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Editor’s desk

Good planning takes work, but it pays off. For example, the VAA’s ready response to what customers tell them has led to improved food and beverage services at the airport. The airport White Spot Restaurant, Tim Hortons Restaurant, and Starbucks’ coffee outlets have been on site for several months now. During that time food sales at the airport have increased 50 percent over the same period of time last year.

Other examples of good planning are found in this issue. Read Going with the Flow to find out about our new car rental maintenance facility that opened this fall. Environmental responsibility is an important part of airport planning. Water course restoration tells some of this story. And for an overview of the VAA Master Plan turn to A Master Plan Responding to Growth.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about airport workers and management joining in an effort to help those less fortunate. And for those of you who absolutely love airplanes of all kinds, flip to the article about Victoria Air Maintenance, an innovative company in the fascinating business of restoring old aircraft to flying condition.

All the best, and happy flying.

Phil Jensen, editor

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On the cover: This T-28 Trojan is undergoing restoration at Victoria Air Maintenance. See the story on page 6.
A Master Plan
Responding to Growth

It’s just over a year since the official opening of the expanded airport terminal building, a project that began in 1998. The changes were needed to accommodate increased numbers of passengers passing through Victoria International Airport. “We’ve seen an increase of six percent per year over the last four years,” says CEO Richard Paquette. This translates into 1.5 million air passengers passing through Victoria this year. Growth in the future is forecast at three percent per annum for a period, with an eventual decline down to two percent.

Recognizing the need to prepare for the future, Victoria Airport Authority has developed a 20 year plan of reasonable and environmentally sustainable responses to anticipated growth. The total dollar value of these projects is $133 million, based on 2006 dollars. The entire amount will be funded by money generated from the existing airport improvement fee and airport operating revenues.

None of the proposals is written in stone, since the Master Plan is not designed to drive growth. Rather, it is a response to predicted growth. If predictions prove to be overly optimistic, some projects will become unnecessary. Those that are undertaken must be justified in terms of financial, engineering, environmental, and operational perspectives before final approval.

The Master Plan identifies several issues as primary concerns. Greenhouse gases and global warming in particular will continue to demand attention. The
Highlights of the Master Plan

VAA is committed to dealing with this issue.

Some Master Plan highlights:

- The terminal building will be expanded incrementally over the years to meet projected growth and traffic.

- Continued demand for parking is anticipated. A multi-level parkade will be needed towards the end of the 20 year plan.

- The VAA board of directors has set aside three million dollars to improve access between the airport and Pat Bay Highway. Financial support will be required from the provincial and federal governments to address this serious safety problem.

- The Master Plan identifies a potential to expand the airport main runway (09/27) from 7000 feet to 8400 feet. This will permit wide body aircraft to fly non-stop to London.

- The plan calls for a new international arrivals and departures area with USA pre-clearance.

- Improvements to the taxiway system will decrease aircraft taxiing and greenhouse gas impacts.

- The Master Plan identifies requirements for a new fire hall and maintenance garage to replace the existing WW2 buildings.

Readers wishing a more detailed look at the Master Plan Executive Summary can find it on the Victoria Airport website www.victoriaairport.com
The Nanchang CJ6A banks and turns south, revealing a panoramic view of the San Juan Islands to the east. Mike is flying from the front seat, and I’m directly behind him in the single rear seat. I’d met him an hour earlier, when I walked into his office at the airport. What I didn’t know then was that any conversation with Mike Sudul just naturally turns to flying. And talking is never really enough.

Cruising at 140 knots, we reach the Strait of Juan de Fuca in just a few minutes. Mike puts the little war bird through its paces, while I glory in our seemingly effortless flight through the summer sky. The full strength of the summer sun beats down on the Plexiglas canopy, and I crack the air vent open another notch. Sensing my movement, Mike gives me a quick thumbs up. His voice crackles over the intercom. “Wonderful day,” he says. It is a wonderful day.

The CJ-6A, designed as a flight trainer for the Chinese Air force, has been flying since the early 1960s. The sprightly craft is powered by a nine cylinder radial engine. It cruises at an easy 140 knots. “Performance is identical to a Harvard,” Mike says. “But it’s half the size and a third of the acquisition cost. It’s the best bang for the buck in a war bird.”
The CJ-6A can be acquired locally from Victoria Air Maintenance. The company specializes in the restoration and maintenance of war birds, experimental aircraft and large overhauls. “We also own Pat Bay Air, a float plane operation; and Royal Pacific Maintenance, a Cessna Service Center and general maintenance facility,” Colin says.

Colin walks me through the hangar, pointing out various projects that are underway. A DC3 dominates the hangar. Part of a private collection, the aircraft is undergoing a complete restoration. “It’s an 18 month

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Since the VAA was established a decade ago, it has worked to remedy environmental damage resulting from the previous 50 years of questionable industrial practices. Recognizing water quality to be a key indicator of a healthy natural environment, the VAA has paid attention to water courses flowing through airport lands. To this end, they worked to restore the ecosystem of Ten Ten Creek, re-establishing stream’s natural meander and health. Improvements include cattle exclusion fencing and riparian plantings for shade and insect food sources. A wetland pond complex has also been constructed to treat storm water run-off.

Following the discovery of heavy metal contamination in the soils of Reay Creek, the Airport Authority undertook a series of investigations to determine source and remedies. A consultant found the contamination was limited to pockets in eddies of the creek, and along the banks - where

Removing contaminated soils along the bank of Reay Creek.
Native plants flourish in restored areas

storm water discharges into the tributary. A team of workers has since removed the contaminated soils and sediments. Soils removed from the banks of the upper reach have been replaced by restorative planting of native flora, including ferns, rose hips, dogwood and grass.

The VAA has also hired an environmental officer to oversee all environmentally related issues. In that role, Leanne Shapka keeps airport tenants informed of best environmental practices, and analyzes the results of annual environmental audits of tenants who are using hazardous materials in their businesses. She also conducts environmental inspections of tenant properties on a random basis.

The natural growth re-appears rapidly along the banks of Reay Creek.

This photo, and the one on the upper left of page eight, show workers beginning restorative planting of the stream banks.
It’s unlikely that their customers ever noticed it. But until a few months ago, airport auto rental employees were obliged to perform an awkward and inconvenient vehicular dance when moving cars to and from their lots for customers or servicing. The natural flow and rhythm needed to make any job go well was almost nonexistent. That’s all changed since the completion of a new car rental maintenance facility this year.

“When this was first considered, the idea was to base it loosely on what we’d seen at one of the other airports,” says Paul Homewood of Budget Car Rental. “It’s similar, but we have adapted it to our own needs. Our parking now provides room for 400 cars in the main lot and 20 to 25 for each rental company in the ready lot.”

Homewood describes how the traffic flow fits in naturally with airport roads, making the return of a vehicle to the maintenance facility easy and convenient. After a car has been fuelled and washed, moving it to the main lot behind the building is a matter of seconds. It’s a beautifully thought out system, and the car rental companies are delighted with its effectiveness. “We’ve been in here for two long weekends now, and it’s proved itself very viable. The vehicles return to the fuel pumps, then to the cleaning facility, then back to the upper lot.”

There are other benefits to sharing a facility. If all four rental companies use the same fuel provider, there’s an opportunity for a volume discount. And there will never be more than one fuel truck on-site at a time. Garbage disposal and recycling costs are shared, and water is recycled. It’s a great system, but the ability to cooperate is key to making it work. “We’re competitors, but everybody gets along,” Homewood says. “That has made the transition smoother. We’re pretty happy with what we’ve got. More importantly, the guys that work here are happy.”

Left to right: Elaine Wiger, Avis Car Rental; Paul Homewood, Budget Car Rental; Wendy Cornock, Hertz Car Rental. Absent: Michelle Brown, National Car Rental.

Paul Homewood, Budget Car Rental Manager, on the main rental lot. The new maintenance facility is in the background.
The VAA and UCTE Local 2029 have taken cooperation to new levels. Part of the collective agreement between the groups speaks to social development. In practice, this means that the employee union and the VAA each contribute an equal amount of money to a worthy cause each year. The dollar amount is tied to the total annual employee work hours - one cent for each hour worked. This year, each group presented $843.19 to the Stony Lions Food Bank.

Beverley Elder, the food bank administrator, was on hand to accept the cheques in an informal ceremony this summer. The food bank is grateful for every contribution it gets, she says. Cash is particularly useful, as it can be put towards what is most needed at any given time. “Dropping off a flat of soup is good. But maybe we already have enough soup. With cash, we can get what we need most.”

The Stony Lions Food Bank feeds 1000 people per month and serves Saanich Peninsula from Sayward Road to Swartz Bay. You may contact the food bank by e-mail or telephone.

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Victoria Air Maintenance

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process. This one was a corporate aircraft before our customer got it. Before that it was with the USAF Flying Tigers and has seen time and service in China.”

Colin points out a Grumman Mallard. “This one is a major refit. Over there is a Grumman Widgeon from Alaska. We have a good reputation for our work on flying boats. We’ve worked on them all - except the Grumman Duck. And we’re up to our 36th restoration on Trojans. We bring them out of Nicaragua and Uruguay.” The T-28 Trojan is an American built, piston-engine military trainer of a similar vintage to the Nanchang CJ6A.

A walk through Victoria Air Maintenance hangars is like taking a step back in time, and it is clearly a place Colin loves. “We’re well known in the war bird community,” he says. “Until recently, our clientele has been 80 percent US based, but we are seeing more Canadian customers now with the more equal exchange rate. They can afford some of these aircraft now.

Complete restoration of this DC3, once used by the USAF Flying Tigers, will take a year and a half.