



Regina Airport Authority is optimistic about its ability to invest in the future

By *JAMES BOGUSZ*
President and CEO, Regina Airport Authority

Like many businesses in Regina, the pandemic has presented many challenges for our airport. At the height of 2020s restrictions, there were a handful of days with no planes coming or going and seeing stretches for weeks with less than two per cent of our normal traffic volumes.

On a much more positive note, 2021 was a turning point as society learned how to manage COVID. The year ended on a strong note with the return of a variety of direct flights to sun destinations – crucial for many in Saskatchewan – as well as passenger volumes hovering right around 50 per cent of normal.

While the Omicron variant put a slight damper on recovery at the beginning of 2022, we are seeing fantastic news on many fronts for the months ahead. Travel restrictions have begun to ease with the big news for April 1 that fully vaccinated travellers will no longer require a test to return or enter Canada.

We know this is especially important for business travel recovery as employers are no longer at risk of having their employees stuck in another country for an extra 10 days. As well, it makes it much easier for those from other countries to enter Canada for business or to explore our wonderful country.

Speaking of exploring our country, YQR is very excited to be serving our community with four fantastic carriers this summer: Air Canada, Flair Airlines, Swoop, and WestJet.



Competition is great for travellers and having two main line carriers as well as two ultra-low cost carriers is going to mean some great deals for those looking to travel.

As well, airlines are already seeing strong demand for bookings going into summer and are responding with a ton of flights in our market. Current schedules put us right around 20 departures and 20 arrivals every day which will provide around 90 per cent of the seats we had pre-pandemic. These flights are going to a variety of great domestic destinations and hubs including Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal.

With the anticipated recovery in travel, it means that the airport can pivot from a defensive posture of trying to save our business and move back to investing in the airport and traveller experience that we had begun in 2019. You can look forward to improvements related to our food and beverage experience, new local retail opportunities, and seating enhancements.

We have a \$26-million dollar runway overlay project in the planning stages and you have likely heard the news that the Government of Canada has agreed to cost share \$13 million towards it, in which we are grateful for.

It has certainly been a challenging past two years, but we are continually blown away by the support of the community and the flexibility and resolve of those working in the airport community. The Regina & District Chamber of Commerce continues to be a great advocate for YQR and we appreciate the efforts of the organization and its many members.

They say growth comes through adversity and we look forward to your continued support as we all work towards building on Regina's bright future.

UPCOMING REGINA CHAMBER EVENTS

WED., APRIL 27

40th Annual "Take A Break" Luncheon

An opportunity to recognize your support staff during Administrative Professionals Week.

Delta Regina

11:30 a.m. -- Buffet luncheon

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