

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **Direct Air Canada flight to Toronto from Nanaimo Airport creates new opportunities for travellers, economy**

*Nanaimo, British Columbia (December 1, 2017)*— A new direct flight to Toronto from Nanaimo Airport, announced this morning, creates even more convenient options for Central Islanders to travel the world.

Air Canada will begin flying from the airport to Toronto effective June 21, 2018. Four Air Canada Rouge flights are scheduled per week until Oct. 8, 2018.

"We are very excited about this announcement," says Mike Hooper, President and CEO of the Nanaimo Airport. "Adding scheduled service like this reinforces our commitment to being the Central Island's gateway to the world."

The new flight gives people who live and work in the region easier access to Air Canada's vast network of global flights from its Toronto hub. From there the many choices include sun destinations like Florida and the Bahamas, as well as major European cities.

"This is a very significant new route with a large body aircraft," says Nanaimo Airport Commission Chair Lucie Gosselin. "We are happy to see Air Canada's recognition of the growth potential for the central island region and the Nanaimo Airport."

Air Canada Rouge will operate the flight Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays using a 136-seat Airbus A319 plane. It will arrive at 11:28 a.m. and depart at 12:15 p.m.

The airline already operates daily flights from Nanaimo to Vancouver and Calgary.

"We are very pleased to announce new, non-stop flights from Nanaimo directly to Toronto to help make summer travel to and from Vancouver Island even more convenient. With more than 755 seats and up to 11 daily flights next summer, Air Canada will be flying non-stop from Nanaimo Airport to three of our Canadian hubs - Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, offering the most options and unparalleled choices for vacation travellers to get to Nanaimo and the surrounding municipalities. Additionally, customers from this area will have direct access to even more far-reaching destinations in our global network at our primary Toronto hub," stated Benjamin Smith, President-Passenger Airlines at Air Canada.

"Schedules that provide choice is the key to Nanaimo Airport's continued growth and to ensure safe, reliable transportation for Central Vancouver Island residents," says Hooper. "The additional service to Toronto is a major indicator of how strongly the communities in our region are supporting the Central Island's airport of choice."

Hooper says the new flight is a good fit for the airport's role as a key driver of the regional economy. "By creating new opportunities for convenient leisure and business travel, this service has significant potential for Central Island economic development."

Business owners, investors and workers will benefit. A direct connection to Toronto means new markets, customers and jobs can be pursued from a base in the Central Island. It also means advantages for the region's tourism industry and for the educational sector, which seek to attract students from overseas.

Hooper says Nanaimo Airport Commission's vision and planning are driven by the needs of the people who rely on the airport for affordable and efficient connections to the world.

The commission's investment in infrastructure, including lengthening the runway in 2011, helped paved the way for the arrival of large aircraft such as the Airbus A319. And the airport earlier this year announced an expansion plan for its Air Terminal Building, to accommodate record passenger volumes and make the travelling experience even more comfortable. The expansion begins in 2018.

Since 2006, passenger traffic has more than doubled. This year more than 355,000 passengers will fly in and out of Nanaimo Airport. In addition, cargo shipments through the airport are booming.

END

**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.

-end-

**Media Contact:**

**Nanaimo Airport**

Mike Hooper

President and CEO

250 245 4191

cell: 250 716 6625

[mhooper@nanaimoairport.com](mailto:mhooper@nanaimoairport.com)

[www.nanaimoairport.com](http://www.nanaimoairport.com)