



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **RUNWAY EXTENSION PROJECT** **BEGINS**

The official ground breaking ceremony took place this morning, Friday February 22, for the much anticipated runway extension project at Kelowna International Airport.

Government and airport officials were on hand as Member of Parliament Ron Cannan, Member of Legislative Assembly Al Horning, Kelowna Mayor Sharon Shepherd and Interim Airport General Manager Sam Samaddar took the first golden shovel digs into the partially frozen ground.

"This project is very exciting not only for Kelowna but for the entire Okanagan Valley," says Mayor Shepherd. "It will mean this airport can offer direct intercontinental flights to countries such as the UK and Germany which will make reunions with friends and families easier, provide more business for the ski industry, increase tourism in general and be of significant benefit to the region's business community."

Runway construction is expected to be complete by November 2008 in time for the 2008/09 ski season. The runway extension project is the first phase of the Airport's 2010 Development Program; the centre piece of that program is a new international arrivals concourse capable of handling 250 passengers per hour. Improved ground access and expanded vehicle parking, a new car rental facility and two new aircraft loading bridges are also included in the development program.

Kelowna International Airport is investing \$36 million to expand facilities to meet the growing demand as passenger numbers are forecast to grow to 1.6 million in 2015. For the third consecutive year passenger volumes at Kelowna International Airport have increased by double digits. Traffic levels reached a new record in 2007 with 1.4 million passengers using the facility, marking an 11% increase over 2006's record breaking year of 1.2 million. January kicked off 2008 with another record breaking month of 129,462 passengers, an increase over 128,040 passengers in March 2007.

"This is an exciting time at Kelowna International," says interim Airport General Manager Sam Samaddar. "The airlines serving this airport are at a high load factor, passenger numbers are up, business is strong and we are building onto our facilities to meet the growing demand."

Kelowna International Airport has approximately 30 departures per day with non-stop service to Calgary, Edmonton, Las Vegas, Prince George, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria on five air carriers; Air Canada, AC Jazz, Central Mountain Air, Horizon Air and WestJet. Seasonal charter service is also offered to Cabo San Lucas, Cancun and Puerto Vallarta.

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