CELEBRATING OUR
HISTORY

YXS
**PRINCE GEORGE
AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

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The birth of the Prince George Airport dates back to 1940 when the Prince George City Council selected the current location and then in 1941 the main runway (14-32) was completed. With Pan American Airways operating flights along the Seattle WA to Fairbanks AK route (by way of Prince George BC, Juneau AK and Whitehorse YK), our connection to the world was established.

Canadian Pacific Airlines soon added YXS to their route schedule with six weekly stops in 1942. The first flight was in a Lockheed Fourteen, piloted by Sheldon Luck, CP Air's first Chief Pilot and an aviation pilot who contributed a great deal to aviation in the region.

Construction of the Prince George Airport was completed on August 9, 1945. At that time it had three 5,000 ft. runways, forming the traditional triangle. The old city Airport was closed and Pan American Airways, Canadian Pacific Airlines, The Royal Canadian Air Force and the U.S. Air Force used the new site.

In 1951, Canadian Pacific Airlines reverted to DC-3's from DC-4's when weight restrictions were put into effect because the heavier airplanes were damaging the runways. It was felt that the wartime construction of the runway system had been rushed and that the quality had been compromised. Central BC Air (later becoming known as Pacific Western Airlines) also began to serve Prince George with scheduled flights.

Over the next few years the Prince George Airport continued to grow and improve. In 1953, the first approach lights were installed on runway 14-32, and then in 1956 the runways and apron were all resurfaced and strengthened.

In 1959 the Prince George Flying Club was established and showcased their first air show in May. Within the same year, the Prince George Airport expanded services to the terminal by including car rentals, vending machines and direct lines to hotels. This same year we welcomed Northern Mountain Helicopters as they purchased Hangar 1.

From 1963 to 1967 the Prince George Airport saw continual changes not only to the Airport, but to the city as well. Mrs. P. Richardson opened the first coffee shop/restaurant in the air terminal building. An aircraft parking area was completed on the west side of Apron 1, and in 1964 the continuous growth of business motivated the Airport to resurface and extend runway 14-32 to 6,400 ft. 1965 saw Prince George boom as three pulp mills opened within a 5-mile radius of the Airport, and in 1967 the existing maintenance/fire hall complex was constructed. Shell and Imperial Oil also established refueling services at this time.

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The 70's saw tremendous growth for the Prince George Airport starting in 1971 when parking meters were installed in the public parking lot. In 1972 Northern Thunderbird Airlines commenced scheduled flights to Edmonton AB, and in 1973 a $2.7 million air terminal complex and control tower were officially opened on October 20, in their current location. The terminal building covered 20,340 square feet and had an enclosed baggage area, eight check-in counters, a baggage racetrack, a 70 seat restaurant, a 70 seat bar, 4 car rental counters, parking for 215 vehicles and the latest in pictorial and bilingual signage. With this, security became an increasing concern, especially with international terrorism on the rise. A 7 foot high chain link security fence was soon installed around the Airport perimeter to secure the airside. Similar fencing was installed at 23 other Airports across Canada in a national measure.

In 1975, runway 14-32 was resurfaced and extended another 1,000 ft. to 7,400 ft. in length, at a cost of $1.7 million. A new Airport entrance road was constructed in order to allow this expansion. The departures hold room was constructed in order to allow for this expansion. The departures hold room was constructed and metal detectors were installed to search all carry-on baggage. The hold room consisted of a glass barrier, which was later extended to the ceiling as some well wishers had the habit of throwing things over the wall.

Unfortunately the same year saw Airport Manager, Sandy Sanderson pass away tragically of a heart attack two weeks after retirement (who had held this position for 20 years).

Stikine Holdings formally proposed to create an artificial lake for a seaplane base in 1976 on 150 acres south of the Airport. The project was to have several phases, including a landing facility, hotel, service area and a helipad. Unfortunately, no development was undertaken.

The 80's were not much different for the Prince George Airport as they continued to improve services starting in 1981 with all the Taxiways being resurfaced, an extension to the existing fire hall was constructed, and a gift shop was opened by United Way. Shortly afterwards, the lease was taken over by Linda Stacey, who operated the business as Linda's Gift Shop.

In 1985, security awareness was hightened due to increased terrorism, internationally. A seaplane base at South Fort George was established with a purchase price from the City of $1.00. The City also zoned a 621 meter airfield near Ness Lake. It had formerly been a private airstrip (now the North Cariboo Airpark), and includes a T-hangar with space for seven planes. Upgrades to the Prince George Airport continued with high intensity lighting for runway 15-33, upgrading

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terminal access roads, and a new parking meter system, allowing meters to be paid from within the terminal bulding. Budget Rental built a $150,000 service centre on-site, and featured a special of $4.95 for two days plus mileage, for customers on their opening weekend.

This same year the Prince George Airport saw the first Community Advisory Committee being formed and chaired by Mr. Charles McCaffray. The Committee was subsequently Chaired by Mr. Greg Jyadzek and Mr. James Blake. The following year the Airport aprons were resurfaced and a ground lighting system was installed.

1987 was another historic year for the Prince George Airport, as an Economic Impact Study showed that the Airport contributed over $32 million in Gross Domestic Product to the provincial economy. The Airport was ranked as the 12th largest employer in the area with over 320 persons employed. This year was also the beginning of Air BC introducing four flights per day on Dash 8's, and Christine Legault became the Airport's, and the region's, first female Airport Manager.

The following year the Airport Advisory Committee was formed and became very active in pursuing developments on the Airport. The B.C. Corps of Commissionaires implemented 24-hour guard service.

In 1991, the Prince George Airport celebrated their 50th birthday, attracting 5,000 people. The first Airport art exhibit featuring "Artists at Work" was held in the main concourse of the terminal building, possibly being the first of its kind in any Canadian Airport. Facility modifications were implemented to prevent against fuel spills. A number of improvements were made including an airside sprinkler system, repairs to the main apron, a material storage building, modifications to the combined Service Building and purchases of mobile equipment.

A well earned accolade was presented to the Prince George Airport in 1992, as they received the "Best Overall Airport" award in Airport Excellence Program for Pacific Region, for year of 1991. This same year a $2 million Instrument Landing System was under construction, Forster Food Services took over the restaurant/lounge operation and the first loading bridge was promised by Transport Canada.

On July 13, 1994 the Minister of Transportation released the National Airports Policy, and the Airport Advisory Board was authorized to work towards the transfer of management, operations and maintenance of the Airport. In August, Her Majesty the Queen ceremonially opened the Prince George campus of the University of Northern British Columbia.

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The Airport's three runways are now 15-33 (7,400 ft.), 06-24 (5,625 ft.) and 01-19 (4,400 ft.). There are four helicopter touchdown pads with all services being provided by a control tower. A Flight Service Station, Weather Office, two fuel concessions, Emergency Response Services, Airfield Maintenance and the B.C. Corps of Commissionaires (24 hour guard service) exist.

In 1997, the Prince George Region Development Corporation formed a planning committee whose role was to determine whether Prince George wanted or should accept the transfer of the Airport.

The new millennium saw the first Board of Directors submitting an application for incorporation, and the Prince George Airport Authority was incorporated on July 27, 2000. The founding Board of Directors included, James Blake (Chair), Jerry Deere, Ronald Epp, Lynne Fehr, Valerie Giles, Neil King, Neil Meagher, Scott Pollard, Michael Tkachuk, David Wilbur and David Wilson; the founding Airport General Manager was Stieg Hoeg. The following year the Prince George Airport began its transformation to become an Airport Authority.

On January 27 2003, Transport Minister David Collenette announced the signing of an agreement to transfer control of the Prince George Airport from the Government of Canada to the Airport Authority. Transferal of the operations to a locally run Airport Authority occurred at 11:59:59pm on March 31st. The National Airports Policy expired on April 1st and the Prince George Airport was the last National Airport to be transferred. The transfer ceremony took place on April 11th. On hand for the ceremony was Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal, on behalf of Transport Minister David Collenette.

Since transferal, an aggressive business plan was set into motion focusing on improving Airport infrastructure and services to attract trans-border and international air services. Building an Airport that truly represents the needs of tourism, business and the residents of northern British Columbia. Upon transfer, the Airport received almost $3 million in new Rollins stock from the Federal Government, something that no other Airport achieved. As well, in 2003 the Provincial Government provided $4 million to the Airport Authority. Three million went towards Phase 1 of the Airport Terminal Building construction which focused on the expansion of the security hold room and baggage check-in services. The Prince George Airport Authority (PGAA) was one of the first Airports across Canada to have a continuous screening system "behind the house" post 9/11. The remaining $1 million funded the Runway Feasibilty Study. As part of the Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative, the Federal Government announced $1.85 million in funding to assist PGAA in bulding Phase 2 a $5.8 million International Arrivals and Canada Border Services Facilities facility.

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In 2004 construction was completed on the new security hold room and baggage check-in services. Construction began on International Arrivals and Canada Border Services Facilities.

The Prince George Airport Authority and the City of Prince George signed an accord to establish mutually agreeable arrangements to delineate principles and define a mechanism to achieve specific operating agreements where necessary; and provide a firm footing for ongoing consultations to assure both the City and the Authority of appropriate certainty in their relationship.

Phase 2 of the Airport Terminal Building was completed in 2005, and Premier Gordon Campbell participated in the Ceremony opening of the new International Arrivals and Canada Border Services Facilities. The International Arrivals and Canada Border Services Facilities allowed direct charter flights to international destinations which produced the first flights to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

2005 was another award-winning year as the expansion construction gained international architectural attention with the PGAA and our architect, McFarlane Green, being recognized with three major awards; 2005 Lieutenant Governor of BC Medal, 2005 North America Wood Design Award Citation and the 2005 BC Wood Award. In addition, the PGAA was recognized by the British Columbia Aviation Council as "Airport of the Year". This same year saw the Federal Government waive a debt of close to $4.2 million.

The $33 million runway expansion, which increased the runway length from 7,400 ft to 11,400 ft became a confirmed project in 2006 with the announcement by the Northern Development Initiative Trust of an $11 million loan to the Airport Authority. This expansion would facilitate the larger cargo and passenger aircraft that PGAA was aggressively pursuing. Construction for this project was proposed for 2007.

In response to public demand this same year, the PGAA approved the construction of a new parking lot with increased parking capacity as well as improved safety measures. Construction was completed in the Fall. The PGAA also received its SuperHost designation and was the first Airport in Western Canada and the third throughout the country to receive it.

In January 2007, the Honorable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources, announced the Federal Government's commitment of $11 million toward the airport Runway Expansion Project. Later in the year, an $11 million loan, courtesy of the Northern Development Initiatives Trust, was provided to the Runway Expansion Project, while Premier Gordon Campbell announced that the Province of British Columbia would also contribute $11 million to the project. The Prince George Airport Authority is grateful for the very strong support provided by all of their funding partners and looks forward to many exciting years ahead.

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