

Saskatchewan/Fort McMurray Business Connections Strong

October 25, 2012. The Red Deer Airport Authority released findings from a recent study conducted to determine and identify direct business connections between Red Deer, Fort McMurray and Saskatchewan (Regina/Saskatoon). For the first time, the business relationships and types of business between these cities and regions have been clearly identified and named. The Red Deer Airport Authority commissioned the work as part of efforts to understand base business connections which further reinforce the need for air links between Red Deer, Fort McMurray and Saskatchewan (Regina/Saskatoon).

The major findings include:

- 200+ businesses with varying degrees of connections and relationships between Central Alberta and/or Saskatoon and /or Regina and/or Fort McMurray
- Manufacturing and Oilfield Services are the dominant industries with connections to all four cities
- Central Alberta has 76 head offices that support or are likely to support some form of presence in Fort McMurray, Saskatoon or Regina.
- Additionally, 56 production facilities in Central Alberta have a relationship or probable relationship to one or more of the three destinations.
- Central Alberta's strong presence with oil & gas, agriculture, and related manufacturing, plus its formidable number of head offices/regional offices and production facilities appear to be a solid foundation for business travel between the regions.

Along with outlining fundamental base business travel opportunity, this study underlines the importance of and depth of business links to the local economy. *"We live in an area that is now more interconnected than at any time in the past. We had a sense that the links are strong - now we know who they are, how many links exist and from what industry sectors. These links are fundamental to the economic well-being of the region. We are pleased to see ties between these growing economic engines that support our ongoing efforts to secure direct air service for the citizens of Central Alberta,"* said RJ Steenstra, CEO of the Red Deer Airport Authority.

The West, led by Alberta and Saskatchewan, is consistently being forecast to lead the country in terms of economic growth. This economic backdrop bodes well for the possibility of direct scheduled business-related air travel between Red Deer, Fort McMurray and Saskatchewan (Regina/Saskatoon). Movement of labour creates a significant demand for air travel. With an increasingly tight labour market in all four locations, there will be increased demand implications for efficient and convenient air links.

"Aviation is critical to growing the Central Alberta economy, supporting jobs, enabling investment and facilitating trade. Expanded air services offers our economy a low cost, low risk, high reward way to grow and diversify, allowing us to reach our full potential." said RJ Steenstra, CEO of the Red Deer Airport Authority.

The Red Deer Airport Authority is a not-for-profit, non-share Capital Corporation incorporated under the Alberta Regional Airports Authorities Act. Since 1992, it has been responsible for the management, maintenance and development of Red Deer Airport. In 2011, Red Deer Airport served over 7,000 passengers and handled 44,000 aircraft movements making it the 2nd busiest Regional Airport in Canada and a vital and vibrant transportation link for Central Alberta.

-30-

For more information or a copy of the report please contact:

RJ Steenstra
CEO, Red Deer Airport
rj.steenstra@flyreddeer.com
403 886-4388