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YXX flight plan: Land L.A., Toronto

Direct flights key to ongoing expansion

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Abbotsford International Airport expects to add direct flights to Los Angeles and Toronto in the coming months and has a long-term plan to provide service to India.

YXX -- which recently learned it scored highly on an international survey of passengers' satisfaction -- also added direct service to Nanaimo, Boundary Bay and Victoria this week with B.C. West Air.

The airport, which served a record 502,634 passengers in 2006, has ambitious plans, business-development manager Sandy Blue said yesterday.

"We want to get direct flights to Toronto and Los Angeles," she said.

YXX has direct flights to Edmonton and Calgary, with a flight to Toronto that stops in Calgary.

But the goal is to get non-stop service to Toronto -- and beyond.

"We have a big interest in people getting into India," said Blue.

"Once we get flights to India, that will really change intra-B.C. travel," Blue said.

The airport would be able to service the significant South Asian population in B.C., Alberta and Washington state.

Part of Abbotsford's marketing campaign is the slogan "Avoid gridlock, fly YXX."

For Lower Mainland residents south of the Fraser River, YXX is much easier to reach than its big cousin, Vancouver International Airport. And the appeal is growing, said Blue.

"We have a lot people coming from Burnaby, New Westminster and the North Shore."

As well as charging airlines lower fees, YXX saves them money on fuel because there's less need for planes to taxi or fly in holding patterns before landing.

For passengers, parking is available for \$6 a day -- or through a \$750 yearly pass for frequent fliers.



CREDIT: Les Bazso file photo - The Province

Passengers have given Abbotsford International Airport the thumbs-up in an international customer-service survey by Airports Council International. As an access-friendly air hub, it's now looking long-term to serving the South Asian community.

Abbotsford recently joined the list of airports participating in an international customer-service survey by Airports Council International.

The airport scored 4.49 out of 5 from passengers for "overall satisfaction" with the airport in the third quarter of this year.

"We are absolutely delighted," said Blue, adding the result wasn't much of a surprise.

"We know we give really good service here."

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