

# AVIATION

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## The Future of PITT MEADOWS AIRPORT

## Ukrainian Army HELICOPTERS

## Uniting AMEs



# The Future of PITT MEADOWS AIRPORT

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**Exciting times lie ahead for Pitt Meadows Airport, but before we look at its future, let's briefly find out more about its past and present, as well as some of the companies which operate from this airport.**

Pitt Meadows Airport was opened more than fifty years ago, in 1963. Later, in 1999, ownership was changed from Transport Canada to the Pitt Meadows Airport Society (PMAS), a not-for-profit organization which continues to own and operate it to this day. The board of directors governing the PMAS consists of members appointed by the Cities of Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge. Airport manager Guy Miller reports to the board of directors. Earlier in his life, Miller flew CF-18 Hornets with the RCAF, and later Boeing 747-400s with Cathay Pacific, before being appointed as Langley Regional Airport's deputy airport manager in 2006. In 2013, he successfully applied for the position of airport manager. Then, having proved his worth, Miller took on the position of airport manager of Pitt Meadows Airport in June last year.

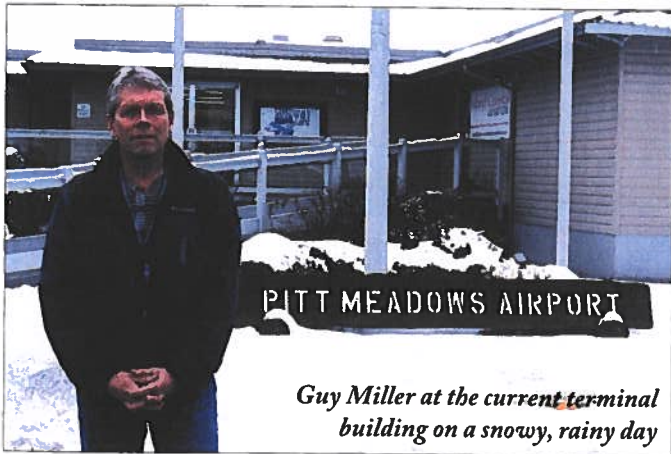
There are several inherent benefits to companies operating from Pitt Meadows Airport, such as the fact that it has three runways, as well as a river and seaplane port. It almost goes without saying that the airport has quite a bit of floatplane activity. Harbour Air, for example, runs a scheduled service to Victoria Harbour. According to Miller, the airport also benefits from a progressive local community, to which the airport strives to reach out. The airport is conveniently located to the main transportation network, in an area which offers affordable housing to employees.

## Businesses located at Pitt Meadows

From flying schools to charter companies and aviation maintenance organizations, there are a variety of businesses







*Guy Miller at the current terminal building on a snowy, rainy day*



*Maxcraft Avionics' facilities*

based at Pitt Meadows Airport. Maxcraft Avionics, for example, one of the largest avionics facilities in Canada, has been based at the airport for more than ten years. (A 'behind the scenes' article on Maxcraft's operations will be published in the next edition of ANJ.)

One of Pitt Meadows' flying schools, Pacific Rim Aviation, was founded at the airport about fifteen years ago. The school has eight instructors and, at the time of writing, about forty students. Its fleet consists of four Cessna 172s, two Diamond DA 20s and one DA 42. The school also has two advanced flight simulators. According to Chief Flight Instructor Masa Tsujino, the advantages of having a flying school at Pitt Meadows include its proximity to the highway, as well as the

practice area. He also likes the variety of aircraft at the airport, which is not excessively busy, but challenging enough for training purposes.

Heliproducts Industries is another notable company which has been based at the airport for more than a decade. This company provides a comprehensive array of maintenance related services to operators of AS350, AS355, H125 and H130 series helicopters. Heliproducts has ten helicopters in its leasing fleet and a staff complement of 28.

Sky Helicopters was founded about six years ago and has quickly become one of the best-known helicopter companies in BC, mainly due to the fact that it puts creative and



*Advanced flight training with Coast Dog Aviation*





*Masa Tsujino of Pacific Rim Aviation*

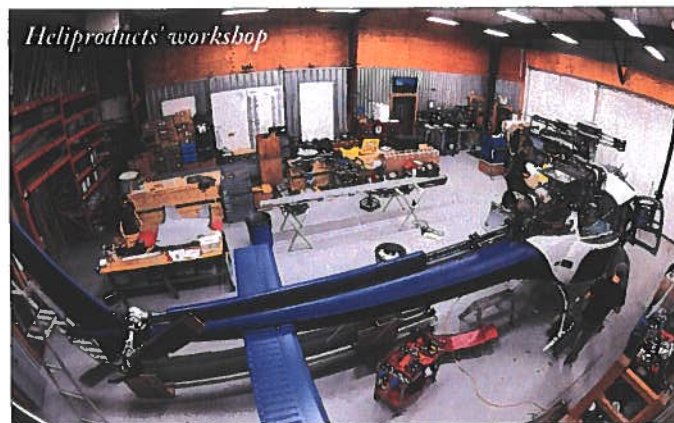
innovative ideas into action. The company has three R44s, two Bell 206s and one A-Star in its fleet, which is used to provide commercial services, but more significantly, to serve the tourism industry. According to company founder Andrew Westlund, Pitt Meadows Airport is incredibly well-positioned for tourism “This airport is a great place to do business. It enhances the community, rather than having an ‘us versus them’ mentality.”

Sky Helicopters’ stunning facilities include a heated hangar which also serves as a venue for private and corporate functions. The company will soon be expanding its facilities by constructing an additional building on the south side of the airport.

Cost Dog Aviation, one of the aircraft maintenance organization based at Pitt Meadows, provides maintenance to light aircraft, small turboprops and aircraft as large as Twin Otters and Beechcraft 1900s. With the airport located next to the Fraser River, floatplanes have easy access to Coast Dog Aviation’s facilities. The airport’s location also allows company founder Dale Floyd to offer advanced flight training. Floyd has well over 10 000 hours of flying experience, most of which are as pilot of floatplanes and amphibious aircraft, such as Beavers and Twin Otters.



*Andrew Westlund of Sky Helicopters*



*Heliproducts' workshop*

### The future

When looking at the aerial photograph in this article, it is clear that the airport has a considerable amount of land available for future development. Considering that, along with the uniqueness of its runway setup and waterway, Pitt Meadows Airport does not need to focus on only one sphere of aviation, such as training, general aviation, helicopters or floatplanes. In other words, various aviation companies can benefit from operating from the airport.

As for the way forward, Miller says, “We’re going to do what already we do, but we are going to do it better.” That said, some exciting developments are lined up in the airport’s master plan for the future.

As part of this master plan, an infrastructure upgrade plan is being implemented. Some of the completed enhancement projects include the installation of LED overhead ramp lights, perimeter fencing upgrades and the relocation of Gate 1A. Coinciding with these upgrades, a new, modern Nav Canada control tower has recently been completed.

This year, the airport’s main apron will be rehabilitated, with asphalt resurfacing and the widening of parking stalls, for example. Other projects in progress include the development of a helicopter park, new commercial and general aviation hangars and storage facilities, and general infrastructure upgrades.

The PMAS recently announced final approval for a new terminal building, which will increase the availability of office space, as well as a waterfront restaurant and seaplane terminal, called the ‘Thirsty Goose’.

“These projects are raising the standard of development at YPK and are the first step towards rehabilitating this regional asset into an airport the community can be very proud of,” said Miller. ●