

History of Grande Cache Airport

In 1977-78, the Alberta Provincial Government began clearing and constructing the Grande Cache airport.

By 1978-80, the construction of the terminal (utilizing Heritage Funding), the completion of the runway's paving and lighting, and the construction of the maintenance garage were accomplished, shortly after which it was opened for service. It was a basic mountain airport with flights to and from the Grande Cache area. This facility aimed to serve the industries in the surrounding area and provide another point of entry to Grande Cache. The province hired one full-time person who has been there since the facility first opened.

From 1982 to 1988, more assets for air control at the aerodrome were purchased to enhance the standards of the mountain airport. Lastly, the Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) was purchased and installed to improve service levels. In late 1988, the first significant repairs to the runway were completed, followed by further repairs in 1990.

1994, the first 5-year tenants were offered lease agreements at the airport:

- K. Davis - Vending Machine Expires April 30, 1999
- K. Nelson – Lot P-3 Expires April 30, 1999
- A. Smode- Lot P-4 Expires April 30, 1999

Additional information for the Annual Lease was provided in 1994; there are presently no aircraft tie-down lease agreements. Key other lease agreements for a period of time include a **25-year** lease agreement with the Environmental Protection (Forestry) for the water bomber area. This agreement was signed on **July 19, 1988**, and was to expire on **July 18, 2013**.

On August 8, 1995, it was decided that while Alberta removed Provincial control from many government-run services, the Grande Cache Airport would be sold to the Town of Grande Cache. There was a process to see the land, terminal, maintenance building, and the operator's residence sold as a package, along with the town. This required the physical transfer of all land to occur by **September 1, 1998**.

With the Town owning the GC Airport, the Lease previously agreed upon on **July 19, 1988**, was void. This new agreement was executed on **October 19, 1995** (Agreement 2510-2-GC) with Environmental Protection (Forestry). The lease term was **9.5 years** commencing on **September 15, 1995**, and concluding on **March 31, 2005**. Payment of \$11,500 per year for the lease. No sublease was allowed.

In **March 1998**, the Municipal District of Greenview No.16(Greenview) signed a maintenance cost-sharing agreement with the Town of Grande Cache. This allowed Greenview to cover up to \$15,000 for operational maintenance and up to \$5,000 for capital upgrades at the airport. Any major asset repairs or capital needs will be identified before next year's budget. The town will manage the necessary insurance for the airport's operations.

In **2008**, the Town released the airport caretaker and closed the residence and associated garage, as they were no longer used. This led to a decline in service quality for recording flights and the information recorded for GC Airport.

In **September 2013**, the Town informed Greenview and participants of the GC Airport that they had passed a resolution to close the airport. The cost of running was \$112,661, and revenues outside the funding were \$57,000. Negating the other Town services, which were also complete and not shown, resulted in an additional \$63,000 of work. Outstanding from 2009 to 2013, totaling \$8.9 million in maintenance and repair costs.

Figure 1: From the CAO report to the council of the day

- **Flight Records (based on self-reporting records): Note there was still an onsite caretaker through 2007 and records from Oct 2007 to Oct 2008 are missing from the file.**

Year	No. Flights	Medivac	
2007 Jan > Oct	289	36	8%
2008 Oct > Dec	28	9	32%
2009	88	13	15%
2010	80	18	23%
2011	93	11	12%
2012	90	15	17%

It is the opinion of the Public Works Department that approximately 70% of the incoming flights are not recorded. Since 2008, there has not been any solid tracking to manage these records and other uses which has created a situation where use and value of the space is very difficult to measure.

At this time, it was mentioned that there were 3 tenants with hangars on site, totaling lease income of \$4,867.30. To quote the CAO *"If the airport were to cease operations, these lease holders would have to find space for their equipment and vehicles elsewhere, the nearest airport would be Jasper/Hinton and they do not have Hangars."*