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On Approach

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIA AIRPORT AUTHORITY



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A message from the CEO



**Chief Executive Officer
Richard Paquette**

It's with pleasure that I introduce you to the Spring 2004 issue of On Approach, a new publication intended to showcase the airport and related businesses. We expect it will be of great interest to travelers, tenants and employees of the airport, and to our neighbours in the greater Victoria community.

In this issue we'll be bringing you news about the final terminal building expansion, and the story of the airport farm program. We're proud of the innovative and responsible way we're managing the interim use of airport lands, and want you to know all about it. Also in this issue you'll be getting the latest information about what has been happening over at Viking Air. We're pleased that their new partnership with Pacific Sky Adventures will allow those jobs to stay in the community.

In many ways the economic health of the greater community is affected by what happens at the airport, so we have to be sure we get that right. And as chief executive officer, I want to take this public opportunity to express my confidence in our fine group in the VAA team. Special mention goes to Scott Cunningham, the airport's electrical supervisor, for coming up with the name of our magazine. For his efforts, Scott will be receiving an airport jacket and a restaurant lunch with his wife.

Although the airport is a significant presence on lower Vancouver Island, only 35 out of the 1000 people working here are actually employed by the VAA. The rest are involved in aviation related businesses, either at the airport itself or in the near vicinity. We want to tell their stories too. So if there's anything you'd like to read about in On Approach, let us know. We'd love to hear from you.



Editor's desk

Welcome to the very first issue of On Approach. In this publication, we hope to provide our readers with news and features about much that is of interest on the airport beat. Stories in this issue include the final phase of the terminal building expansion, the environmentally responsible uses of airport land, and the future directions of Viking Air, a long term airport tenant. There's more, of course, but you can read it for yourself. Just turn the page and begin.

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The VAA

It's six years ago now that the Victoria Airport Authority asked Linda Petch for assistance with their governance policies. As a consultant in the area of board governance, she was happy to oblige, not thinking about where it might lead. But soon after the project concluded, Petch was invited to join the VAA as a board member. She accepted, and now after five years of active service in various leadership positions, Petch has been appointed as VAA chair.

She praises the airport management and staff, saying their strength makes it easier for the board to focus on what they are meant to be doing. "The board operates at a policy and strategic level and delegates the day-to-day management to the CEO," she remarks.

"That's the board's job - to provide the direction, vision, and priorities. It's up to staff to flesh it out and make it happen. This board is good at keeping those distinctions."

Petch says that an important task during the next few months is to look at, and update the strategic plan. "Safety and security are paramount, but after that a priority is to increase direct air service links to Victoria. And we anticipate that with a good marketing plan and working jointly with Tourism Victoria it will happen. Victoria and the Island have been named as one of the primary tourism destinations in the world by Conde Naste Traveler ... It's all interlinked."

Another board priority is to encourage business development on airport lands. "That is a strategic direction to the CEO," Petch says. "I think the airport plays a vital role in the community. And I think the airport can have a strong economic role in the community. Fiscal responsibility is the over-arching framework for all of this."

Petch is enthused about the concept of a local airport authority, and says the model of governance they've adopted has been successful. Board members can serve a maximum of eight years, which are comprised of

two appointments of three years each plus a final two year term.

Appointments are made from names put forward by official nominating bodies. "We go to them and we tell them the kind of skill sets we need on the board,"

Petch says.

"They've been very cooperative and it's worked very well. Members tend to have a broad range of knowledge and skills. Members are nominated because of their accomplishments."

Petch is currently in the last year of her second three year term on the VAA, which means she has three years left to serve. Interestingly, January 1, 2004, the day she took office as chair, is the same day that the last of the founding board members retired.



Victoria Airport Authority Chair Linda Petch.

The official VAA nominating bodies are:

- Town of Sidney
- District of North Saanich
- District of Central Saanich
- District of Saanich
- City of Victoria
- Capital Regional District
- Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
- Provincial government
 - The federal government
 - The VAA

A sense of place

First class, but not extravagant. That's how CEO Richard Paquette describes the award winning terminal building expansion at Victoria International Airport. Following a brief hiatus, the final construction phase has now been approved, and the unmistakable signs of construction will soon be evident.

"The challenge will be to keep the terminal operating during construction," says Darcy Kray, president of Durwest Construction Management. "We won't be able to

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This artist's rendition shows the interior of the new departures area.

A sense of place

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avoid all inconvenience, because we're going right into the heart of the departures area. But the way we're phasing it, we're trying to facilitate the needs of the airlines and the public."

Victoria Airport Authority Chair Linda Petch explains that the final phase of expansion was delayed until the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority clarified security requirements for the post 911 era. Those requirements have now been incorporated into the plans, and the \$11.2 million price tag for the final phase will be partially offset by a contribution from the federal government.

Preliminary work will begin in April, with full construction starting in May. Stage one, which will double the length of the departures area, is slated for completion by February of 2005. In stage two, 70 percent of the ticket counter and baggage handling areas will undergo renovation.



The expanded terminal building's central hall as viewed from across the street.

This portion will be finished by August, 2005, with the remaining 30 percent finished by Christmas 2005. The total project will cover a floor area of 1,377 sq. meters. "It's

about twenty-one months work squeezed into eighteen months," says Kray.

Describing the philosophy behind the design, Tom Moore



Victoria International Airport CEO Richard Paquette welcomes visitors to the new terminal building.

of Moore Paterson Architects says, "We've tried to give the building a sense of place, so when you arrive at the airport you'll get an immediate sense of where you are on the planet. We've made a conscious effort to do this. So we've created all these glazed curtain wall areas, allowing for natural light. And we've used and continue to use the indigenous wood panels and wood trusses. We've tried to keep things simple to reflect the size of this community. We want it to be warm and welcoming. We've also made sure we have a flexible design, so that we have expandability to move in many directions. We've removed columns, creating easier flow and giving more depth behind the ticket counters."

Paquette expands on the theme, explaining that the second phase will mirror the look and feeling of the first. "That same feeling is going to reflect through the departures area," he says. "It's going to be open and bright and completely match the

balance of the building. We're going to have expanded space for airline check-ins, and more queuing space at the check-in counters. We're also going to incorporate the latest in self-serve kiosk check-in facilities for those who want to take advantage of them.

"The first goal is to get people through to where they're going," he adds. "This building is successful in that. Everything is in exactly the right proportion, and everything is where it's supposed to be. The central hall is an interesting and welcoming feature. Everybody passes through there, whether they're coming or going. The roof trusses there suggest an aviation theme, and the use of wood and greenery gives us a sense of place. It reflects the city of gardens."





Aerial view of farmlands near the airport terminal building.

Farming the airport

With land lease holdings of 1,143 acres, the Victoria International Airport is comparable in size to a Canadian prairie farm. But its size is where the similarity ends.

Like many other airports, Victoria International has a large inventory of land which is held in reserve to accommodate long term growth. Much of this acreage is utilized for agricultural purposes. In addition, the grassed areas between the airport runways and taxiway system is prime land for farming. In total, the airport farms 495 acres inside the security fence and 300 acres of its reserve lands, Making it one of the largest farms on southern Vancouver Island.

The semi-rural municipality of North Saanich, where the airport is located, doesn't want

things like golf courses or RV parks on airport reserve lands, but it is supportive of some agricultural uses. "So we've committed to hold those lands in agricultural use for as long as required," Stewart says.

The beauty of this strategy is that both the airport and the community benefits. On the operational side the farm program helps with the ever present problem of wildlife control. Birds flock to the wide open fields of North Saanich, and the airport has them in abundance. Ducks, geese, and other waterfowl are drawn to water that collects in low lying areas. Raptors are attracted by the population of mice and voles scurrying through the grass, and smaller flocking birds can be a major problem at airports worldwide. "We also have a

huge problem with seagulls at this airport," Stewart says. "We work fervently from dawn to dusk at controlling the birds."

Because birds are more attracted to groomed lawns than they are to hay fields, Transport Canada requires that grass on the infields and near the runways must left to grow during bird seasons. "But if you cut twelve inch long grass with the equipment we have, you can't pick it up," Stewart says. "And grass laid down attracts voles and mice; then birds come. So the best way is to harvest the grass. The farmers do it very effectively. They get a benefit and we get a benefit."

Interestingly, the urea used as a runway deicer creates an additional benefit. "When it rains, the urea washes off the runway

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Farming the airport

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into the soil," says Stewart. "Because urea is a high nitrogen fertilizer, the best hay crop on the airfield is always within two hundred feet of the runways."



Terry Stewart takes time to check the airport wetland. Run off from the surrounding fields collects in this reservoir and is diverted into a wetland filtering system.

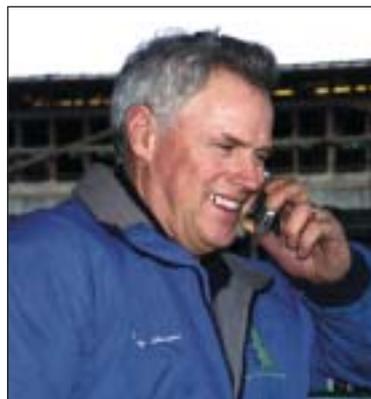
This is where David Pendray enters the picture. A third generation dairy farmer, Pendray works almost 800 acres at the airport. "We gave Dave Pendray a 25 year lease so he could make improvements to the land, making it a more profitable endeavor," Stewart says. "He has invested \$100,000 into a new drainage system, which will significantly improve the farm potential of reserve lands."

For Pendray the deal means additional work and expense, but it gives him more land to grow feed for his cattle and that suits him just fine. "We grow some hay for silage, and may grow some corn where it's

applicable," he says. "Land is too expensive here not to have something growing. On that field you see out there, we grow corn with a rye grass intercropping. The soil is heavy and the grass helps by loosening it. Here at the airport we've gone in with soil that hasn't been worked for 20 years, and some preparation has been necessary. So we've put tile drains in and removed some boulders. The

next step is to put in some irrigation."

One concern with large herds of cattle on the Saanich Peninsula is the possibility of water pollution. Because this is a concern that Pendray shares, he's implementing a government sponsored farm nutrient management program for all the



David Pendray taking care of business.

acreage under his control. "It will track what we put into the ground, and what's coming off the ground," he says. "We have to watch those nutrients, so they don't go down the creek. And we know coliform is something we've got to monitor."

Ten Ten Creek follows a twisty path through airport lands, on its way to Saanich Inlet. It was once a Coho bearing stream, but decades of neglect and abuse wiped out the fish and all but destroyed the waterway itself. Restoration of Ten Ten Creek began soon after the federal government turned the airport over to a local authority. Since then, tons of debris and garbage have been removed from the stream bed, which has also been restored to its natural depth and contour. And the stream's banks have been stabilized, so that siltation is under control. "In seven years we put \$1.2 million into cleaning and restoring this creek," Stewart remarks.

Regardless of what improvements have been made, fecal coliform must be dealt with on an ongoing basis. "When a farmer liquefies the manure and puts it back on the field as a nutrient, there's the potential to put higher fecal coliform counts into the creek during storm events," Stewart observes. "A wetland marsh is probably the best filtration system in the world. So a few years ago we put in a wetland to intercept all the storm water that runs off the fields.

Our intentions are to build two more wetlands on the acreage we've just enhanced, and we've hired Royal Roads

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Flying into the future



Michael Orr and David Curtis. The 1956 DeHavilland Beaver was restored by Viking Air, and is presently owned by an American client residing on Orcas Island.

After months of public speculation and uncertainty, Viking Air has cut a deal that ensures their continuing presence at the Victoria International Airport. Although recognized as a highly diversified aerospace facility, the home grown company is perhaps best known for its special niche as the repair and overhaul facility for DeHavilland Beavers and Otters worldwide. David Curtis, company president and a minority shareholder, has been a presence at Viking for more than twenty years.

"Viking is well recognized in the industry, and I'm constantly receiving expressions of interest [from potential investors]," Curtis says. "My former partner never wanted to sell. But then he passed away, and his wife

wasn't interested in continuing as a partner." Thus began a period of speculation about the future directions of Viking Air. It was a time of conjecture that only ended with the arrival a new kid to the neighbourhood. Pacific Sky Adventures took a close look at the operation and saw the possibilities. "The latest good news story is that they're helping us to establish and grow Viking Air," says Curtis.

Mike Orr, president and CEO of Pacific Sky Adventures, describes his organization as a group of private investors who prefer to keep a low profile. They come well equipped, with a Boeing 737 corporate jet and a Cessna Conquest 441, both available for charter. In addition to the deal struck with Viking Air, Pacific Sky has also pur-

chased the Esso fuel supply facility in the airport's West Camp. And in recent weeks they've acquired Juan Air, a local flying school and charter company. "We're in it for the long haul," Orr asserts.

Immediate plans are focused on the construction of a new facility for Viking Air. Once that's achieved Pacific Sky plans to develop an FBO, and a hangar for executive size jets.

"Then when the demand indicates, we will add an additional larger hangar for Boeing 737 size aircraft," Orr says. Already in the design stage, the target date for completing the new Viking Air facility is late fall of this year. East Camp development will begin this

Viking Air is known around the world as a manufacturer of quality aircraft components. The company's operations also includes aircraft sales and leasing, modification, repair and overhaul. Among Viking customers are Bombardier Aerospace, Bell Helicopter, Textron, Lockheed Martin, Boeing Commercial Aircraft Group, and every De Havilland aircraft operator worldwide.

David Curtis is chief executive officer and a shareholder of Viking Air, in partnership with Pacific Sky Adventures. Curtis's aviation career started in 1983 with flight training at Victoria Airport. During more than twenty years with Viking, his responsibilities have ranged from sales and marketing to vice president. He was named president in 1991.

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This turbo Otter belongs to a customer in the Maldives.

The Hawk has landed

Hawkair, a Terrace based airline flying Dash 8 aircraft, is now providing daily direct service between Victoria and Prince George. The Hawk landed in Victoria barely days after the route was dropped by West Jet, leaving a niche in the local market. Speaking about the new service, General Manager Simon Sheppard, said. "737s aren't feasible for this route. We feel that replacing them with the Dash 8 is going to work."

Sheppard's comments were made at a February 6 reception hosted by the airline. Bill Helin, a Tsimshian artist and dancer, was also present to provide a welcome with burning sage and an eagle dance. "The eagle song welcomes new friends and brings a protective spirit to watch over you," Helin said. "The burning sage neutralizes any negativity in the atmosphere."

In addition to the Prince George service, Hawkair will be providing three daily flights between Victoria and

Vancouver. "We are the only Dash 8 providing service into Vancouver's South terminal," said Sheppard. The airline also schedules regular flights into Prince Rupert, Terrace-Kitimat, Dawson Creek, the Queen Charlotte Islands and Grand Prairie.



Bill Helin, a Tsimshian artist and dancer, welcomes Hawkair to Victoria airport. Simon Sheppard, the company's general manager stands behind and to the left.

Farming the airport

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University to act as consultants on this."

Stewart predicts that they'll be able to release salmon back into the creek within the next two or three years. He's proud of what the VAA has accomplished in such a short time, and of his role in restoring and preserving the airport lands. He's also a pragmatist, who knows that the airport must earn a profit to fulfill its obligations to the community. It's a point of view that Pendray shares wholeheartedly. "Our exercise with the airport is a true partnership in land stewardship," Pendray says. "We are the vehicle on the agricultural side that's going to keep things going. And if we can keep a positive cash flow, we're going to be able to assist in growth at the airport."



Flying into the future

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summer and finish in the summer of 2005.

What it all means for Viking is that any uncertainty about continuing as a strong presence in this community is over. That's good news for their one hundred plus employees. And it's good news for students enrolled in the aircraft sheet metal apprenticeship program at nearby Camosun College. "The whole trades issue is a challenge for us," says Curtis. "It would be a shame to try to grow this business, if you can't get qualified people. By setting up these options the infrastructure is there."

Curtis is optimistic about the future. "We're unique as a manufacturer of aeronautical products, and aircraft overhaul and modification," he says. "Ninety percent of our components are exported out of country, so we're not reliant on the local economy. We have a new arrangement with Bombardier for the Twin Otter program, and will be doing ninety percent of the manufacture of Twin Otter parts. Altogether we'll be responsible for about 1,600 air frames, including the Beaver, the Otter, and the Twin Otter."

For his part Orr is enthused about what the new partnership can bring to

the community.

"The way we've looked at it is we have to create an atmosphere that will bring people to Victoria. We have vision for Victoria, and one of our objectives is to create jobs here on the Island. This is where we are and want to be for the long haul."

As far as Curtis is concerned they're off to a flying start. "I've been impressed at how positively they move forward once the decisions are made," he says. "I'm very happy that it's a Victoria story and there's a strong commitment to this area."



