



BC GOVERNMENT CAUCUS

NEWS RELEASE

E-Annex, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 TEL: (250) 356-6171 FAX: (250) 356-6176

For immediate release
April 18, 2005

MLAs Bennett, McMahon deliver \$4.5 million for Cranbrook Airport expansion

Cranbrook – MLAs Bill Bennett and Wendy McMahon have delivered \$4.5 million towards the Cranbrook Airport expansion project.

“This expansion project will help boost the local economy by bringing new business and new jobs,” said Bennett. “I have been pushing for this expansion since 1997 when I was president of the Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce and I know there is millions in “parked” investment that will be unleashed by this announcement. I am proud to deliver these funds as we look forward to a golden decade of opportunity.”

“Tourism activity in the region has outpaced much of the province over the last several years with visitors coming from Canada, the U.S. and Europe and this will certainly increase immediately before and after the 2010 Olympics,” said McMahon. “An upgraded airport will accommodate larger aircrafts, allowing resorts like Panorama in my riding to offer their customers better access to their resort.”

The present runway length of 6000 feet limits the size of aircrafts using the Cranbrook Airport. Phases one and two of the expansion project includes extending the runway by 2000 feet in order to accommodate direct air services from eastern Canada and U.S. destinations. Phase three, a further runway extension to 9000 feet, would allow direct air services from Europe. The improved airport facilities will enable East Kootenay businesses and resort operators to compete more effectively in eastern Canada and U.S. markets. Presently, international tour operators route tourists destined to East Kootenay resorts via Calgary International Airport, where they are bussed to their destination.

“Having East Kootenay bound air travelers landing in Calgary, then bussing them to our region, doesn't make sense or enhance an otherwise great tourism experience,” said Mayor Ross Priest. “With an expanded Cranbrook Airport, larger capacity aircraft will be able to land directly at our Airport, and visitors will enjoy the service amenities of Cranbrook and use our city as a base of operations to explore the opportunities of the entire southeast corner of our province I'm confident we will see the federal government deliver their share in the near future.”

“This is a historic day for the Kootenays, BC and Canada. Over time this airport will become a key gateway to one of the best ski and golf destinations in the world. It will also become a major gateway to Banff National Park,” said Matt Mosteller, Resorts of the Canadian Rockies. “This

government has the right vision for improving and helping our economy excel.”

The expansion project includes upgrading the existing terminal, constructed over 30 years ago, to meet current Canadian Air Transport Security Authority requirements, enlarging baggage claim facilities and waiting areas and expanding space for retail facilities within the airport.

-30-

For more information contact Dale Steeves, caucus communications, 250-952-0778