



*Where journeys begin.*

Comox Valley Airport News

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## YQQ Presents 2011 Goals, Objectives and Achievements

The Comox Valley Airport Commission (CVAC) marked a successful fiscal year with a strong financial performance and increased passenger numbers and exposure in the aviation industry, reported CEO Shirley de Silva at the 2011 Annual Public Meeting.

The Commission's five year strategic plan includes five goals focused on achieving an overall vision of developing and expanding YQQ's scheduled air services network: expanded air services, facilities meeting customer needs, effective communications, financially viable and competitive operations and professional development for staff and board members.

In pursuit of its strategic vision, CVAC has been working for the past eight months to identify and build business cases for possible new routes at YQQ.

"We are focusing on destinations that are currently being accessed through other airports by passengers residing within our catchment

areas," said de Silva. "We have approached airlines, including our current tenants, with 14 business cases for possible new routes."

The Commission also reported that passenger numbers at the airport increased by 2.3 per cent over 2009 and projected a minimum three per cent increase for the next five years. De Silva also confirmed the current passenger terminal can accommodate both current and projected increases to passenger loads.

Several improvements were also announced: the recent redesign of the entranceway to security screening, the introduction of fuel services at YQQ and CVAC's Shell Goal Zero award for the successful and safe delivery of this new service. Several improvements to financial practices have also been implemented and professional opportunities for staff were detailed.

Read the Accountability Report at: [comoxairport.com/about-us/publications](http://comoxairport.com/about-us/publications).





## Message from the CEO

Welcome to the third issue of FLY YQQ, the Comox Valley Airport's award winning newsletter. We are proud to reveal our "upgraded" look which reflects YQQ's new brand identity, launched this summer at our Annual Public Meeting.

A lot has happened at YQQ over the last three months: a healthy growth in passenger loads during our busiest travel months, the tenth year anniversary of our volunteer program, a successful marketing event for Air Transat's Mexico flights, the unveiling of our new logo, tagline and visual identity, a coveted award from Airport Council International – North America (for this very newsletter), the opening of our annual art exhibition and the release of a new economic study detailing the benefits of new air service for the Comox Valley.

### Continued Growth

We've experienced a busy summer with more than 4,000 passengers passing through YQQ in August, one of our busiest months of the year. We are well in line with our forecasted annual growth of three per cent, and

we are continuing our work behind the scenes to bring more traffic into the Comox Valley. We have presented 14 business cases in our quest to bring complementary routes to the region and we are hard at work on an incentive program for new air service.

### Where Journeys Begin

This summer we were proud to unveil a brand for YQQ that successfully embodies both our world-class service and our local charm. It was the product of six months of intensive work that included: consultation with airlines, passengers, tenants, employees, volunteers and our community partners. It provides us with the strong platform we need to effectively market the airport and grow our business. We are now moving ahead with implementing the brand in signage, advertising and uniforms for YQQ staff.

### Fall, Winter and Beyond

This month we are pleased to celebrate the anniversary of our tenant, Mid Island Gifts, which has provided our passengers with locally produced goods and giftware for the last decade. This eclectic gift shop has contributed greatly to our passenger experience and plays a key role in delivering on the local charm that makes YQQ unique from other airports.

As part of our brand implementation, we are anticipating the release of six new print advertisements for the airport later this month, including a new ad for our winter charter flights. We'll be celebrating the first flight to Puerto Vallarta on November 5th with an authentic Mexican Fiesta for our passengers. Of course we will also be preparing for the upcoming busy holiday travel season.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley de Silva". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Shirley de Silva**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Comox Valley Airport

## New Air Service Would Pump Millions into Local Economy

YQQ has released the results of a new economic impact study that demonstrates the extensive benefits to the local economy from potential new air service in the Comox Valley.

“An airport connects a community to the rest of the world and promotes economic wellbeing within that community. The economic impact of a new air service is impressive and demonstrates what an important investment YQQ is for the Comox Valley as a whole,” said CEO Shirley de Silva. “For example, establishing a once daily service to the United States would result in more than \$24 million in direct annual economic impact for this area.”



**An airport connects a community to the rest of the world and promotes economic wellbeing within that community.**

Shirley de Silva  
CEO, Comox Valley Airport

The study conducted by InterVISTAS Consulting Group, reports on the direct impact a new air service would have on the airport and visitor spending in the Comox Valley. InterVISTAS is a leading worldwide aviation consulting firm that conducts studies which document the wide ranging economic stimulus generated by an airport. The study completed for YQQ takes employment, wages, GDP and economic output into account.

“Each time a plane lands at YQQ, it generates labour hours for individuals involved in handling passengers, their baggage and the aircraft,” said de Silva. “The establishment of new air service at YQQ would also bring in more tourists who will spend money on food, lodging and entertainment in the Comox Valley region.”



The study looked at three potential scenarios and the associated economic benefit for each:

- A once daily year-round domestic air passenger service operated with a 119-seat B737-600 aircraft.
- A once daily year-round transborder air passenger service operated with a 70-seat Q400 aircraft.
- A once weekly seasonal international air passenger service to Europe operated with a 250-seat aircraft.

The final report, which can be found at [comoxairport.com/about-us/publications](http://comoxairport.com/about-us/publications) details numerous findings, including the combined direct annual impact on the airport and visitor spending.

## YQQ Working on Incentive Program for New Air Service

The airport will soon be offering a new incentive program aimed at qualifying air carriers who provide new or expanded service to the Comox Valley.

The program's purpose is to stimulate and increase passenger traffic between Comox and new destinations, enhance economic opportunities and strengthen commercial and cultural ties between the regions.

"Airline incentives would be used in the most effective way possible to reduce the risk to an airline during the start-up phase of a new service, and to build awareness and demand



for a new air service as it becomes established," said YQQ CEO Shirley de Silva. "The program would not be used to "buy" air services as we approach air carriers only with business cases that can be self-sustaining in the long term."

Examples of airline incentives include marketing support and aeronautical fee discounts for a fixed period of time.

## Passengers Catch the Wave at YQQ

On July 16, YQQ passengers were invited to attend a fiesta event in celebration of the return of two weekly Mexico charter flights offered by Transat Holidays and Nolitours.

"We are looking forward to another successful winter travel season partnering with the Comox Valley Airport," said Carlo Trinidad, Western Canada Director of Sales for Transat Holidays and Nolitours. "We were thrilled to see so many residents attend our event and enjoy some complimentary food, music and fun, while gaining some valuable information to assist with planning their 2011/2012 vacation."

Beginning December 18, 2011, Comox Valley residents can fly direct from YQQ to both Cancun and Puerto Vallarta aboard a CanJet Boeing 737 aircraft. Direct flights will depart every Monday and Tuesday through to March 28, 2012.

YQQ is also looking forward to the first WestJet Puerto Vallarta flight of the season, which will take off on November 5, 2011 and continue through April 2012.



"We are pleased to offer Comox Valley sun-seekers the opportunity to access two fantastic destinations in Mexico," said Shirley de Silva, CEO of the Comox Valley Airport. "Flying direct from YQQ ensures that our passengers avoid additional travel time and can enjoy a worry-free vacation."

Transat Holidays offered the first flight to Puerto Vallarta from YQQ in 2004 and added Cancun as a destination in 2009. More than 22,700 passengers have flown to Mexico from YQQ with Transat Holidays and Nolitours over the past eight years.

## Comox Valley Airport Launches New Look

The Comox Valley Airport has unveiled its unique brand model, marking a new chapter in the implementation of YQQ's strategic plan. The brand includes an original logo and the tagline "where journeys begin". The brand is based on local imagery that brings to life the personal stories of travelers to the area.

The model was presented for the first time at the Airport's Annual General Meeting and includes guidelines for everything from stationary and business cards, to signage and employee uniforms. The brand model will help to ensure consistency in all aspects of the airport's public image.

"We are very pleased with our new look and the fact that our brand reflects everything our loyal travelers already appreciate about our airport: ease of use, caring personnel and convenience," said YQQ CEO Shirley de Silva. "Our new logo also features the incorporation of the YQQ airport code, in an effort to raise awareness of the airport's call sign and make the online booking experience easier for our passengers."

YQQ's new brand is just one component of the airport's overall communications strategy, which also includes air service development, employee and stakeholder relations and a targeted marketing campaign, aimed at stemming leaking passengers from the airport's catchment area.

More than 60 participants were consulted as part of the brand development process through in-depth interviews, focus groups and facilitated sessions with representatives of municipal governments, the community, military, tenants, airline stakeholders, business partners, employees, volunteers and passengers of YQQ.

The airport is now sporting its new look on YQQ's website, business cards, letterhead, signage and the arrival and departure screens in the terminal building. Additional implementation is ongoing and will include banners, advertising, uniforms and marketing collateral materials.





Front Row: Artists Helen Utsal, Tracy Kobus, Esther Sample, Brian Scott and Bev Byerly, with Jen Alton representing CVCAC and Christianne Wile representing YQQ. Back Row: Artists Martin Kaspers and Ron Pogue.

## Featured Artists for YQQ's Art and Culture Program Unveiled

The Comox Valley Airport Commission and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council are pleased to announce the group of artists who will display their work as part of the 2011/2012 Exhibition for the Art and Culture Program at the Comox Valley Airport (YQQ).

Corre Alice, Brian Buckerell, Bev Byerly, John Hooley, Tracy Kobus, Martin Kaspers, Marilyn Peeters, Ron Pogue, Esther Sample, Brian Scott and Helen Utsal were chosen from a call for submissions seeking art representative of the Comox Valley and Northern Vancouver Island region. Each of the selected artists resides within YQQ's catchment area.

"We are extremely pleased with the quality of submissions received for this year's exhibition. This is a testament to the amount of talent that exists within the region," said Dallas Stevenson, Executive Director of the Comox Valley Art Council. "The Council is pleased to be working with YQQ on a revamped program for 2011/2012. We believe this exhibit is going to be an excellent representation of life in the Comox Valley and

on Northern Vancouver Island. This is great exposure for our artists and a wonderful experience for the passengers and members of the public who will be fortunate enough to view their work."

The 2011/12 exhibition will run from September 28, 2011 to May 1, 2012. A mix of paintings, original prints and photography unique to the Northern Vancouver Island region and the Comox Valley will be displayed. The program coincides well with the launch of YQQ's new brand, which draws inspiration from local imagery and the Comox Valley landscape.

"YQQ has a unique perspective as the first point of entry for many Northern Vancouver Island tourists," said YQQ CEO, Shirley de Silva. "This exhibition will contribute to the first perceptions of the Comox Valley for our passengers. We are so pleased to be able to support local artists in our community and provide a venue that can showcase their work to all those who enter into our terminal building."

## Raffle Winner Soars High in a Jet Fighter

Don Booth was the recipient of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity on August 25th. He flew in an Aero Vodochody L-39 Albatros, a light attack jet fighter. The plane's owner and pilot, Ed MacDonald, donated the trip to help raise funds for the United Way.

Don was the lucky winner of the 2009 CIBC Krazy Kar Rally for the United Way raffle that offered the chance to fly in the jet that was used in the James Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

"I really wanted to fly in that plane," Booth said when he bought the raffle ticket. "I used to live out in Little River and watch the F-18s all the time. This opportunity came up and I was so happy to win the flight."

The L-39 is capable of traveling at a maximum speed of 485 mph at 19,600 feet and 435 mph at sea level. Prior to boarding the plane, Don received a 15-minute preflight instruction from Ed. Their itinerary began at the Comox



Don Booth, winner of the 2009 CIBC Krazy Kar Rally for the United Way raffle

Valley Airport and included a trip to Mount Washington and Campbell River, with a couple of loops and tricks in between.

This is Ed's fourth year offering his fighter jet to charitable causes like United Way to raise funds. In that period of time, he has helped raised over \$700,000 for different charities from Toronto to Vancouver.



**I really wanted to fly in that plane. I used to live out in Little River and watch the F-18s all the time.**

Don Booth  
Winner of the 2009 CIBC Krazy Kar Rally  
for the United Way raffle

## YQQ Receives Award for Excellence in Airport Marketing and Communications

The Comox Valley Airport has been recognized for its outstanding work in communications, the result of a new public relations program launched in 2010 to improve communication with airlines, passengers, employees, tenants and stakeholders.

On September 1, 2011, the Airport Council International – North America (ACI-NA) awarded FLY YQQ with second place in the newsletter category for its 2011 Excellence in Airport Marketing and Communications Contest. Indianapolis International Airport took home top honours in the category with Vancouver's YVR placing third behind YQQ.

"Each year, this very competitive contest allows airports to showcase their best marketing and communications efforts

that serve their stakeholders, including the traveling public, airlines and other tenants, employees and the community. We continue to be amazed by these award-winning entries," said ACI-NA President Greg Principato.

"We are very proud to be able to compete among large international airports like Indianapolis and YVR that have established and respected marketing and public relations programs," said YQQ CEO Shirley de Silva. "FLY YQQ encompasses the world-class aspect of our brand that is all about taking a professional approach to our business operations and ensuring open communication with our stakeholders and business partners."

## Mid Island Gifts Celebrates a Decade of Service at YQQ

The Comox Valley Airport is pleased to congratulate Mid Island Gifts on a successful 10 years at YQQ.

"For the last decade, Mid Island Gifts has provided our passengers with unique giftware that is locally produced," said CEO Shirley de Silva. "This one of a kind shop has contributed greatly to our passenger experience and has been a generous supporter of artists in our community."

Owner Diane Weir has always been interested in the local arts and crafts scene, and when the opportunity presented itself at YQQ; the business was a natural fit for her.

"I've had the privilege to work with more than 200 Vancouver Island Artists and producers, many whom have become friends over the years," said Weir. "Our biggest challenge has always been to find more room for the new work artists bring to us."

Mid Island Gifts started out as a kiosk at YQQ with limited stock, and then expanded to its current location.

"Our original funding came from Community Futures, a group that had the patience and the resources to help me develop a vision and a business plan," explained Weir. "Community Futures made it possible for us to get started in the old terminal until we could prove that a market existed for local or hand made products."

Now Mid Island Gifts is firmly established at YQQ and has built a loyal following of customers who are appreciative of the unique, one-of-a-kind items it has to offer. There are a wide variety of gifts for any occasion available in-store, from key chains to jewelry, wood ornaments and bowls, local books, prints and originals of local scenes and local food products.



"Moving into the new terminal was a period of huge growth for us. As more flights and destinations were added at YQQ, I had to rely more and more on my dedicated staff," said Weir. "I owe much of my success to these wonderful people; I simply couldn't have managed without them!"

"Being part of YQQ has always been interesting," concluded Weir. "On a daily basis, we meet people from all walks of life, heading out in dozens of different directions, for holidays or business. We also have many regular customers who just come to the Comox Valley Airport to shop for special occasion gifts."

To thank the community for its tremendous support over the last 10 years, Mid Island Gifts hosted a six day sale beginning on October 10th with many items reduced from 20 to 50 per cent. All passengers and customers were also invited to enter their name for a chance to win 10 gift certificates valued up to \$100.00.



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