



PRESS RELEASE

Airport Infrastructure Improvements

Tasiujaq, Québec – May 28, 2009 – With the summer construction season quickly approaching, the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) underlined at its Council sitting this week several important infrastructure improvement projects at Nunavik's community airports.

KRG Chairperson Maggie Emudluk stated, "The projects announced, and those that we have been working so hard at over the last few years, are absolutely necessary to bring our community airport infrastructure up to par with ever-increasing demands. The projects will have a positive impact on our communities, facilitating the transfer of patients, improving the quality of perishable foods and generally enhancing our quality of life."

In the summer of 2009, the following airport projects are slated to be carried out by the KRG, the Ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) or private contractors.

New equipment garage, Kuujjuarapik – The preparation of the plans and specifications for this new maintenance equipment garage represents the final stage in improvement work begun at this airport in 2001, including the replacement of the runway lighting system, the resurfacing of the runway and apron, the installation of perimeter fencing, and the construction of a new terminal. Construction is expected to begin in 2010.

Dust abatement project, Kuujjuarapik – The application of an abatement product on the runway will reduce the quantity of dust generated by aircraft activity.

Apron expansion, Puvirnituk – This expansion of the apron will permit more and larger aircraft to use the airport. The contractor Gely Construction began blasting two weeks ago to produce the granular material necessary for this project. Work should be completed before the end of the summer.

Runway extension, Puvirnituk – A call for tenders for this project was recently issued by the MTQ with the expectation that an agreement will be signed with a private contractor before December 2009, permitting work to begin in the spring of 2010.

Runway resurfacing and perimeter fencing installation, Kangiqsujaq – These two projects are being planned to minimize interference with regular aircraft activity and should be completed before the end of the summer.

Apron expansion and runway lighting system replacement, Salluit – This expansion work will allow the airport apron to accommodate more aircraft. Permafrost analysis work is expected to be completed in the coming year and will permit the project to proceed.

Runway lighting system replacement, Tasiujaq.

The funding for these projects is the achievement of intensive lobbying efforts begun by the KRG and the Makivik Corporation at the Katimajit Conference in 2007. These efforts lead to two government-funding announcements this past spring. Québec Premier Jean Charest announced on March 31, 2009, a Québec-government investment of \$106 million for northern community airports, and Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Chuck Strahl announced on behalf of the Canadian government on March 6 an enhanced financial commitment for the Puvirnituk airport in particular.

Between 1984 and 1991, airports were built in all the Northern villages except Kuujuarapik and Kuujuaq where facilities already existed. Then and still today, along with the construction of homes, schools and health centres, these airports are considered to have had the most meaningful impact on living conditions in Nunavik. However, while airlines have expanded considerably to meet the region's growing needs (population growth, health services, tourism, mining activities and business development), airport infrastructure has remained little changed. In fact, the condition of this infrastructure is deteriorating due in particular to changes in the permafrost, but also over-use. A technical survey released by the MTQ in 2008 identified airport apron and terminal expansions, runway lighting system replacement, and improved navigational aids among important and necessary upgrading work.

In the coming year, the KRG and the Makivik Corporation will continue to make representations to a joint Nunavik–Québec–Canada airport infrastructure improvement advisory committee to ensure that the essential role played by the region's airports continues to receive full consideration.

The KRG is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel. The KRG administers public affairs in Nunavik in the areas of municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use management, civil security and economic development. Through its Transportation Department, the KRG is responsible for managing, operating and maintaining airports in Nunavik's 14 communities in accordance with applicable federal and provincial laws and regulations.

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