

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Central Island residents invited to witness Nanaimo Airport history

(Nanaimo, B.C., December 9, 2015) -- Central Island residents don't have to wait until Christmas Eve for the long-awaited arrival of a special airborne visitor, thanks to Nanaimo Airport.

As an early Christmas present for the region, WestJet Encore launches its new service from Nanaimo to Edmonton on Tuesday, Dec. 15. The public is invited to be on hand at the airport for the arrival of the first flight, as part of in-terminal celebrations that run from 11 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

The 78-seat Q-400 aircraft will touch down at approximately 1:51 p.m.

"Securing direct service to Edmonton has been a top priority for the airport team for several years and now our passenger numbers support this expansion," says Mike Hooper, President and CEO of Nanaimo Airport (YCD). "Our strong growth in passenger numbers was a key factor in securing this route."

The airport is five years ahead of passenger projections, with more than 315,000 people expected to travel through YCD in 2015.

Residents who attend the celebrations will be part of airport history. They'll witness the arrival of the inaugural flight, officially welcome the new service, which gives Central Island residents access to many additional connection flights to sun destinations and other locations around the world.

The new service also creates business and tourism opportunities throughout the region.

Flights will leave Edmonton daily at 12:45 p.m. local time, and depart from Nanaimo at 2:25 p.m. The trip takes about one hour and 50 minutes.

More than 300 seats per day will depart for Alberta when the new service comes on line. It will complement the three daily non-stop flights currently connecting Nanaimo to Calgary with WestJet Encore and Air Canada Express.

Nanaimo Airport now gives Central Island residents the choice of connection options in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

About Nanaimo Airport (YCD):

Nanaimo Airport is a ten-minute drive south of downtown Nanaimo on 224 hectares (550 acres), which includes the nearby Cottonwood Golf Course. YCD is a not-for-profit authority owned by the Nanaimo Airport Commission. Vancouver Island's third largest airport, Nanaimo Airport serves a primary central Vancouver Island area with a total population base of approximately 250,000. The YCD service area extends north from Nanaimo to Qualicum, west to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, and south to Duncan and the Cowichan Valley. YCD is ideally situated as the most convenient departure/arrival point for customers from the mid-Island area.

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