IN THIS ISSUE:

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In this issue, you’ll meet Victoria Airport Authority Chair, Christine Stoneman, who discusses some immediate and future focuses of the VAA. Read this article to find out what changes to expect at YYJ, and why they matter. Stoneman’s optimism in these economically challenging times is rooted in solid business background, sound management practices and good common sense.

Be sure to check out the story about the upgraded third floor observation lounge, which has been renamed Eagles Landing after the carving by First Nations Artist Charles Elliot. (See the front cover of this issue). The walls of the lounge are also graced by a brief history and photos from early days to the present.

In this issue we introduce you to three businesses located at the airport. Two of them, Central Island Distributors and Slegg Lumber, have built in the new Mills Road Business Park. Silver Lining Helicopter Services is based in Hangar 51 in the West Camp. Read these articles to find out what they are doing, and why they are located at YYJ.

This year Horizon Air celebrated its 20th anniversary in Canada. During those two decades the Victoria base alone has transported more than a million air travellers between Victoria and the United States. This story touches on how the operation has changed in those 20 years, and how it impacts this community.

We hope you enjoy the stories and photos in this issue. Read them in good health and have a wonderful summer.

Phil Jensen, editor, On Approach
Meet Christine Stoneman

Christine Stoneman has an extensive history of public service. She’s served on many boards, including the VAA since 2004. She has also served as chair of Tourism Victoria Board of Directors and chair of the Victoria Police Board. Now half-way through her first term as VAA Chair, she’s in a good position to evaluate how things are going at the airport. “The working relationship between management and board here is one of the healthiest I’ve seen,” Christine remarks. “The board members are solid; they are well enough informed to establish policy, but they don’t get in there and tinker. I think sometimes boards get too much into (management responsibilities).”

During 2009, the board is focused on a number of projects. The McTavish Interchange and the Runway Extension are the big ones, and both have seen extensive media coverage. Meanwhile other projects continue. The administration offices renovation has been completed; the third floor observation lounge (Eagles Landing) is finished; the new fire hall/maintenance building is moving along.

The runway extension is perhaps more important than many realize; its completion may be a big factor in maintaining Victoria Airport’s unique position in difficult economic times. During the past year, Canadian airports have experienced an average decrease of 10 percent in passenger volume, while Victoria passenger volumes have decreased by only one percent. “We need to keep focussed on how to maintain our volumes,” Christine says. “Attracting more direct flights is important. Of all the small and medium airports in Canada, we are the only one without a runway longer than 7000 feet. Extending the runway will support direct flights to the East Coast and Europe ... the runway is key. This is the perfect time ... interest rates are low ... the quotes now are the best quotes we’ll get. It’s the perfect dynamic for moving forward.”

In her other life, Christine is one of three partners in Chemistry Consulting Group, a Victoria firm dealing in tourism, hospitality and human resources. Her skill set includes expertise in working with people and making things happen. These skills are important to her as VAA Chair. “I really think the emphasis is around board and management dynamics,” she says. “If the human dynamics are working, you can work through the obstacles. We can’t just foster the relationships; we need to further them as well.”
Dawn Rees was there on May 7, 1989. It was the day that Horizon Air opened in Victoria. Also present were Cheryl Kimber, Jan Gardner and Karin White, all of them still working for Horizon here in Victoria. Over the years since that first day, they have helped Horizon transport one million-plus people from the Victoria area. “We want to reach out and thank our passengers for their patronage over these many years,” says Dawn, Horizon’s customer services manager in Victoria.

“This marks not only our 20-year anniversary in Victoria, but also two decades of service across the Canada-U.S. border,” says Dan Russo, vice president of marketing and communications for Horizon. “The partnerships and friendships we’ve fostered over these years have been very gratifying, as has been knowing we’ve provided a valuable service by connecting Victoria to the U.S. airline route system. We look forward to celebrating many more anniversaries together.”

“Horizon has been instrumental to the success of transborder service at the Victoria Airport,” said Richard Paquette, President and CEO of the Victoria Airport Authority.

“How that service has been provided has evolved a lot over the years. It began with six daily flights to Seattle (via Port Angeles, Wash., to clear U.S. Customs) in an 18 seat Fairchild Metroliner III. By 1997, all flights had become nonstop to Seattle. Today, Horizon’s service has grown to five daily nonstop flights to Seattle. The aircraft is a 76 seat Bombardier Q400.

Horizon serves 47 cities throughout Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Baja California Sur (Mexico), and Seattle is a key connection that greatly benefits both U.S. bound passengers and our local tourism sector.”
British Columbia and Alberta. Together, Horizon Air and Alaska Airlines serve more than 90 cities and are subsidiaries of Alaska Air Group, Inc.

During the month long celebration, Horizon Victoria staff provide random prizes to customers at the gate, and everyone wore buttons with pictures of themselves from 1989. “Some of them were very young children at the time,” Dawn says. “Me? I’m a lifer. I’m staying here until retirement.”
Have you ever wondered about alternatives to high priced automobiles and crowded highways? Now, for the price of a high end sports car, you can rise above those crowds. The Robinson R22, a small two-seater helicopter, is used extensively by flying schools and private owners. Randy Brodie, chief engineer and owner of Silver Lining Helicopter Services at Victoria International Airport, explains its popularity.

“The Robinson is a very reliable aircraft,” he says. “It just doesn’t break down.” He adds that relatively low flying hours is another factor working in the private pilot’s favour. The average private owner seldom flies more than 100 hours a year, and the first major overhaul on a Robinson isn’t required until after 2,200 hours of operation. This translates into a 22 year lifespan. True, the 2,200 hour overhaul can be expensive, but you’ll have a virtually new helicopter when the job is done.

Randy has worked in the helicopter industry since 1981. He left his last long term employment with a local company in 2003, before striking out on his own as a contract engineer. Contracting work usually involves rotating work schedules for commercial operators in remote locations, something that helicopter engineers are accustomed to and accept. But during his time at home, Randy found he was also working 12 hours a day for aircraft owners in the Victoria area. His family liked having him at home, and he began to wonder if it was really necessary to spend every other month out in the field.

“It took about six months to find this place,” he says. “We started here March 1, 2006.”

At first, he focussed on locally

This R22 is owned by Coast Helicopter College and serviced by Silver Lining.
operated Bell Jet Rangers, a widely used commercial machine. “I just wanted to keep busy, working for myself for a modest income. But I’m always reaching, and decided to take a refresher course on R22s and R44s.” Word got around, and the phone started ringing. Predictably, the new customers consisted primarily of private owners, and helicopter schools. It looked good from a business point of view. Then the economy took a nosedive, and things got tight for a few months. “Now everybody is starting to fly again, and I’m way busier,” Randy says.

Silver Lining Helicopter Service (www.silverlininghs.com) is located in a 10,000 square foot hangar at Victoria International Airport. They lease hangar space to helicopter owners, and service Robinson and Bell 206/206L series helicopters. Coast Helicopter College (www.coasthelicoptercollege.com) is located upstairs in the same building.
Airport News Briefs

This spring, the Victoria Airport Authority received the Annual Victoria Hospitality Award Program's Going the Extra Mile (GEM) 2009 Award. The GEM award is given for consistent excellent service to customers, encouragement and training of employees, and dedication to the community.

“We are so delighted by the surprise of receiving this award,” comments Richard Paquette, VAA President and CEO. “This award is a recognition of everyone here at the airport, who provides courteous service to our passengers and customers on a day-to-day basis.”

Also this spring, the VAA was honoured by the Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce with the Newsmaker of the Year (2008) Award. A number of significant developments kept the airport in the news throughout 2008.

- VAA has been in the news for its proposed runway extension project, which will allow direct air service to London, England, generating significant tourist and business travel.

Victoria International Airport, the gateway to Vancouver Island is the ninth busiest airport in Canada with over 1.5 million passengers per annum. Victoria is well served with more than 60 daily departures and convenient non-stop or one-stop service to every major Canadian city and many US destinations.

- A 2.5-kilometer bike/walking path was created by the Victoria Airport Authority, providing a safe recreational facility between Patricia Bay and Sidney.

- Land developments, such as Slegg Lumber’s new wall panel production plant on the airport, and the new Central Island Distributors warehouse will bring 50 new jobs to the peninsula.

- VAA was lauded for its excellent management during winter storms, which hung over the region for the better part of two weeks. Airport operations continued without incident throughout that period.

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Representatives of the Victoria Airport Authority and First Nations communities on the Saanich Peninsula met at Tseycum for a celebration of friendship on June 26. said, “It’s long overdue, Tseycum Chief Vern Jacks said. “It’s about working together, and finding solutions. We want to sit down and work together. It’s medicine for both sides.”

Airport President and CEO Richard Paquette explained that the VAA had asked for a meeting to discuss issues of mutual concern some time ago. But First Nations groups were reluctant to enter into business discussions without first recognizing the friendly relationship between them and the VAA. “We were ahead of ourselves,” Paquette remarked. “This (event) forms a foundation, and we can move forward. What I take away from here today is that we can join hands and move forward together.”

Chief Bruce Underwood from Pauquachin First Nation spoke about the need for cooperation between the groups. “We want to make a commitment to work together,” he said. “We lift up our hands and say thank you. Some of the decisions, (we make) at the airport, will affect generations to come.”

Responding to the speakers, VAA Chair Christine Stoneman said, “To all of you here, thank you. You are right. It is a much better place to start a dialogue here than in a board room. I believe in honest open dialogue. I don’t believe in fences. They are meant to be removed.”

Spiritual Leader Xelcilem (Fred Charlie) conducted the Fern Dance, which he described as very sacred to his people. The airport and his people have been close from the very beginning of their association, he added. “They’ve given us a lot of respect.”
Cycle path opens

On Saturday May 30, cyclists from the Saanich Peninsula and Victoria celebrated the opening of the new 2.5 km Mills Road Bike and Walking Path. The path was completely funded by the Victoria Airport Authority as a contribution to the community and the local environment. Local councilors and residents of the District of North Saanich and the Town of Sidney attended to show their support of this new community initiative.

Among those attending the festivities were Richard Paquette, VAA President and CEO, Christine Stoneman, VAA Chair, Mayor Alice Finall of North Saanich and John Luton of Victoria City Council and the President of Capital Bike and Walk Society of Victoria.

VAA CEO Richard Paquette

John Luton, Christine Stoneman and Alice Finall cut the ribbon, opening the Mills Road Bicycle and Walking Path.

The path is for walking too: Mr. and Mrs. George Maude.
One of the best kept secrets of Victoria International Airport is the third floor Eagles Landing Observation Lounge. This is the place to go, whether you’re a local history buff, a lover of First Nations Art, or simply want a quiet place to wait for a flight.

Just prior to the official opening on May 22, Charles Elliott said, “I want to congratulate the Airport Authority for their bold new move. I feel a part of the airport now. There was no first nations presence here before. I want to congratulate Chief Vern Jacks and (Airport CEO) Richard Paquette for their part in this. It’s going to lead to better things.”

Master carver Charles Elliott was raised on the Tsartlip First Nations reserve in Brentwood Bay, almost next door to the airport. Elliott is known around the world for his role in the revival of Coast Salish art. He carved the Queen’s baton, which was used in the Commonwealth Games in 1994, and was commissioned to create a Talking Stick for Nelson Mandela. In 2005, Elliott received the prestigious Order of British Columbia in recognition of his work. Travellers passing through the airport can now view some of his carvings in the recently renovated third floor observation lounge. Elliot has also provided a series of swimming salmon carvings, installed in the arrivals area of the terminal building on the bulkhead above the domestic baggage carousels.

“I am always humbled when asked to create a piece or pieces of artwork or carvings,” said Elliott. “The artwork or carvings, I say, are great ambassadors for our Saanich Salish Nation and speak to the world of our existence and history.”

Also in the lounge are story boards taking visitors on a journey through four major eras: the Saltwater People and the history of First Nations on airport lands; contact and colonization, including the Douglas Treaties; the war years and the role this airport played during...
World II; and commercial aviation from the end of the war, to the transfer of the airport to the Victoria Airport Authority in 1997. Present at the opening of Eagles Landing Observation Lounge and Historical Exhibit were local First Nations representatives, Charles W. Elliott with his family and friends, local historians, and representatives from the Town of Sidney, District of North Saanich, and the Victoria Airport Authority. Special guest Rusty Hopper was also present at the opening. On October 22, 1939, RCAF Flight Lieutenant George DuTemple and Corporal Rusty Hopper left Sea Island in Vancouver in an Avro 626 biplane, landing at Pat Bay 15:11 hours. Shortly after the landing, the Royal Canadian Air Force Ensign was raised over Patricia Bay Air Station for the first time.

Rusty Hopper with a model he created of the Avro 626, the first aircraft to land at Pat Bay.
When we think of airports, we usually think of them as transportation hubs or jumping off points. But there is more to it than that. One of the functions of an airport is to support the economic development of the community. At Victoria International Airport this includes a land development program. The new nine acre Mills Road Business Park on the north side of the airport is a recent example. So far, seven-and-a-half acres have been leased out to two well known Vancouver Island businesses.

Central Island Distributors
Central Island Distributors (CID) is a Nanaimo based operation with warehouses on the lower mainland and Central Vancouver Island. Their new Mills Road distribution centre has the benefit of being centrally located between the lower mainland and South Vancouver Island. “The airport is a fantastic location,” says Alex Dugan, company president. We have

Mills Road Business Park

An interior shot Central Island Distributors’ warehouse at Mills Road Business Park.
been treated very well by the airport people.

“I started this company in 1992 with one tractor and a broken down five ton,” he says. Today, CID operates more than 50 tractor-trailers and employs about 60 staff. His son David is general manager. “We are bringing a reputable freight service to this community at fair prices,” Alex says. “And we provide employment for our people and a steady income.”

Slegg Lumber

With more than a dozen outlets on Vancouver Island Slegg Lumber is very much a household name. The new 50,000 square foot wall panel operation at Mills Road will be in operation by the end of summer. “We expect to move into the building with the machinery we now have very shortly and expect the arrival of some new automated building machinery in two months,” says Eric Slegg. “We are very pleased with the way this new location has come together, and expect some substantial increase in our rate of production very soon.”

Construction Supervisor Gary Dunphy explains that the computerized equipment they will be installing takes a customer’s house plans and converts them into construction-ready framed walls. “We’re new to this aspect of the business,” he says. “Sleggs is very aware of what the industry is doing, and the machinery going in here, and the size of the building leaves us open for growth.”