

# *On Approach*

VOL. 8, NO. 1 — SUMMER 2011

VICTORIA AIRPORT AUTHORITY

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

- **Big Changes at 443**
- **Viking Air**
- **Role of an Airport**

# Contents

- 3 - Geoff Dickson**  
Victoria Airport Authority welcomes a new leader.
- 4 - Big Changes at 443**  
Preparing for a new hangar and new helicopters.
- 6 - Viking Air**  
Filling a niche in the world market.
- 8 - Airport News**  
New flights, lights and website top recent improvements at the airport.
- 10 - Community Living**  
A success story.
- 12 - Paul Connolly**  
Victoria Airport Authority's go-to-guy heads into retirement.
- 14 - Role of an Airport**  
Not just a place to get away from.

**On Approach is a publication of the Victoria Airport Authority.**

Phil Jensen, Editor  
250-686-5018  
pjensen@shaw.ca

Melinda Orłowski,  
Executive Assistant -  
President & CEO and Board of Directors  
250-953-7501  
melinda.orłowski@victoriaairport.com

Laura Lavin, Production  
ljlavin@shaw.ca

Victoria Airport Authority  
201-1640 Electra Blvd., Sidney, B.C. V8L 5V4  
www.victoriaairport.com

## Editor's desk

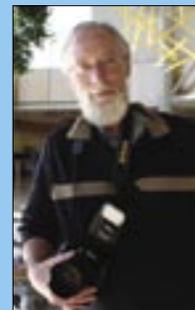
Welcome back to *On Approach*. In the previous issue, we introduced the new Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Dickson. In this issue, we share some information about Geoff's background and his focus after eight months on the job. Be sure to read *Geoff Dickson, President and CEO*.

Geoff is enthusiastic about the role Victoria Airport plays in the region, emphasizing that its influence goes beyond providing an air link to other locations. To get a sense of what he means, read *The Role of an Airport*. As you continue through the magazine, you'll find articles about two specific high profile airport tenants: Viking Air, a local company doing business around the world, and 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron, who are in the beginning stages of building a new hangar/administration complex that will house the new Cyclone helicopters.

Airport employees are interesting people, and the longer they serve the more they come to represent the airport in the public eye. This summer, Paul Connolly retired from his position at Victoria International Airport. To find out how he impacted his co-workers and the public, see *Paul Connolly- still flying*.

Wishing you an enjoyable summer.

Phil Jensen,  
editor, *On Approach*



# Geoff Dickson, President and CEO

Geoff Dickson assumed the role of President and CEO at Victoria International Airport in January 2011. With his 25 years experience in the air and marine transportation industry, the opportunity to lead the airport is a natural fit. Geoff was born and raised on Vancouver Island, and is a graduate of the University of British Columbia School of Business, with a specialization in transportation and urban land economics. He started his career with Pacific Western Airlines (PWA) in 1985, after graduation. Soon after Geoff's arrival at PWA, the company merged with Canadian Pacific to form Canadian Airlines. Geoff held positions in the areas of international marketing and route development, with specific responsibility for the European and Asian markets. He eventually assumed overall responsibility for route performance for the entire domestic, U.S. and international operations.

In 1998, Geoff moved to Victoria and joined BC Ferries as Vice President, Marketing and Business Development. There he oversaw the complete redesign of the company's fleet and terminals, with a view to grow the ancillary revenue base and improve the overall customer experience.

At the airport, there are a number of things Geoff is focused on for the immediate future:

- Realignment at Willingdon road to improve safety for vehicles exiting the terminal, and position the airport for future

parking expansion. Work is now underway, and will be completed in October.

- Improve passenger pre-board screening and increase space in the screening area. Preliminary design is complete, and construction will commence in 2012.
- Greater food and retail choices in the passenger hold areas. Design is underway, with a plan to commence in 2012.
- Enhancements to the international arrivals area. Work is underway, and will be completed in October.
- Increasing the number and availability of routes served in and out of YYJ. One-stop service from Ottawa commenced summer 2011, and a new service to Phoenix will commence November 2011.
- Greater public transportation access for the terminal. Service tripled effective June 2011.

In the longer term, there will be a need to increase the baggage capacity, enlarge the terminal building and secure the U.S. pre-clearance area. There will be a continued focus on developing the tenant base around the airport in a structured manner.

Geoff is enthused about the range of tenants at the airport, and the benefits they bring to the region. He speaks about the new 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron hangar and administration complex. "We're look-



**Geoff Dickson**

ing forward to working with the Department of National Defence," he says. Geoff adds that the DND project and the Sobeys/Thrifty Foods development, on the north side of the airport, are two of the largest construction projects on the island this year.

Victoria International Airport is a vital economic contributor to the economy of the region, and the leadership role at the airport is a challenging and demanding job. Geoff clearly recognizes this challenge, and acknowledges the role of his predecessor, Richard Paquette, in evolving the airport to where it is today.



# Big Changes at 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron

The big grey helicopters are the heart of 443 Helicopter Squadron. Sea King helicopters and their crews, based at Victoria International Airport, provide a support role to Canadian Navy ships in the North and South Pacific, the Indian Ocean and other waters. More locally, they are employed to monitor and fight illegal activities, such as environmental, fisheries, and drug violations in Canadian waters. But it hasn't always been about helicopters. During the Second World War, the 443 was a fighter squadron, flying Spitfire airplanes. This history is reflected in the motto: Our Sting is Death. The Squadron reformed as a maritime helicopter squadron, based at Shearwater, Nova Scotia, in the late 1960s. In the late 1980s, the 443 moved to Victoria Airport at Patricia Bay.



**443 Squadron is the designated entry point to Victoria for British royalty, the Canadian Prime Minister and other dignitaries.**

Major Don Leblanc is a former Commanding Officer of 443 Squadron. After his retirement in 2006, he returned as a reservist. He explains that he wants to be on hand to witness the changes facing 443 Squadron today. "My goal is to be here until the new building is done, or we retire the Sea King, whichever comes last," Leblanc says. "I'm hoping to be the last person to fly the Sea King on this coast."

The new hangar and the new helicopters are a package. At present, 443 Squadron has six Sea King helicopters. These will be replaced with nine of the new Cyclone helicopters, beginning in 2014, and larger premises will be needed to house them. Additionally, Squadron strength will increase from 254 to 350.

Airport representative Terry Stewart has been working on the project with 443 Squadron,

since the beginning. "It will be the biggest building on the airport and the biggest building north of the Uptown Centre in Victoria," Stewart says. "The apron will be big enough to accommodate the new Cyclone helicopters, and the CC-177 Globemaster."

The new hangar and office complex will be located on 20 acres, north of the current hangar and administration building. A significant benefit of the new location is that it will be isolated from civilian buildings for increased security. The old administration building will be demolished, and the airport will take over the old hangar. "Because the old hangar sits prominently on airside, it will be a good opportunity for an inside related tenant," Stewart says. Construction of the new building is slated to begin in October 2011 and completed in the spring of 2013.



**Major Don Leblanc**



*Sea King Helicopters on the ramp at 443 Squadron.*

FROM PAGE 4

## 443 Squadron Aircraft

443 Squadron has flown a wide variety of aircraft over the years, including the following:

- Supermarine Spitfire
- North American Harvard
- North American P-51 Mustang
- DeHavilland Vampire
- Beech CT-128 (C-45) Expeditor
- Canadair (Lockheed) CT-33 Silver Star
- Canadair (North American) F-86 Sabre
- DeHavilland CC-123 (DHC-3) Otter
- Sikorsky CH-124 Sea King

## More about 443 Squadron

- The new hangar/administration complex was designed by Stantec. It will be earthquake proof and Tsunami resistant. 1200 piles will be driven down to bedrock, and 115,000 cubic meters of fill will be brought in. The final cost is expected to be around \$105 million, plus taxes.
- The Cyclone helicopter is a Canadian military version of the Sikorsky S92 used by commercial operators. The CC-177 Globemaster is a Canadian military version of the Boeing C17 cargo carrier.
- The Sea King helicopter is a Canadian military version of the Sikorsky S61.



*A completed Series 400 Twin Otter outside the Victoria hangar.*

## Viking Air: filling a niche in the world market

Viking Air's \$65 million contract with the Peruvian government is a clear indicator of the local company's growing stature in the aviation world. The contract calls for 12 Viking Series 400 Twin Otters, configured with wheel gear and floats for missions in remote areas of Peru. The aircraft will be delivered over the next four years, with training, spares and equipment included in the contract. With this purchase, Peru will become the world's largest government operator of Twin Otters.

As the original equipment manufacturer for heritage DeHavilland products, Viking provides support for well known aircraft types such as the Beaver, the Otter, the Twin Otter, the Caribou, the Buffalo and the Dash 7. Although production of the original Twin Otter ceased in 1988, more

than 600 of the original 800 built are still flying and supported by Viking. Widely proclaimed for its exceptional reliability, versatility and short take-off and landing ability, the Otter has been a long time favourite.

Viking's 2007 launch of a brand new Twin Otter was followed with great interest in the aviation world. The DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400 is now in full production with a backlog in excess of \$300M through 2014. This has meant an increase in activity at Viking's facilities in Victoria, BC and Calgary Alberta, with a workforce of approaching 500 employees, an increase of 350 since the program's launch.

The first Viking Series 400 Twin Otter was delivered last year to a customer in Switzerland. It was subsequently put to work in

Uganda, flying as a support aircraft in the oil and gas industry. This first aircraft off the line joins a fleet of 12 legacy Twin Otters employed in oil and gas, various humanitarian efforts, and non-governmental agencies worldwide. The second Series 400 Twin Otter joined a fleet of three legacy Twin Otters flying passengers in the Seychelles Archipelago. The third Series 400 Twin Otter off the line is working in the Maldives, where it joined more than 40 legacy Twin Otters flying in the region. It is the first float plane in the region to be outfitted with modern safety features, standard on the Series 400 Twin Otter.

Most recently, Viking has contracted to provide Airfast Indonesia with four Series 400 Twin Otters, scheduled for delivery in 2012 through

TURN TO PAGE 7



*The first of twelve Series 400 Twin Otters for Peru.*

FROM PAGE 6

2014. These airplanes will expand a current fleet of three legacy Twin Otters doing charter work in the mining industry. Airfast Indonesia and Peruvian Air Force purchases have significantly increased the market presence of the Series 400.

To support growing demand, Viking has appointed Associated Defence Industries Corporation (ADIC) as global sales representative for the Philippines. ADIC will liaise specifically with military and government customers for the Guardian 400, a restricted category high gross weight military version of the Series 400 Twin Otter. Approximately 25 percent of the new Twin Otters sold are the Guardian 400, developed for special mission and government operations in medium range maritime patrol and critical infrastructure support.

ADIC is a subsidiary of Novacell, a distributor of aerospace and communication systems to the Philippines Armed Forces.

Viking launched the new DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400 production program in 2007, and has a production backlog estimated at over \$300M through 2014. Viking provides OEM support for the worldwide fleet of de Havilland heritage line of aircraft (DHC-1 through DHC-7), and is part of Westerkirk Capital Inc., a Canadian private investment firm with substantial holdings in the hospitality, aviation and real estate sectors.



# Airport News

## New Flights

Victoria International Airport (YYJ) is the ninth busiest airport in Canada, moving in excess of 1.5 million passengers every year. Victoria is well served with more than 120 daily passenger flights throughout North America. On July 20, Victoria Airport Authority announced a new seasonal non-stop service between Victoria and Phoenix. This new non-stop flight will operate once a week on Fridays. The new sun destination service begins November 4, 2011.

## New Website

The Victoria Airport Authority launched a new website on July 6, 2011. The refreshed look provides very user-friendly navigation, improved flight status

information, increased site content and an enhanced search feature. VAA President and CEO Geoff Dickson says, "The new website is a great improvement and provides our customers with better access to the information they need." Check out the new website at [www.victoriaairport.com](http://www.victoriaairport.com).

## Fire Truck

A new Rosenbauer fire truck arrived at the Airport Fire Department this spring, replacing a 15 year old vehicle. The new \$850 thousand fire truck complies with all current regulations. It comes complete with high-reach extendible turret capable of piercing the wall of an aircraft, allowing it to inject fire retardant foam.

## Runway Paving

This year a minimal amount of strengthening on the heavy route was undertaken. Three inches of asphalt were added in the centre of the runway, and the shoulder area was rehabilitated. EBA Engineering is the Engineer of record, and paving was provided by Island Asphalt.

## High Intensity Approach Lighting

New high intensity lighting mandated by Transport Canada was installed on Runway 27 this summer (see photo on back cover). It replaced an outdated system, installed in the 1970s. High Intensity Approach Lighting provides pilots with needed visual guidance during darkness and inclement weather. The system begins with a group of lights that flash in sequence toward the runway, followed by rows of fixed lights leading to the runway threshold. The system is 2,400 feet long, and consists of 13 groups of lights. The five lights furthest from the threshold are single flashing lights that help the pilot line up with the runway. The next eight groups are steady burning lamps, that guide the pilot to the threshold of the runway. In order to provide a full length system, three of the lights have been located off of airport land, immediately adjacent to the airport. To reduce the visual impact to the neighbourhood, the lights are positioned on top of 30 foot standards. The lights are shielded to minimize



*The new Rosenbauer fire truck is capable of piercing the wall of an aircraft to inject fire retardant foam.*

TURN TO PAGE 9



*Keeping the runways in good condition is a priority at Victoria Airport.*

FROM PAGE 8

the impact to people on the ground.

## Willingdon Road Realignment

The Victoria International Airport 30 Year Master Plan includes realignment of Willingdon Road. This will provide room for additional parking spaces that may be needed during the 30 year period. The realignment will include a round-about to facilitate the smooth flow of traffic. A public art component will be part of the project. The old portion of Willingdon Road will be preserved for overflow parking during peak travel times, and there will be a lighted walkway for pedestrians to get from the overflow area to the terminal building. The project will also

include construction of a cell phone lot, making it convenient to communicate with travellers arriving in the terminal. Construction began in July and is expected to be completed the first week in November

## Transportation Connections

BC Transit has introduced more service to the airport and the new McTavish Transit Exchange linking express services and local transit services on the Peninsula. The 88 Sidney/Airport Bus offers three times more service to the terminal than was previously available. It also provides service between Sidney and West Sidney to the McTavish Transit Exchange and the airport terminal.





*Leslie Sanchez (Community Living Group Leader) assists Donald (Spike) Butterfield, and Deanna Hellener.*

# Community Living

It's Thursday morning and a group of workers eagerly descend upon the airport after exiting their white van. They are here to collect recyclable plastics, paper, and glass from pre-arranged locations around the airport. Their sense of purpose is palpable, and it's a joy to watch them work. The Airport Recycling Program is very popular with her group, explains Leslie Sanchez, a long time Community Living employee, and the group's leader. "The recycling program started in 1990," she says. "We've been doing this for 21 years."

Community Living Victoria (CLV) is a non-profit organization providing services to children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. The organization's purpose is to promote full citizenship and inclusion in the community and provide a full range of life choices for those they support. People wanting to learn more about CLV may access their website at [www.communitylivingvictoria.ca](http://www.communitylivingvictoria.ca)



*Deanna Hellener and Patrick McCrimmon collect paper products in the administration area.*



*The Community Living crew assembled at the airport, prior to collecting recycled paper and plastics. Back row: Janice Hudlin, David Main, Lynn Smedley, Michael Hecht (support worker), Donald (Spike) Butterfield, Andrew Cunningham. Middle row: Joanna Frey, Deanna Hellener, Michelle Tooke, Patrick McCrimmon, David Perodeau, Liam Chadwick. Front: Susan Schmitt, Troy Mander.*



*Retirement has brought Paul a new sense of freedom.*

# Paul Connolly – still flying

Paul Connolly has left the building, but he's still flying. A short explanation is needed here. Co-workers say that in carrying out his responsibilities as Executive Assistant to the President & CEO and Board of Directors, and Community Relations Coordinator Community Relations, Paul would buzz around like an energetic hummingbird. He was very much the go-to-guy, assisting community members with enquiries, providing travellers with information and advice, helping airport tenants, and assisting VAA board members, the CEO and staff.

Paul served at the airport from 1996 until June 2011, when he retired. He was originally hired by Transport Canada on a short term contract. But a major historical shift was about to take place, and the relationship would end less than eight months later. On April 1, 1997, management and operation of the airport transferred from Transport Canada to the newly formed Victoria Airport Authority (VAA). After following a long road with many turnings, Paul had arrived at a time and place of new beginnings.

Paul James Connolly was born in Toronto, the youngest son of a family of eight children. After graduating from St. Michael's College High School in Toronto, he earned a degree in history and political science from York University. He moved to Ottawa to work in home construction and insurance, then back to Toronto to study accounting. He spent some time in his father's

business as an insurance broker, but something was still driving him towards change. He returned to Ottawa to study tourism and work in the tourist industry, then moved into real estate. When a recession hit Ontario in 1992, Paul and his best cat buddy, Michael, jumped into the car and drove west to Vancouver Island.

He settled in Victoria where he found employment at the Naval Officer Training Centre (NOTC), working as an administrative assistant to Naval Officers. During that time he met a feral cat from the DND Work Point lands. He took her into his home and named her Kirna. Reilley, another cat, joined them a year later. Paul and his cats were settled quite comfortably, until the DND began cutting back civilian workers within the Forces. It was the final fork in the road leading to Victoria International Airport.

It turned out to be a good fit for everybody. By 1999, Paul was Executive Assistant to VAA President and CEO Richard Paquette, and the VAA Board of Directors. During the balance of his career, Paul worked with five board chairs and more than 42 directors. He participated in implementing major changes at the airport, including a newly renovated and expanded terminal building. A true child of the boomer generation, he was particularly pleased to see a significant advancement in environmental stewardship on the part of the airport and the aviation industry. The new Art at the Airport

Program was like icing on the cake. "My experience at the Victoria International Airport could not be replicated," Paul says. "There was no better place to learn about best governance, financial management, environmental stewardship and leadership."

*"There was no better place to learn about best governance, financial management, environmental stewardship and leadership."*

**Paul Connolly**

Paul says he hasn't made a definite decision on the flight path ahead. Always interested in a healthy lifestyle, he'll continue his long established regime of getting up at 4:30 every morning and going to the gym. He points out that as a vegetarian, he's not just interested in personal health, but is passionate about the health of our planet and everything living on it. "The human species is unique but no more special than any other species," he says. "We are all on this small planet together, each species and individual deserves equal respect. We are dependent on each other."



# The Role of an Airport

Airports play a complex role in the modern world. We tend to think of an airport as a somewhat sophisticated bus stop — a place to catch a ride to another place. This is the primary purpose of an airport, but there is much more. To better understand the complexity of airports, let's take a look at Victoria International (YYJ). More than 2,000 workers are employed by businesses located on airport land on the Saanich Peninsula. A large majority of these businesses (60 - 70 percent) have no direct relationship to air transportation.

In the past, we've brought you stories about a variety of businesses located at the airport. In this issue we've introduced two airport tenants: 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron and Viking Air. We'll continue to feature interesting tenants in future issues. For now, let's take a brief look at the kinds of businesses located at Victoria Airport.

The main office of **VIH Aviation Group** is located right here at YYJ. VIH operates a full service helicopter charter service at locations around the world, and is the largest privately owned business of the kind in Canada. It has sister companies in the U.S. (VIH Cougar), and on the east coast of Canada (Cougar Helicopters). These companies run scheduled air service to oil rigs with a fleet of modern Sikorsky S92 Helicopters.

VIH Aerospace, another member of the Group, designs and engineers a variety of equip-

ment for helicopters. They also offer a complete avionics service, a major overhaul service, and produce a variety of after market applications for rotor wing aircraft.

The Shell Aerocentre, another VIH company, is the only true corporate fixed base operation at the airport. Every year, they provide fuel and services for hundreds of visiting corporate jets and commercial carriers.

**Victoria Air Maintenance** has been an airport tenant for many years. This company restores and converts old aircraft for specific uses. They restore Mallards, the Grumman Goose, old warbirds, military jets and a range of other aircraft for customers worldwide. Victoria Air Maintenance is also a Lycoming Authorized Service Centre, giving Lycoming owners a source of parts and servicing for their airplanes. This enterprise provides steady and satisfying work for their 20 employees.

**Scott Plastics** started plastic injection moulded products in 1952 and is a major supplier of sport fishing and marine accessory equipment and fire fighting products. Almost everyone is familiar with Scotty downriggers, rod holders and related equipment. Scott Plastics has been a tenant of the airport for 10 years, and provides work to 90 employees. It has an average total annual sales of \$30 million.

**Nicholson Manufacturing** is a company that manufactures ring debarkers for the forestry

industry. In earlier days, the task of debarking logs, prior to milling them into lumber, was a slow and difficult task done by hand. Bill Nicholson built his first debarking machine in 1948. It was a welcome addition to the industry, and over the years Nicholson improved the early design to the standard of today. Some modern Nicholson models are capable of a maximum speed of 500 feet per minute, a far cry from the days of manual debarking. Nicholson has reported up to \$50 million in sales a year.

**Sobeys** (Thrifty Foods) is investing \$31 million into a new distribution centre on airport lands. The project is expected to be complete by late 2012. The environmentally friendly centre (LEED level certification) will incorporate sustainable and energy saving features including waste recycling, heat capture, energy use monitoring, gas leak protection systems and environmentally farmed wood products. Sobeys is a major employer and food supplier in the Victoria area.

There are two truck freight forwarding companies located on airport lands. With a requirement for additional space, **Pacific Coast Express** and **Central Island Distributors** have both relocated here. The airport location also provides the benefit of close proximity to BC Ferries and easy access to the lower mainland.

**Slegg Lumber**, a household name on Vancouver Island,

TURN TO PAGE 15



*Aircraft undergoing restoration at Victoria Air Maintenance.*

FROM PAGE 14

recently built an innovative 50,000 square foot wall panel and truss plant at the airport. Using sophisticated computer software, Slegg pre-designs houses and builds them right in the plant. Once the components are moved to their final location, it's possible to assemble a fully framed house in two days. This allows significant savings in material and labour, and provides for greater security on the building site.

Courier services are a natural fit in an aviation environment, and both **Purolator** and **Fed Ex** are tenants of the airport. Their aircraft bring freight from locations across North America,

providing a quick turn-around for parts, parcels and supplies to people all over Vancouver Island.

All of these businesses, none of them airlines, provide 1,500 jobs to local workers and bring more than \$400 million a year into the local economy. Clearly an airport is more than commercial passenger carriers. It is a sophisticated industrial node, economic generator, and transportation centre bringing jobs to the region and injecting dollars into the community.

### In memoriam

July 29, 2011 was a sad day for employees and tenants of Victoria International Airport. A group of Yellow Cab drivers playing cards at a picnic table, while waiting for fares, was hit by an out-of-control vehicle. One of the drivers, Ramesh Sharma, tragically passed away from injuries he received in the accident. Members of the airport community paid their respects to the Sharma family at a memorial service on August 7.



