



Saskatchewan's Aviation Strategy

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Minister's Message

I am pleased to present Saskatchewan's aviation strategy.

Aviation is a critical part of the transportation network that supports economic growth, keeps our communities safe and ensures Saskatchewan remains the best province in Canada to live, work, invest and raise a family.

Air travel is more than just a means of getting from one place to another. It connects people and communities. It ensures everyone has access to high quality health care, no matter where they live. It assists in the protection of our communities, through aerial suppression of wildfires and support for courts and policing.

Aviation supports forestry and mineral exploration. It transports workers to and from northern mines. It's how we bring tourists to some of the best fishing and hunting spots anywhere in the world.

The heart of our air transportation system is the thousands of pilots, mechanics, engineers, flight and ground crews, who give their best everyday to serve others. This report is dedicated to them. I appreciate your efforts. Thank you on behalf of a grateful province.

I hope the actions contained in this report will help unleash aviation's full potential for generations to come, and in doing so, help build a stronger, more connected, and more prosperous Saskatchewan.



David Marit
Minister of Highways

Executive Summary

Aviation in Saskatchewan supports a strong economy, strong communities and strong families by contributing to the Government of Saskatchewan's Growth Plan goals. Saskatchewan's Aviation Strategy has been developed through extensive engagement with stakeholders to help the sector address future challenges and opportunities while supporting economic growth and protecting the health and safety of Saskatchewan people.

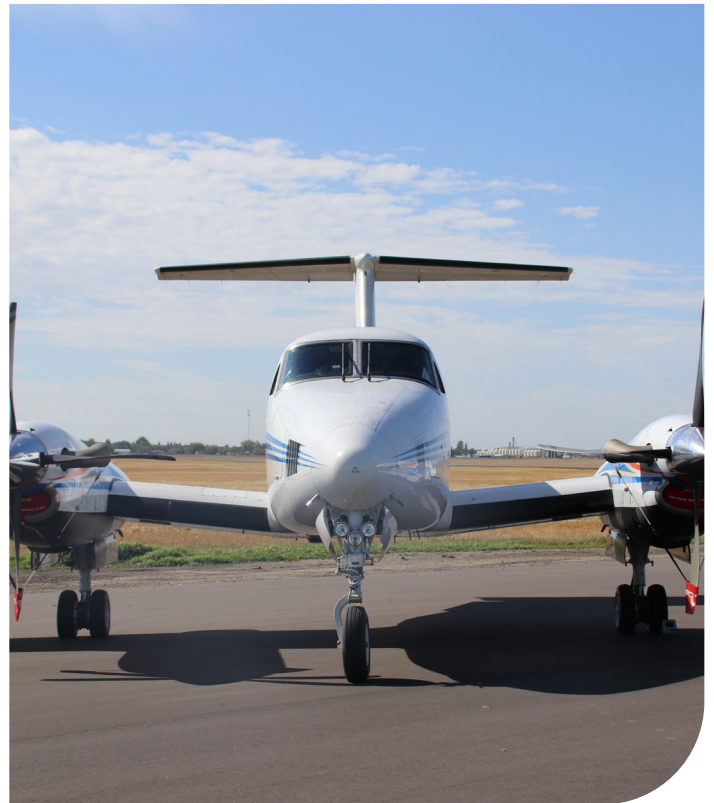
Aviation supports the movement of goods and people. It contributes directly to employment and the provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Its economic impacts include:

- 9,520 jobs;
- \$470 million in wages;
- \$850 million in GDP; and,
- \$1.75 billion in economic output.

The aviation sector improves quality of life by delivering healthcare, education, emergency relief, justice, law enforcement, and other essential services, particularly in northern and remote communities. Nearly 27 thousand patients have been transported by Saskatchewan Air Ambulance and regional air medevac carriers over the past nine years, highlighting the critical role of aviation in saving lives. Aviation is crucial to wildfire suppression and helps protect communities from widespread destruction.

Through extensive stakeholder consultation, several key issues in the sector have been identified in this strategy. These include:

- improving air connectivity
- ensuring adequate funding for community airports
- providing more support for aviation training
- modernizing government aircraft fleets
- leveraging new technology for the delivery of social and health services,
- federal regulations that consider Saskatchewan's unique requirements.





The Strategy has five pillars:

1. Support business and economic growth

2. Protect health and safety

3. Encourage careers in aviation

4. Invest in community airports

5. Effective relations with federal regulators

These strategic pillars were developed after consulting with airlines, airports, industry associations, and municipal and provincial governments.

Introduction

The Ministry of Highways manages an integrated transportation system that supports economic growth and prosperity. Aviation is an integral part of the provincial network. Saskatchewan's vast geography makes aviation vital due to its unique ability to cover distances quickly to transport people, goods, and services. This transport mode is crucial for many northern and remote communities with limited road access.

The need to develop an aviation strategy originated from the ministry's review of its Community Airport Partnership Program (CAP), which provides funding for regional, community-owned airports. The CAP review identified the lack of a strategic policy.

Saskatchewan's Aviation Strategy supports the Growth Plan goal to build a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people. It has been developed to optimize the sector's long-term potential. A safe, reliable, effective, and competitive aviation industry facilitates trade and tourism, streamlines access to remote areas and connects the province to the world. Aviation touches many parts of our communities. This strategy was developed in collaboration with other ministries and agencies to ensure a coordinated government approach.



Some of the challenges facing the aviation sector include:

- infrastructure needs
- aging fleets
- regulatory and safety concerns
- workforce shortages
- skills development
- environmental considerations, and
- technological advancements.

Current State of Aviation in Saskatchewan

Aviation is an essential part of the province's transportation network, supporting economic development, social and health care delivery, and community connections.

The airports in Saskatoon and Regina are part of the National Airports System (NAS). They are owned by Transport Canada and run by airport authorities. Saskatchewan also has 67 community-owned airports, 51 private airports, and 16 provincial airports owned and operated by the Ministry of Highways, and a military airbase owned and operated by Canada's Department of National Defence. Provincial airports are essential to support services to remote communities, including medivac, health care, justice, and social services. Appendix A includes the definitions of each category of Saskatchewan's aerodromes, including airports and helipads.

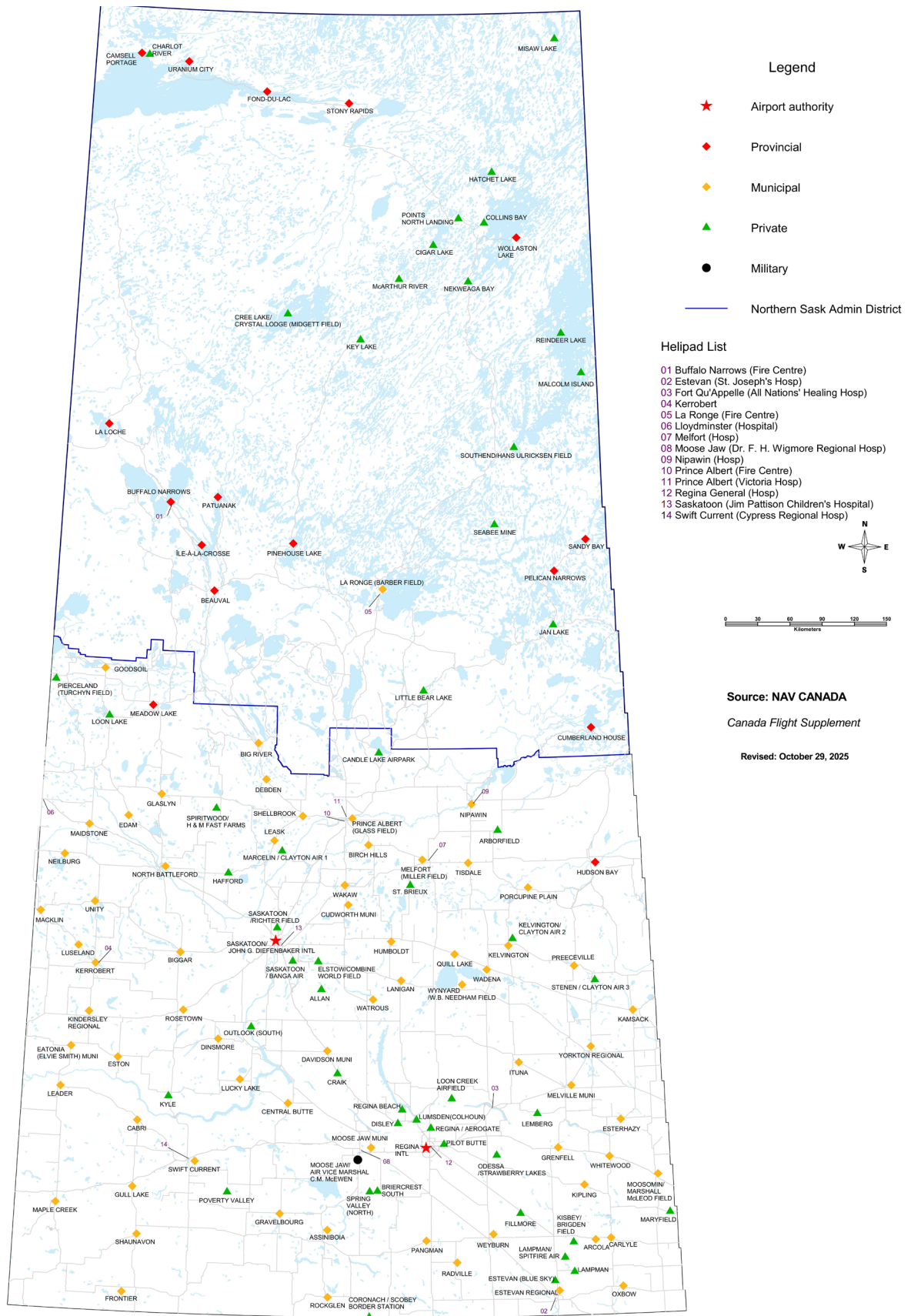
Flights to and from Saskatchewan are primarily provided by WestJet and Air Canada, with limited service offered by Porter Airlines and United Airlines. Air transportation within the province is provided by a combination of primary scheduled and charter operators. Rise Air is the primary regional carrier providing scheduled and charter passenger services, as well as cargo and medevac flights to northern and remote areas. There are several charter operators that provide flexible service options for business travel, tourism, mining and resource exploration. These operators are critical as they provide services to areas not served by scheduled airlines .

The Government of Saskatchewan owns fleets to provide critical health and emergency services. The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency owns 17 aircraft that support wildfire suppression and containment. Saskatchewan Air Ambulance is delivered through a partnership between the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and the Ministry of Saskatchewan and Procurement (SBP). SBP owns four aircraft equipped for medical care and provides maintenance and pilots for the program. The SHA provides flight nurses and paramedics.

In Saskatchewan, commercial pilot training is provided by Saskatchewan Polytechnic or approved flying schools, including Birch Hills Aviation, Battlefords Air, Provincial Airway Flight Centre, Southeast Aviation Services, Millennium Aviation Ltd, Leading Edge Aviation Ltd., Mitchinson Flying Service Ltd. and Regina Flying Club. Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies is the primary institution that provides Aircraft Maintenance Engineer training.

The *Aeronautics Act* (Act) is the primary legislation governing civil aviation in Canada, establishing the framework for its regulation, and providing the Federal Minister of Transport with powers to create rules for safety, security, and the management of airspace. The Act gives Transport Canada the authority to regulate all aspects of aviation, including aircraft operations, security measures at airports, pilot and crew member qualifications, and liability insurance requirements. In Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Highways is responsible for the province's transportation network, which includes aviation.

Map of Saskatchewan's Aerodromes



Economic and Social Impacts

Aviation plays a significant role in economic and social development. It supports job creation in sectors such as tourism, transportation and logistics, and enables the efficient movement of goods and personnel vital to industries such as mining and agriculture. It also enhances the delivery of critical health and social services, particularly for northern and remote communities.

Economic Impact

The aviation sector contributes significantly to the province's economy, generating approximately \$1.8 billion in total economic output. This reflects the combined direct, indirect and induced effects of on-airport operations, capital expenditures and visitor spending. Beyond the quantifiable impacts, aviation also supports Saskatchewan's

long-term growth by enhancing the province's connectivity to business markets and resources.

Social Impact

Aviation enables rapid and reliable access to essential social services and support, particularly in northern and remote communities. Aviation offers unparalleled accessibility and speed for services such as:

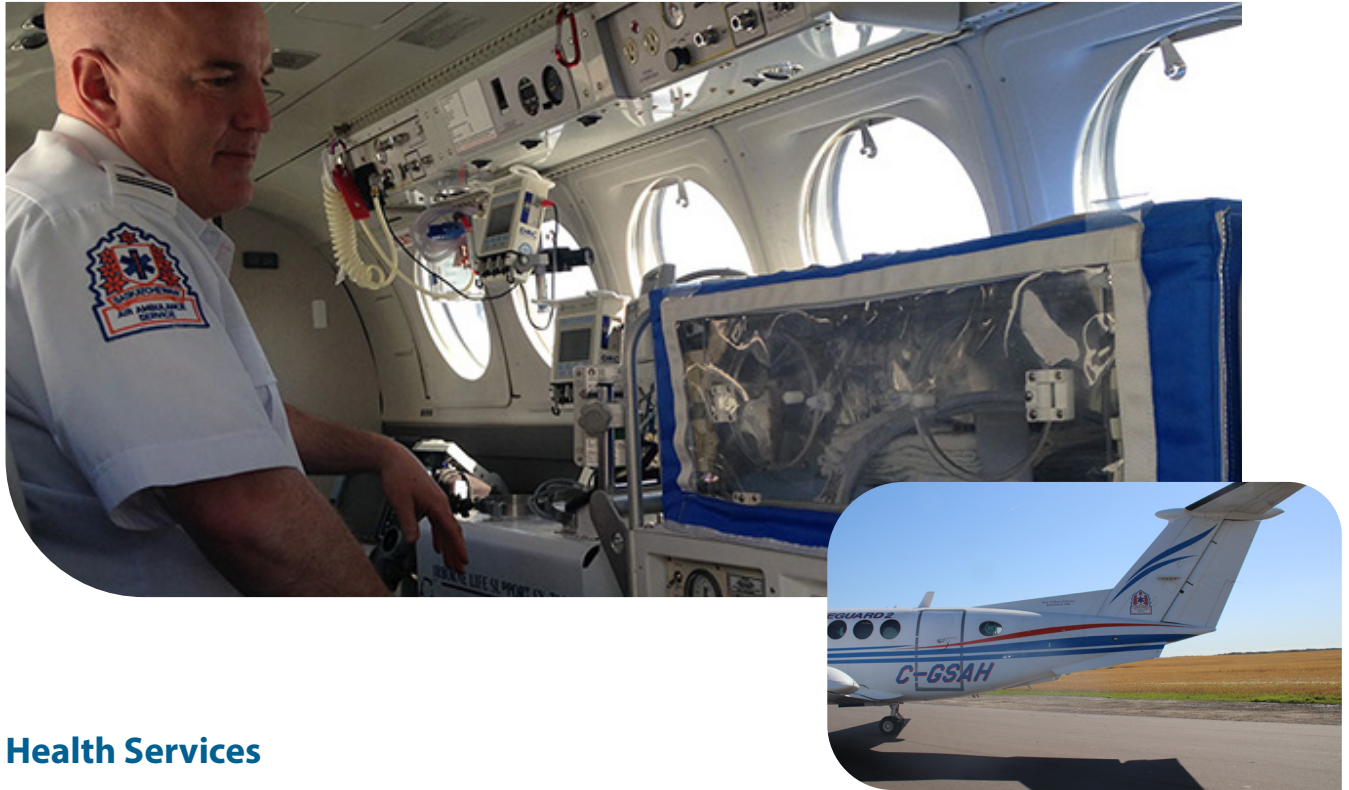
- Transporting medical personnel and supplies;
- Airlifting patients to specialized hospitals;
- Providing wildfire suppression;
- Ensuring food and essential supplies are delivered; and,
- Assisting in judicial and law enforcement activities.

Direct, Indirect, Induced Economic Impact of Saskatchewan's Aviation System, 2023

Impact	Employment	Wages (\$ Millions)	GDP (\$ Millions)	Output (\$ Millions)
Direct	6,810	320	520	1,200
Indirect	1,720	100	190	350
Induced	990	50	140	200
Total	9,520	\$470	\$850	\$1,750

The estimated economic impact reflects airport operations, non-local visitor spending and airport capital expenditures in Saskatchewan for 2023. Source: InterVISTAS analysis sourced from airport surveys and statistics, Sabre Global Demand Database, Statistics Canada's National Travel Survey and Visitor Travel Survey, Ministry of Highways program data, historical economic impact studies and Canadian Civil Aircraft Register.





Health Services

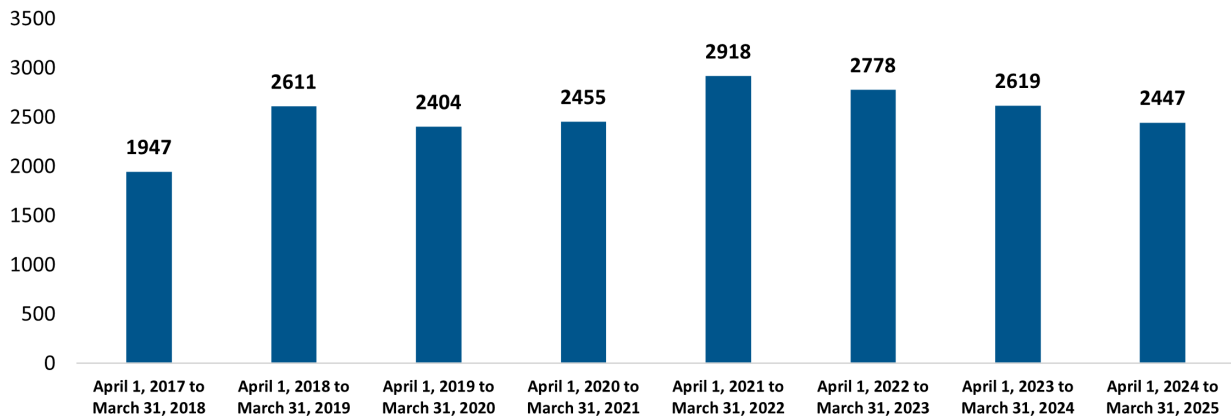
Aviation provides essential support in emergencies and routine medical care, saving lives and improving health outcomes. It enables the rapid transportation of patients in emergencies or from remote or underserved areas to specialized facilities. It facilitates timely delivery of essential medical supplies, organs, and blood, which is crucial for effective treatment.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority provides air medical transport through Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS), Saskatchewan Air Ambulance (SAA) and regional air medevac carriers such as Rise Air. SHA and Athabasca Health Authority also flies medical professionals to remote areas to provide care for patients.

STARS is a non-profit organization that offers 24-hour transportation for critically ill and injured patients via helicopters based in Saskatoon and Regina. STARS uses various landing sites across the province, including certified and registered hospital heliports, airports and temporary landing zones. STARS transported a total of 7,447 patients between 2015-16 and 2024-25.

SHA also provides air ambulance services through the SAA and regional air medevac carriers. SAA is based at Saskatoon Airport, and operates 24/7, transporting critically ill and injured patients. SHA uses regional air medevac carriers to provide basic to intermediate northern medevac. SAA averages 2,522 flights per year.

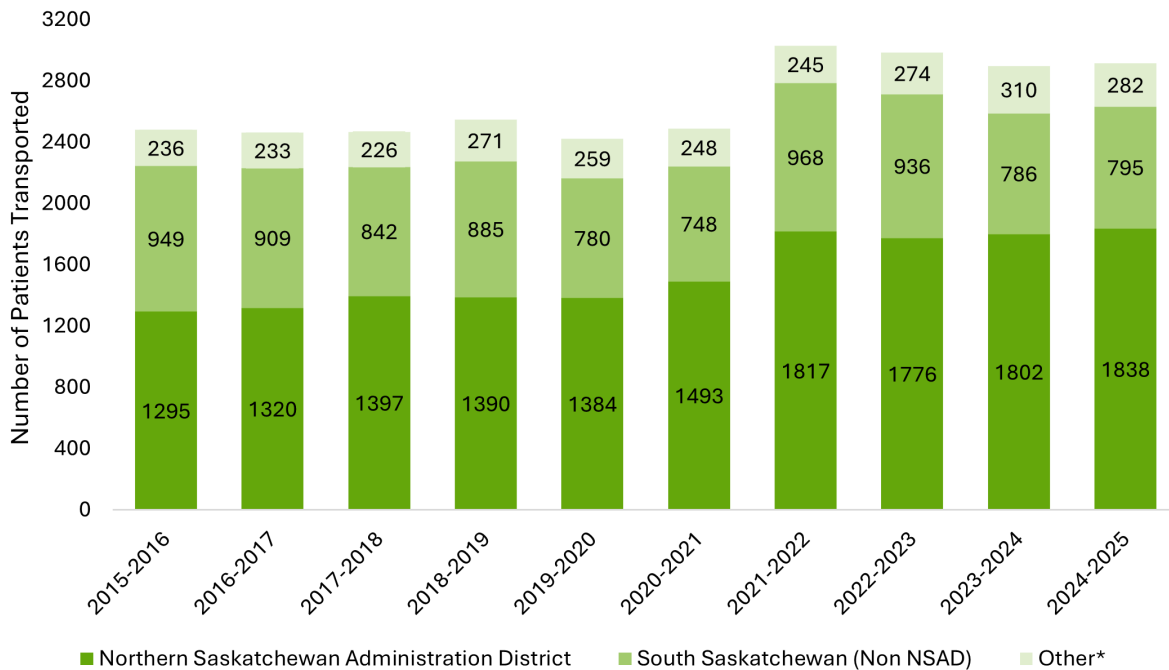
Saskatchewan Air Ambulance Flights



Between 2015-16 to 2024-25, SAA and regional air medevac carriers transported 26,694 patients. This demonstrates the critical role of aviation in saving lives by providing rapid access to advanced care. On average, nearly 60 percent of air ambulance services are provided to patients in northern Saskatchewan.

Some of the main referring facilities include Regina General Hospital, La Ronge Health Centre, Lloydminster Hospital, Royal University Hospital, Ile a La Crosse St. Joseph's Hospital, Fond du Lac Clinic, Athabasca Health Facility, La Loche Health Centre, Pelican Narrows Clinic, Pinehouse Lake Clinic, and Southend Clinic.

Number of Patients Transported from Referring Facilities



*Other consists of rescue flights, intercepts, out-of-province referrals, or unspecified locations.

Wildfire Suppression

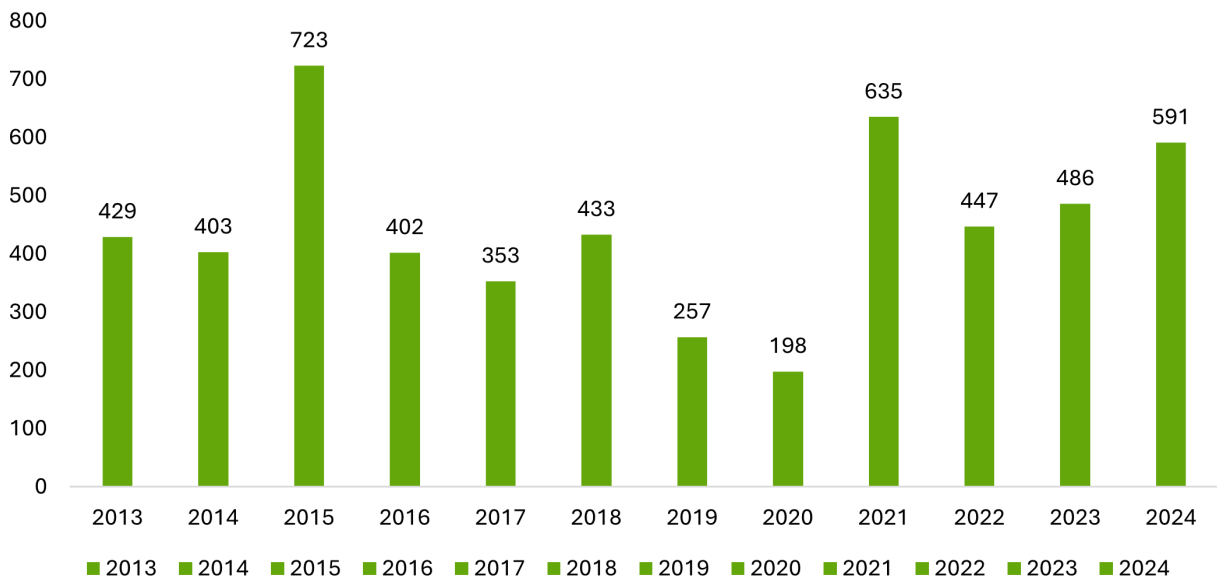
Aviation provides essential support in managing wildfires. Wildfires cause widespread destruction, including loss of life, destruction of property, and environmental damage that results in costly recovery efforts and disrupts local communities. In northern Saskatchewan, where there are extensive forested areas, robust wildfire suppression is essential to protect residents.

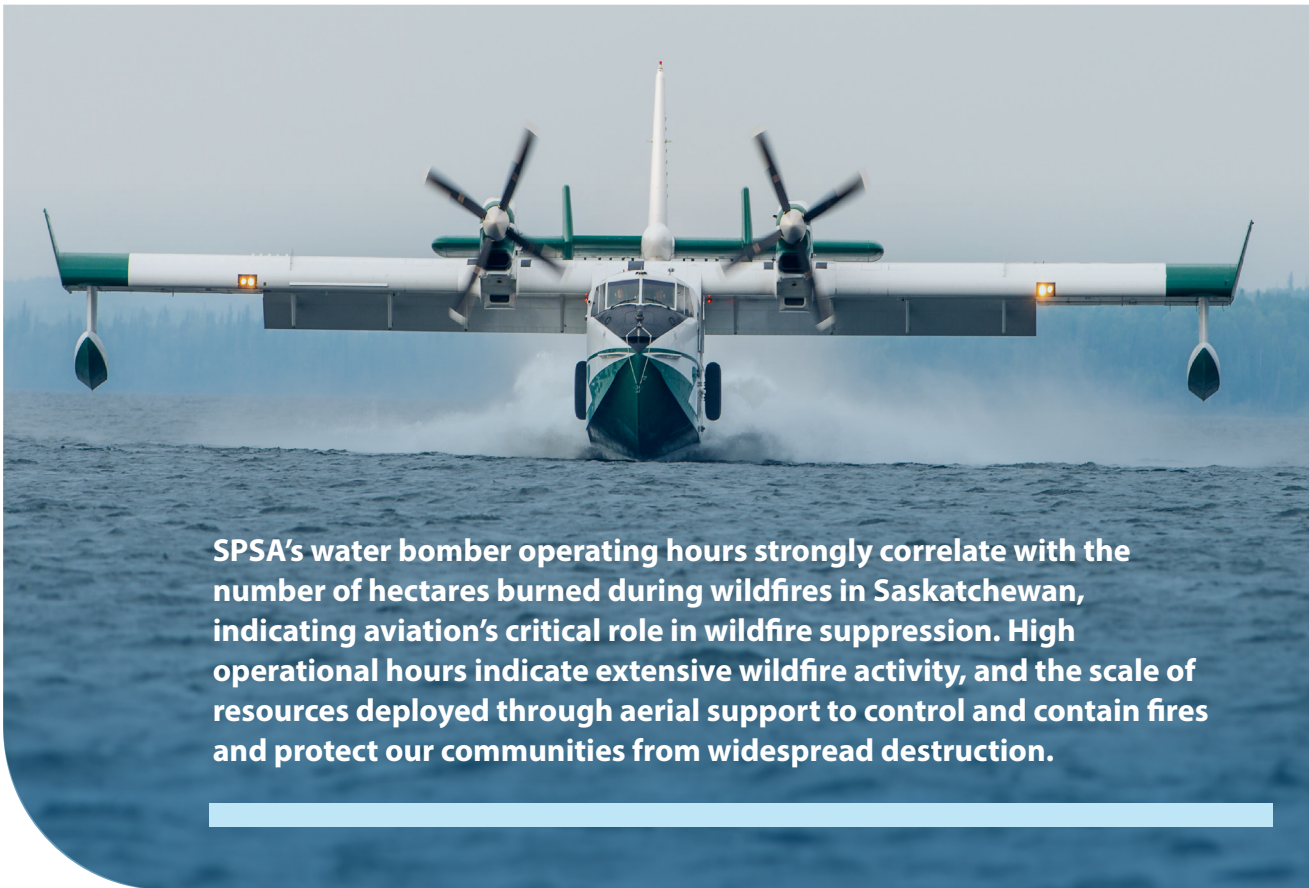
The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) oversees provincial emergency management, including wildfire response, Saskatchewan's 9-1-1 emergency dispatching services, and provincial emergency operations. SPSA's fleet of 17 aerial suppression aircraft includes six water bombers, four land-based tankers to carry fire retardant, and seven birddog aircraft to assist

with incident command. SPSA's main base of operations is located at La Ronge airport with a secondary, seasonal tanker base in Prince Albert airport. SPSA equips and staffs tanker bases in Meadow Lake, Buffalo Narrows, and Hudson Bay airports and operates from partially equipped satellite bases in Stony Rapids and Estevan airports. For support in the east, there is a tanker base at Flin Flon, Manitoba. These airports, aircraft, and personnel are critical to suppressing wildfires, particularly in northern regions.

Wildfire activity has fluctuated over the years but has generally increased, posing a significant threat to public safety. From 2013 to 2024, there have been an average of 446 wildfires and approximately 615,000 hectares burned each year.

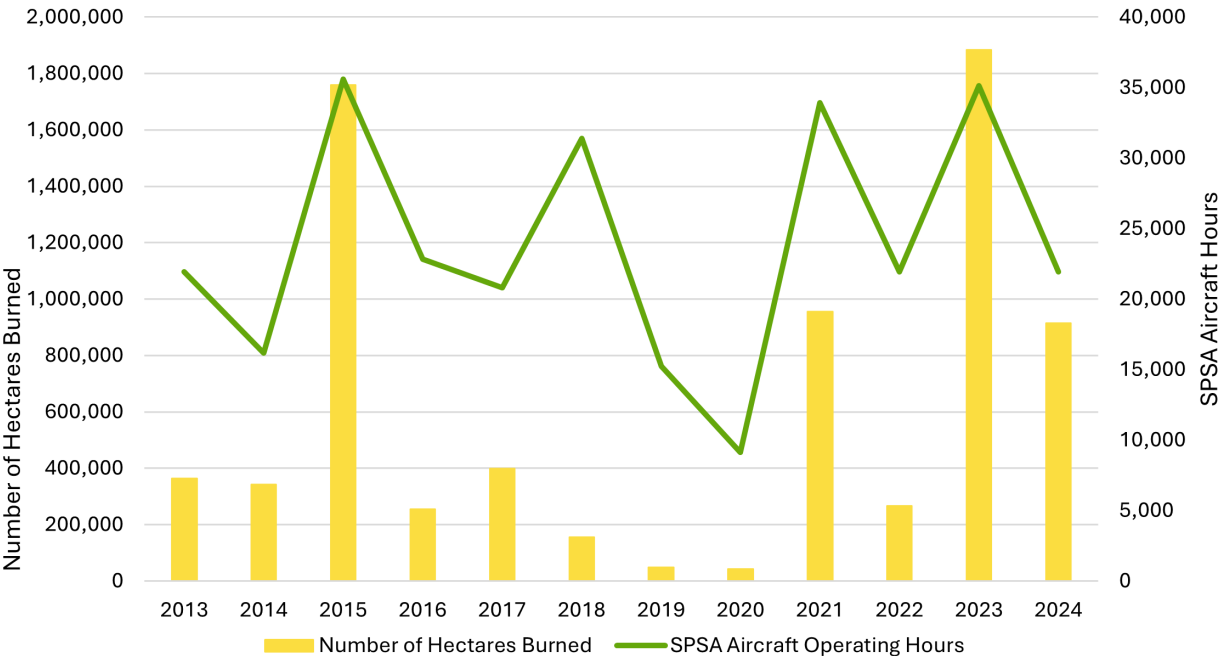
Number of Wildfires





SPSA's water bomber operating hours strongly correlate with the number of hectares burned during wildfires in Saskatchewan, indicating aviation's critical role in wildfire suppression. High operational hours indicate extensive wildfire activity, and the scale of resources deployed through aerial support to control and contain fires and protect our communities from widespread destruction.

Number of Hectares Burned and SPSA Water Bomber Operating Hours



Provision of Essential Supplies to Northern Communities

Air transportation is frequently used to ensure residents have access to food, and other essentials, especially for northern communities such as Camsell Portage, Fond du Lac, Uranium City and Wollaston Lake where air is the only means that provides year-round access.

Justice Services and Law Enforcement

Aviation supports justice services in Saskatchewan, including law enforcement, transporting personnel (e.g., inmates, court judges), searches for persons of interest and court services to and from remote communities. The Ministry of Justice relies on northern airports and regional airlines to transport judicial personnel to communities without permanent court facilities.

The Regina and Saskatoon Police Forces have air support units to assist with law enforcement. These units consist of a pilot and tactical flight officers that enhance the safety of both the public and officers.





Saskatchewan's Aviation Strategy

- Improve air Connectivity
- Foster investment and collaboration
- Strengthen advisory structures
- Advocate for affordable air travel

**Support
business and
economic
growth**

- Modernize government aircraft fleets
- Maintain and support critical airport infrastructure
- Address workforce needs in northern aviation
- Use technology to enhance service delivery

**Protect
health and
safety**

- Aviation education and training
- Increase financial aid for pilot students
- Federal training support
- Expand training and career pathways

**Encourage
careers in
aviation**

- Improve Community Airport Partnership
- Advocate for expanded federal funding
- Promote long-term investment

**Invest in
community
airports**

- Regulations tailored to Saskatchewan's aviation needs
- Protect NAS airports from encroachment

**Effective relations
with federal
regulators**

1. Support business and economic growth

The aviation industry naturally supports the growth of economic activity across all business sectors. Aviation enables the movement of people and goods, which in turn, facilitates business activity, attracts new business investments and promotes Saskatchewan as an attractive destination for tourism. It also has potential to facilitate regional economic growth centred around airports. The following actions intend to support a diverse and growing economy in Saskatchewan.

Actions

1.1 Enhance Saskatchewan's air connectivity, within and outside of the province.

Improving connectivity, through measures such as risk-sharing partnerships or other supports, will increase Saskatchewan's competitiveness, support economic activities by facilitating travel between key business hubs, and promote leisure travel for our province.

Regional, domestic and international connectivity is critical for tourism, investment attraction, and the operation of existing businesses throughout the province and in the north. Connectivity is also an important factor in retaining newcomers, who are crucial to supporting continued population growth as well as meeting skill shortages required for continued economic growth and quality of life.

Addressing domestic or international connectivity could involve establishing additional risk-sharing partnerships to open new routes to major hubs similar to agreements put in place to incentivize direct flights from Regina and Saskatoon to American hub cities. Other inter- and intra-provincial hubs are also important considerations for many businesses and aviation users. Saskatchewan will continue to explore partnerships with airports and airlines to maintain and expand non-stop domestic and international access to major hub cities, making travel to and from Saskatchewan easier and more convenient.





1.2 Engage industry and local communities to explore investment attraction, economic development and collaboration opportunities.

Saskatchewan is a resource-rich province, and the extraction of resources, such as critical minerals and forest products, is part of the engine that drives our economic growth. Aviation supports these industries by providing essential logistical, exploration, and safety services, especially in northern and remote regions. The aviation sector will help Saskatchewan unlock the potential of our critical mineral resources and advance the goals of province's Critical Mineral Strategy. It will be important to engage with the private sector and local communities to develop innovative options to support economic opportunities, particularly in the context of seasonal pressures on aviation service availability, and different ownership structures of aviation infrastructure.

Government will leverage existing and new forums to engage with industry partners and communities, particularly northern and remote communities to better understand and support their aviation needs, including infrastructure development and maintenance. Collaboration opportunities will support efficient, safe, and cost-effective aviation services critical for the success of a variety of industries, particularly in remote locations, and explore potential regional economic development. It could also explore potential partnerships to maximize the use, benefits and cost effectiveness of airport infrastructure, and limit land use impacts where possible

1.3 Review the provincial Aviation Advisory Committee structure and purpose to provide ongoing guidance on the implementation on the Provincial Aviation Strategy.

The Aviation Advisory Committee (AAC) was established in 2013 for the purpose of working collectively with the Saskatchewan Aviation Council (SAC) and ministry officials to address issues of mutual concern regarding ministry-owned (northern) airports. The Committee consists of representatives from the SAC, which represents aviation stakeholders in the province, and officials from the Ministry of Highways. The objectives of AAC include addressing issues of common interest relating to the Saskatchewan aviation sector, identifying policy options to manage the Ministry's 16 airports and providing an advisory and supportive role through continuous discussion on aviation issues in Saskatchewan.

Future considerations for the AAC may include a review of the committee structure and terms of reference to ensure appropriate parties are included and the discussion is focused on committee outcomes. An option could be to revise membership to include representatives from southern airports (operators) who are also members of SAC. Other options are including members from groups with an interest in promoting aviation in support of enhancing economic and tourism development outcomes for Saskatchewan. Expanding membership could enable AAC to provide expert guidance on aviation sector improvements throughout the province, and guidance to community airports looking for partnership or revenue generation options.

1.4 Partner with Provinces and Territories to engage the federal government to review the user pay model to make air travel more affordable.

Canada’s user-pay airport model differs from that of many other countries and reduces airport competitiveness and connectivity. The federal government owns NAS airports but leases them to private, non-profit airport authorities. Most NAS airports are self-sufficient authorities and fund their operations and infrastructure improvement through fees charged to airlines, passengers, and service providers, while also paying rent to the federal government.

The current user-pay airport finance model burdens passengers with various fees that are paid directly or are charged to airports or airlines and passed on to passengers. These include airport terminal and landing fees and NAV CANADA service charges that are passed on by airlines but not clearly shown on ticket prices. Other add-on fees, such as air travellers security charges and airport improvement fees, are directly displayed on the total airfare cost.



The current system results in higher fees and charges for air passengers on their tickets compared to other countries and transportation modes. Saskatchewan will partner with other provinces and territories to engage with the federal government on options that could improve air travel affordability, enhance competition and promote transparency for travellers. This could include reviewing the user-pay model for aviation in Canada and assessing other models such as those with fewer fees or some level of federal subsidization. This will ultimately enhance the air travel industry’s ability to contribute more to overall economic growth.



2. Protect health and safety

Aviation across Saskatchewan facilitates government-delivered human services such as public safety, health and social services, especially in rural and remote regions. The following actions are intended to ensure a healthy and robust aviation system to support timely and equitable delivery of vital social and health services to all Saskatchewan residents. The Ministry of Highways owns and operates 16 airports in Northern Saskatchewan which have a key role in providing services to northern communities.

Actions

2.1 Develop a plan to replace and upgrade aging government aircraft fleets and ensure adequate equipment for safe air operations.

The action focuses on developing a business case to replace and upgrade the government's aging aircraft fleets and equipment to ensure they meet modern safety and efficiency standards. This involves assessing the current fleet's condition, identifying the necessary upgrades and replacements, and ensuring that adequate equipment to support air travel operations, such as advanced navigation systems and maintenance tools, are in place. Modernizing the aircraft fleet will enhance the reliability and performance in delivering vital health and safety services to Saskatchewan residents while also reducing the expensive maintenance cost of older planes.

2.2 Maintain safe and adequate infrastructure at Ministry of Highways-owned airports in northern communities and provide support to other strategically located non-government airports in delivering critical social and health services.

Ministry of Highways airports are essential in ensuring year-round access to certain northern communities and are vital for residents and local industry. Airport constraints often require aircraft modifications and are key considerations in how fleet upgrades proceed. Modern fleets may require infrastructure upgrades such as longer runways, and infrastructure conditions can affect the level of service that can safely be delivered to these communities. Saskatchewan will support infrastructure upgrades at provincial northern airports that ensure safe operations.

Maintaining sustainable infrastructure will also require periodic assessments to determine the adequacy and distribution of the ministry-owned airports. In addition, government will evaluate the role of other strategically located non-government airports and provide the support to help deliver essential social and health services.

2.3 Explore strategies to recruit and retain aviation workers for government carriers and northern airports.

The increasing demand for key aviation roles, such as pilots, senior Aircraft Maintenance Engineers (AMEs) and support staff, combined with labour shortages, makes recruitment and retention challenging, especially in northern and remote areas. Government will review the compensation for government employees in roles that support aviation to ensure it is competitive to help attract and retain personnel. Incentives for hard-to-fill positions in northern and remote areas could also be explored. In addition, partnership with Indigenous and local communities to provide training and job opportunities will be considered, encouraging local talent to join the aviation sector.

2.4 Explore how to leverage new technology and regulatory advancements to enhance the delivery of essential services.

Government will explore avenues to integrate new aviation technology and evolving regulations to enhance data collection and the delivery of health, public safety and other essential government services, where applicable. This includes modernizing government-owned airports with technologies to enhance safety and efficiency, the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), adopting other emerging technologies and leveraging new regulations.

An example is Transport Canada's recent regulatory amendments that allows RPAS weighing up to 150 kg to operate within visual line-of-sight and routine beyond-visual-line-of-sight operations for RPAS up to 150 kg in sparsely populated areas, at low altitudes, and in uncontrolled airspace. This new rule can revolutionize many aspects of our society. Government will explore opportunities to use RPAS to enhance services in northern and remote locations such as first responder operations, delivery of essential supplies and supporting land stewardship through natural resources and wildlife surveys.



3. Encourage careers in aviation

Aviation careers require highly specialized training. Government support to Saskatchewan education institutions offering aviation training is critical to ensure a steady flow of high-quality applicants, as well as retention of students to work in the provincial aviation industry stakeholders after graduation. The following actions recognize the importance of support for aviation training in Saskatchewan and the critical role they play to ensure there is sufficient personnel to support safe and reliable air services across all regions. They also reinforce the Labour Market Strategy action to support Saskatchewan citizens to fill high quality existing and emerging jobs through access to post-secondary training, skill development and apprenticeship programs while engaging underrepresented groups in the labour force.

Actions

3.1 Partner with industry and other stakeholders to support aviation education programs.

Government will seek opportunities to partner with stakeholders to support aviation career pathways and education institutions. This could include working with post-secondary institutions or northern communities to support training pathways such as work-integrated learning, internships, or other tools that link graduates to a job after graduation.

One recent partnership is the Dziret'ái Pilot Training Program, which involves collaboration with Prairies Economic Development Canada, the Prince Albert Grand Council, Rise Air, Cameco, Orano, and SSR Mining. This initiative aims to provide skills training and academic upgrading for 15 student applicants, with 10 selected to enter the professional pilot training program starting in January 2025. Students who complete the two-year program will be guaranteed positions as First Officers with Rise Air.

3.2 Explore measures to provide additional financial support for students in the commercial pilot program.

This includes exploring support options in other provinces, increasing maximum weekly financial assistance limits through the provincial student aid program for pilot training, providing grants, student loan forgiveness, or return of service bursaries to cover a portion or all of the training costs.





3.3 Engage with the federal government to advocate for additional federal supports for pilot training.

Saskatchewan will collaborate with provincial and territorial counterparts in tables related to labour and transportation to raise awareness of the need for federal supports to address pilot shortages. This includes advocating for expedited federal processing of Commercial Pilot medical requests and licensing. It could also explore the use of other federal supports for aviation career training. There may also be a role for the federal government in data collection on aviation employment.

3.4 Support training capacity and career pathways through provincial aviation programs.

This could include providing increased provincial support to training institutions to ensure they have adequate training seats, equipment and instructors to meet demand. The province could also explore opportunities to increase in-province career paths for graduating students. This could include formal or informal arrangements with airlines, or agreements linking grant assistance with a return-of-service work term.

4. Invest in community airports

Saskatchewan airports represent critical infrastructure assets to the provincial aviation system. Community airports receive minimal support from the federal government as very few are eligible for the federal funding program. However, without funding assistance from higher-order government or increased user-pay models for infrastructure repair and replacement, the ability of some of these airports to facilitate air access to support economic activity and deliver human services in the province could suffer. The challenge is determining which community airports align to provincial, regional and national transportation interests versus others that while beneficial, are more recreational in nature. The following actions recognize the importance of Community Airport Partnership (CAP) program, and the need to prioritize annual funding support according to a data-driven and need-based airport classification system.

Actions

4.1 Explore opportunities to improve CAP's effectiveness, including how it is allocated, to better support provincial objectives and the needs of community airports.

To better support community airports, Saskatchewan will explore initiatives such as developing and implementing a new airport classification system to provide a framework to better prioritize provincial funding for critical infrastructure needs. The CAP program funding will also be reviewed to ensure it accounts for inflationary changes and the current pricing environment in the aviation supply chain. Furthermore, the shared funding arrangement (50/50 split) under the CAP will be reconsidered.

To assist in aligning CAP with provincial priorities, the Ministry of Highways will apply a scoring method that classifies community airports according to their regional and provincial importance.

The key priority factors are strategic and economic importance, importance for medical services, importance for emergency services, useability, capacity and safety specification.

The classification system will be reviewed periodically to ensure the factors reflect current needs.

Based on the insights gathered from the consultations, the ministry is reviewing options to enhance CAP's effectiveness.

- Reviewing the overall program funding and the ministry's maximum contribution per project.
- Reviewing the current 50-50 shared funding arrangement.
- Expanding program eligibility to include capital equipment and other critical maintenance costs.
- Allowing multi-year funding to support larger projects.



Community Airports Partnership

The Community Airports Partnership Program (CAP) provides funding to improve regional and community-owned airports in Saskatchewan. The program was established in 2007-08 to assist with the rehabilitation, construction, upgrades, and general improvement projects. Since its launch, the program has invested more than \$12 million, resulting in a total investment of more than \$24 million in 43 community airports.

The program is delivered on a 50-50 cost sharing basis with a maximum provincial contribution of \$275,000 per project. Priority is given to projects that support safety, air ambulance and medevac operations. Funding is not available to private airports.

Since 2010-11, CAP has not used the full allocated budget in any year, despite strong demand for the program. Many approved projects did not proceed due to issues such as the timing of project approval, difficulty tendering or inability to raise the required community funding. In 2022-23, the ministry reviewed the program and implemented changes to the selection criteria. The program now places higher priority on projects supporting emergency services (medevac or public safety evacuations), projects designed to meet federal regulatory requirements, and projects involving partnerships with other municipalities, industry and Indigenous organizations.

CAP also established fixed annual intake dates in September. The change gave applicants more time to secure contractors and materials and complete the tendering process before the next year's construction season.

4.2 Partner with Provinces and Territories to advocate for the expansion of eligibility requirements and funding under the federal Airports Capital Assistance Program (ACAP).

Saskatchewan will partner with other provinces and territories to engage the federal government in support of a review of the current eligibility requirements to better meet the infrastructure needs of Saskatchewan's airports. For instance, Saskatchewan would support the inclusion of small airports essential for the transportation of goods to surrounding communities, despite not offering scheduled commercial passenger services. Saskatchewan will advocate for increased funding for the program to ensure it has kept up with inflationary increases in the cost of capital projects.

Saskatchewan will encourage the federal government to consider aviation infrastructure as part of long-term per-capita infrastructure funding.



5. Effective relations with federal regulators

Components of the aviation ecosystem are regulated by Transport Canada at the federal level. While new regulatory requirements are proposed to maintain high safety standards, the impact of federal aviation regulations may differ between each Province and Territory. For Saskatchewan, compliance with both new and existing federal regulations may result in new or unintended barriers to air access in remote regions in province. The impact of land use development around airports must also continue to be monitored and regulated appropriately to avoid unintended consequences to airport approaches, with consequences for connectivity and air access. The following actions support advocacy for federal legislation that recognize Saskatchewan's unique aviation needs and remote operating environments.

Actions

5.1 Engage with stakeholders, including Provinces and Territories, to advocate for federal regulations that acknowledge the unique characteristics and requirements of Saskatchewan's aviation sector.

Northern and remote airports in Saskatchewan have a different operating environment, with different infrastructure and staffing considerations, and a one-size-fits-all approach to regulation can result in unintended consequences. Whether it is regulations that apply to airports, air service providers, pilots or other aspects of aviation, Saskatchewan will advocate for federal authorities to consider the unique characteristics of the Saskatchewan's aviation sector, as well its crucial role supporting community health, safety, and food security. The burden of regulatory requirements must be balanced with the need to maintain air accessibility to ensure the well-being of Saskatchewan communities across the province.

One example of unintended consequences resulted from recent changes to Flight and Duty Time regulations. These regulations impose excessively burdensome restrictions on pilot duty time, resulting in more pilots being required to provide the same amount of service. This exacerbates the issue of pilot shortages in the aviation sector, increases operating costs and service disruptions. This issue particularly affects regional air service providers servicing northern and remote areas of Saskatchewan, where limited road access makes air service essential.

5.2 Engage the federal government and municipal governments to raise awareness and implement the necessary enforcement tools to protect NAS airports from encroachments.

Saskatchewan will coordinate with the federal government as needed to maintain protections for NAS airports and ensure developments do not compromise safety by creating obstacles that can interfere with safe air navigation operations at Canadian airports. The province has a role in ensuring municipal land use policies consider the potential for incompatible development encroaching on transportation infrastructure.



Aerodromes in Saskatchewan



Airport Authority

Airport authorities are private, not-for-profit, non-share capital corporations and are incorporated under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*. They provide the required infrastructure and facilities to sustain commercial air service in the province. The two airport authorities in Saskatchewan are Regina Airport Authority (Regina International Airport) and Saskatoon Airport Authority (Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport).

Provincial

Provincial airports are owned and operated by the Province of Saskatchewan's Ministry of Highways. Staff and contractors work at these airports when work is required (e.g., snow removal, crack sealing, general maintenance). There are 16 provincial airports in Saskatchewan.

Municipal/Community

Municipal or community airports have a variety of ownership models, but these airports are generally run and funded directly by a municipality or regional municipal district. There are 67 municipal airports in Saskatchewan.

Private

Private airports are independently run and funded by their operators. In some cases, corporations may decide to build their own airport to support the movement of fly-in/fly-out workers. There are 51 private airports in Saskatchewan.

Military

Saskatchewan has one military base (15 Wing Moose Jaw) that serves as a centre for Royal Canadian Air Force training. The military base is owned and operated by Canada's Department of National Defence.

Helipad

Eleven of the helipads are located near hospital facilities providing helicopter medevac service and are listed as certified in NAV CANADA's Canada Flight Supplement. Three helipads are registered and serve as fire centres in the province.

For additional information or questions, please contact:

Highways Customer Service Centre

Phone: 1-844-754-4929

Email: mhi.customerservice@gov.sk.ca

www.saskatchewan.ca/highways