

## The sky's the limit for Red Deer Airport

We're the little airport that could. After years of being the region's best kept secret, the announcement of the runway extension at Red Deer Airport has got the community talking about all the exciting possibilities that lie ahead. And with those discussions come a new understanding of the important economic impact the airport has had on the region all along.

"The runway expansion means single aisle jets will now be able to land in Red Deer, and that opens up all kinds of exciting opportunities for the region – for individual travel as well as for local business development," says RJ Steenstra, CEO of Red Deer Airport. "The airport has been a major economic driver for years, and that's why we could make an excellent case for funding the runway expansion; last year Red Deer Airport supported 225 jobs and contributed \$100 million into the regional economy."

In fact, Red Deer Airport (YQF, in airline and social media terminology) is already one of the busiest, fastest growing regional airports in Canada, with over 46,500 aircraft movements in 2014. YQF saw a 179% compound annual growth increase in scheduled passengers over the last four years – and that's before the runway extension that will change everything.

"The airport connects many unique Red Deer businesses to the world, and it's also home to an array of aviation-related local businesses that operate on the international stage," Steenstra says. "Red Deer Airport is an important centre for flight training, and we have a full transportation infrastructure that gets used by local business constantly. We're also a transportation link for corporate aircraft for national and international companies such as Tim Hortons, Costco, WalMart, Nestle/Purina, London Drugs and numerous oil and gas companies."

In other words, the airport is vital to expanding the economic possibilities of central Alberta. For years, it has acted as a key business gateway and a transport interchange, creating employment and driving future business growth.

The recent announcement of the runway expansion, made possible by funding from the Province, The City of Red Deer and Red Deer County, was greeted with excitement by those with an eye on the long-term economic growth of the region.

"The airport is well positioned for the next phase of its growth and we're ready to turn those possibilities into realities," says Steenstra. "The runway expansion will help us attract a broader range of aircraft and airlines, improve passenger experience and options, and also support the expansion of aviation-related business and industry in Red Deer and Central Alberta."

Not only will central Albertans be able to connect to the world more easily, we'll also be positioned to bring the world to us: attracting new airlines and the resulting new jobs; helping local industry to expand its reach; and retaining the one and a half billion dollars worth of local cargo revenue that currently goes elsewhere.

As Steenstra notes, one 737 landing every day at an airport equals 16 person-years of employment. "With the runway expansion, we can accommodate larger aircraft. That means



advanced tourism, economic power, attracting corporations to the area, and increased quality of life for residents.”

“Red Deer Airport is on an exhilarating trajectory,” Steenstra says. “As a key economic driver, we’re already contributing \$100 million into the regional economy – just imagine the economic impact to central Alberta in the next few years as the runway expansion is completed.”