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PAVING OF THE DAWSON CITY RUNWAY IN 2017 IS CRUCIAL FOR TOURISM

Dawson City: TIA Yukon considers the paving of the Dawson City airport crucial for the Yukon's tourism industry and asserts that if the paving of the runway is not completed in 2017, it will be detrimental for the territory's economy.

The current jet aircraft operating out of Dawson City is the only one of its kind in Air North's fleet and is not projected to remain in service past 2018. This means that the runway, if it remains unpaved, can only be used by this aircraft until the end of the cruise ship season: September, 2017.

"The Yukon is fortunate to have a local airline like Air North that has the capacity to land on a gravel runway as this provides much needed access to other parts of the territory", says Blake Rogers, Executive Director of TIA Yukon. "But to expect an airline to continue to incur costs and challenges to accommodate these kind of conditions, isn't realistic. To continue down this path risks jeopardizing the ground the industry has gained from having this access."

Rogers notes that with greater access comes opportunity, but without access, the opportunities dry up. Holland America in particular has showed a commitment to the Yukon by entering into a multi-year contract with Air North to provide air service for Holland America guests between Fairbanks and Dawson City. This demonstrates a long term business case, which has already generated a spike in tourism visitation and revenue in the region, estimated at \$2.3 million annually. But to be sustained, an infrastructure investment is needed to support the commitment.

A report commissioned by the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce earlier this year shows a good business case for the paving of the airport runway, including a positive net benefit of \$4.7 million. On top of this, a paved runway will result in Dawson City being accessible to more kinds of aircraft, including newer, more fuel efficient aircraft which will reduce costs to the carrier and the customer.

"Whoever is elected on November 7th to form government needs to flag the paving of this runway as a priority", says Rogers. "This is a time sensitive project, vital to the continued health of the tourism industry. The homework has been done and the results support this project. At this point, the risk comes not from moving forward, but from standing still."

For more information, contact:

Blake Rogers
Executive Director, TIA Yukon
(867) 668-3331
blake.rogers@tiayukon.com