the airport for us to make it a revenue-neutral investment. And I really do believe that. I also believe that there are services provided out there that we truly can't quantify with regards to a dollar figure.”



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Surge in holiday traffic caps a stellar year at London International Airport

Original Article by Norman De Bono,
London Free Press, Jan. 9, 2024
For full article click here

Londoners have returned to the air, winging their way out of London International Airport in numbers not seen since the pandemic, said Scott McFadzean, chief executive of London International Airport.

Driven largely by vacationers and sun worshippers, the airport's holiday traffic, the last two weeks of December when travellers largely went to warm weather destinations, was up 100 per cent over the same period last year, he said.

In total, about 20,000 people lifted off from the tarmac at the London airport during those two weeks last month, double the previous year. Only two years ago, there were no warm weather destination flights offered from London.

"Everything was sold out over the holiday period and we had new flights added. Finally, we are back to normal," McFadzean said.

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St. Thomas Airport a gateway to the area

Original Article by Joe Konecny, Wings Magazine, Jan. 5, 2024
For full article click here

St. Thomas Municipal Airport may be too small to land a Boeing 747, but the former Second World War Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) training base is big enough to nurture economic development and help attract the likes of Volkswagen to Elgin County.

"I don't think we can land a 747, but we couldn't accommodate the people coming off a plane that size either," St. Thomas Mayor Joe Preston said in a recent interview. "We're very close to an international airport in London anyways.

"St. Thomas has an airport that can do pretty much what we need it to do," added Mayor Preston. "Even though it's a smaller municipality-run airport, it's great."

On the checklist for a corporation like Volkswagen-PowerCo, with plans to build an electric vehicle (EV) battery plant in St. Thomas by 2027, "it's a tick," added Mayor Preston. "Yes, we have railways. Yes, we have roads. Yes, we have an airport. If you didn't have it, it would be something missing from somebody's checklist." The German motor vehicle manufacturer announced March 13, 2023 that it will build Volkswagen's first overseas gigafactory at a 1,500-acre industrial park in the city's north-east end.

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Airport looking for diversion business

Original Article by Chris Dawson, Bay Today, Jan. 17, 2024

For full article click here

Jack Garland Airport is hoping to attract more business to the northern Ontario airport.

Bryan Avery, Airport Manager at North Bay Jack Garland Airport Corporation, says they are trying to promote the airport, including a recent promotional article in Wings magazine, a Canadian national aviation publication.

"It's part of a campaign that we worked closely with the City of North Bay on to continue to bring awareness to the capabilities at the North Bay Airport and throughout the city; to inform and assist those maybe new to their roles in airline dispatch, logistics coordination, or who are aircrew that have changed airline operations over the past few years," explained Avery.

"There's been a lot of change throughout the industry so we wanted to take the initiative to educate everyone of options to help their day-to-day operations as well as support their growth."

Avery says North Bay remains on the flight path of many airlines flying throughout Canada and internationally which makes Jack Garland Airport an ideal and practical diversion option.

"Whether coast to coast or to and from Europe we often work with airlines that are looking to prepare for operations that may require them to land at another airport temporarily," noted Avery.

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Discover what Saugeen Municipal Airport is all about

Original Publication by Midwestern Newspaper Corp., Jan. 24, 2024

For more details click here

When the Saugeen Municipal Airport (SMA) is mentioned, people often say, “What airport? I didn’t know we had an airport around here.”

We do, in fact, have an airport located in Brockton, on Airport Road, just west of Marl Lake. It has been serving our communities and beyond since 1962.

The airport is owned by the municipalities of Brockton, Hanover and West Grey, and the Saugeen Municipal Airport Commission oversees the facility. There are five members of the commission: three councillors, one each from Brockton, Hanover and West Grey; and two members-at-large appointed by the municipal appointees. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of Tim Olds, airport manager, with additional staff who ensure the maintenance of the facility.

The commission’s monthly meetings are open to the public with agendas and minutes posted on the airport website at www.saugeenmunicipalairport.com, which also includes information for pilots, the public and businesses.

Besides being a hub for recreational pilots, the airport is important for emergency services including ORNGE, Ontario’s air ambulance and medical transport service, and the OPP. There is a top-notch flight academy that trains and certifies pilots and provides sightseeing flights. There is a restaurant, which also provides a catering service, and facilities for rent include a 20-seat boardroom and the dining area overlooking the runways which can accommodate events of up to 130 people for events such as weddings and seminars.

The airport has 253 acres of land with 56 acres leased out for crops. It offers hangars for rent, as well as land to lease for anyone wanting to build their own hangar.



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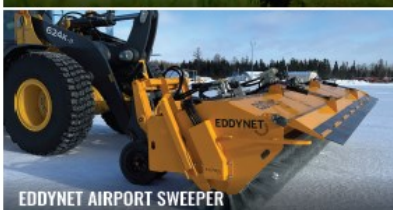
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Bombardier unveils new private jet assembly plant at Pearson airport

Original Publication by CBC News,
Jan. 23, 2024
For more details click here

The Canadian aerospace firm Bombardier is in the midst of moving its aircraft assembly plant from Downsview Park to Pearson Airport, and CBC Toronto got a sneak peak of the new facility.

The company describes the \$670 million assembly plant as the most advanced private jet manufacturing facility in the world. [...]

Construction on the project began in 2019. Bombardier's move from Downsview to the new site at the northwestern edge of Pearson began last summer and is due to be completed later this year.

"It's not something you can do over the weekend," said Mark Masluch, Bombardier's senior director of public relations, during a tour.

Most of the production work and about 1,200 of Bombardier's 2,000 staff have already shifted to the new Pearson site.

This location is where the company assembles its Global 6500 series of private jets, as well as the Global 7500. The company says the Global 7500 is the fastest and longest-range private jet on the market, selling at a list price of \$78 million.

At the plant's 17 production stations, work is ongoing on aircraft in various stages of completion, from a bare central fuselage tube sitting atop a wing assembly, through the additions of stabilizers, the tail fins, landing gear and engines.

Airport rent raises airfares for Canadians

Original Publication by Brent Jang,
Skies Magazine,
Jan. 30, 2024
For more details click here

Canadian airports remain at a competitive disadvantage to their U.S. counterparts as Ottawa finds itself addicted to generating revenue from Canada's aviation industry, according to a study from the Montreal Economic Institute. [...]

With three-quarters of Canada's population living within roughly 160 kilometres of the Canada-U.S. border, many budget-conscious travellers from Canada find it worthwhile to cross the border to seek cheaper fares, especially to sun destinations such as Florida. Industry observers in Canada say the U.S. government views airports as economic engines, in contrast to the Canadian government's treatment of airports as revenue streams.

"The current fiscal and regulatory framework penalizes Canadian travellers, who pay more for their plane tickets due, among other things, to airport rents and other elevated fees," said Giguere. "This framework also undermines the competitiveness of our airports compared to American airports just south of the border."

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Choice of flight times to remain limited at northeastern Ontario airports

Original Publication Kate Rutherford, CBC News, Dec. 29, 2023

For more details click here

Air travellers in northeastern Ontario will never again see the frequency of flights they enjoyed prior to the pandemic, according to managers at three small airports in the region.

As the industry continues to take steps to return to prosperity, regional airports are still advocating to regain their corner of the market with Air Canada and Porter.

Chris Pollesel is the manager of passenger experience at the Greater Sudbury Airport.

Reliability of flights returned in 2023, improving customer service, said Pollesel, but the airport continues discussions to bolster the flight schedule and offer more options.

However, he said it's a tough time with a national pilot shortage that has airlines concentrating on using larger aircraft than they used to for connections to the hub of Toronto. That means more seats are becoming available for passengers but choice of times to fly is still limited. Currently, he said Air Canada provides two flights a day and Porter one to Toronto and back each day, seven days a week.

"Previously we had, say, you know, six, seven, eight flights a day on those smaller aircraft," said Pollesel. "We likely won't see that ever again, at the moment or for the foreseeable future, but we will still have those same number of seats, if not more, departing Sudbury once that recovery does happen for us."

He said the airport continues to advocate for passengers, and would like to include a direct flight to Ottawa at some point.

Typically, there is more flexibility for travellers in the summer, he said, but it's not clear yet what the carriers have in mind.



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The situation is similar at the airport in Sault Ste Marie.

The President and CEO of the Sault Ste Marie Airport Development Corporation, Terry Bos, says traffic from small regional airlines such as Bearskin is back to normal but the larger carriers are still not offering the schedule that they used to.

He says passengers are somewhat frustrated with the lack of options.

Dryden ready to tackle air challenge, says mayor

Original Article by Mike Stimpson,
Northern Ontario Business,
Jan. 18, 2024
For full article click here

The City of Dryden's chief administrative officer and the local airport's manager are leading efforts to address a pending gap in plane service, Mayor Jack Harrison said Jan. 16. Bearskin Airlines will end its scheduled passenger air service to Dryden, Kenora and Fort Frances in May.

City CAO Roger Nesbitt and the airport manager met with officials from Winnipeg-headquartered Perimeter Aviation, Bearskin's parent company, in late 2023 to discuss issues of "ridership and reliability" [...] The air travel company's decision Jan. 15 to close down service to Dryden and the other Northwestern Ontario centres "was very disappointing."

Additionally, he said, "there's opportunity to work together" with Kenora and Fort Frances "to see if we can attract another carrier." "I mean, there's a lot of potential to develop in our area," he said.

Future of airports is up in the air, says advocacy group

Original Article by Ian Ross,
Northern Ontario Business
Jan. 29, 2024
For full article click here

Ontario is on a growth curve, but there's no room for airports in some communities.

"It's a little bit of an oxymoron," said Laura McNeice, CEO of the Airport Management Council of Ontario (AMCO).

With the provincial government incentivizing cash-starved municipalities to build more housing, those flat expanses of serviced airport land look awfully attractive to developers.

AMCO is red-flagging a disturbing trend in the last couple of years. Small municipal airports and aerodromes across Ontario are being sold or considered for sale to private developers as potential housing developments. [...]

To McNeice, it's a crisis situation that calls into question whether municipalities and other higher orders of government overlook or recognize the value of these facilities in being essential infrastructure.

Many of these new private owners are still running them as airports, McNeice said, but without municipal control, there are no guarantees they will remain open in the long run for air traffic.

AMCO is looking to Queen's Park to step up and offer assistance to municipalities to keep airports viable and operating. "These airports are essential and they need protection. They provide so many services," said McNeice.

In a recent news release, AMCO and the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association said airports and aerodromes shouldn't be viewed by municipalities as a "drain on coffers," but valued for the public services they provide in health-care connectivity with life-saving medical flights and as staging bases for search and rescue, policing and fire suppression.

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