



An allocution by the President and CEO of the Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier International Airport Authority	Une allocution du Président et chef de la direction de l'Administration de l'aéroport international Macdonald-Cartier d'Ottawa
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Paul Benoit

At the Authority's Annual Public Meeting Held on May 12, 2009 Hilton Garden Inn, Ottawa	À l'occasion de la réunion publique annuelle Tenue le 12 mai 2009 Hilton Garden Inn, Ottawa
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VEUILLEZ VOUS REPORTER À L'ALLOCATION

Good afternoon and welcome.

As the Chairman mentioned, 2008 was a year of quiet accomplishment, and I do stress accomplishment.

We got a lot done, and it was a successful year on many fronts.

First and foremost, we weathered the storms – literally. I'm sure everyone remembers the near-record snowfall of 2008.

Well, that weather gave everyone the best reason to travel – and travel they did.

A record 4,339,225 passengers flew in and out of Ottawa, which was a 6.1% increase over 2007.

La hausse générale du trafic-passagers a justifié la phase II de notre projet d'expansion, laquelle a complètement ouvert ses portes en 2008, comme l'a mentionné Peter.

Je suis très fier d'annoncer que le projet a été achevé dans les délais et le budget prescrits.

Et même si nous n'avons pas fait beaucoup de bruit au sujet des différentes étapes de l'ouverture, elles se sont bien déroulées.

Nous prenions plaisir à observer l'expression des voyageurs lorsqu'ils mettaient les pieds dans la nouvelle jetée pour la première fois – elle ressemblait au reste de l'aérogare mais il s'agissait manifestement d'un nouvel espace.

Credit for the success of the project once again goes to our construction partners and, of course, our employees who managed many pieces of the project in addition to handling their regular jobs.

Many other projects were implemented during the year as well.

Common use self service check-in kiosks were rolled out in August with a flawless cutover.

Customers can now approach one of many kiosks, simply choose their particular airline from a menu of options and proceed to go through the check-in process.

It's simple and efficient.

This project is particularly interesting because its success was largely dependent on the Airport Authority and the airlines working hand and glove – which they did.

Increased passenger volumes have also resulted in an increased demand on airport parking facilities.

You might have experienced driving around the various levels of the Parkade to find an available spot.

A few things were done to address the issue;

First, P4, the long-term surface lot was expanded to add 350 spots – all of which were used during the holiday season.

Second, a Parkade expansion feasibility study was initiated in an effort to determine the most effective means of adding capacity to the structure.

When you think about it, the airport only had surface parking until 2003.

To date, we've expanded the Parkade once to meet the demand, and are now looking at doing it again!

We also launched a \$4 million project to address crowding and queuing issues in the transborder pre-clearance area.

Once again, the Authority worked closely with the airlines to make the project happen, and now travellers to the US will enjoy a more open space, with more efficient screening, and better access to the preclearance area.

Feedback from our customers and tenants is extremely positive so far and everyone appreciates the changes.

La capacité de l'Administration à entreprendre de tels projets, selon les besoins, tient en grande partie à sa solide assise financière.

Chaque année depuis la création de l'Administration, il y a maintenant 12 ans, j'ai eu le plaisir d'annoncer que ses finances étaient bien gérées.

2008 n'a pas fait exception à cette règle. À la fin de l'année, nos revenus avant dépréciation s'élevaient à 14,3 millions de dollars.

Comme d'habitude, l'excédent des revenus sera réinvesti dans les activités d'exploitation au cours des prochaines années.

The Authority's prudence where its finances are concerned has not gone unnoticed or unrewarded.

In August, Moody's, one of the Authority's bond rating agencies, upgraded our credit rating from A1 to Aa3 with a stable outlook.

While this may be numbers and letters to some people, it actually is the highest rating that Moody's has given any airport in Canada that it rates.

This is something we can all be proud of – it speaks to my team's consistent effort to spend only when necessary, and to look at each and every project with a critical eye.

And, as always, any decision to go forward with a project is based on affordability.

Les mesures adoptées pour créer de nouvelles sources de revenus, soit par le développement des terrains aéroportuaires, l'ouverture de nouvelles concessions, et la mise en place de nouveaux trajets et de nouveaux vols, ont porté fruit l'an dernier.

Le tant attendu Hilton Garden a enfin été inauguré à l'aéroport et, comme vous avez sûrement pu le constater, l'attente en valait la peine.

Dans l'aérogare, nos voyageurs ont maintenant davantage d'options pour magasiner et se détendre avant un vol.

Le pub irlandais D'Arcy McGee's a ouvert ses portes dans la nouvelle jetée en avril et, depuis ce jour, reçoit un flot constant de clients.

Au cours du troisième trimestre, HDS, notre principal détaillant, a ouvert les boutiques Fruits et Passion et Artizan.

Enfin, en décembre, nous avons accueilli la boutique Brookstone.

Selon nos rapports, ces trois détaillants font de très bonnes affaires.

In the transborder area of the terminal, the Runway Duty Free store was moved past the pre-board screening and US preclearance checkpoints.

Since the move, Duty Free sales have increased significantly, largely due to the fact that customers no longer have to worry about packing their purchases into their checked luggage prior to going through the screening process and can simply take them in their carry-on bag.

On the air service development front, 2008 was a busy year.

Air Canada added service to Charlottetown, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon and Washington-Reagan.

WestJet added direct service to Nassau in the Bahamas, but changed it to Cancun a few months later.

Perhaps the best news was Air Canada's decision to add non-stop service between Ottawa and Frankfurt to its schedule.

Frankfurt is an important route because as a major European hub, it offers travellers an incredible number of options.

In fact, it connects to more than 250 cities making it easy to get to almost anywhere in the world.

From an economic impact perspective, the Frankfurt flight generates approximately \$7.2 million in direct economic output each year, so needless to say, we are delighted.

Adding such a route is no easy task, but we worked closely with the planners at Air Canada to make it happen, and have continued to work with them to ensure that the route is a success.

And, I must add that the support of the community is more important than ever if we want to keep this flight in operation.

The news was not all good however.

As fuel prices continued to climb through the summer months, many of our carriers were faced with tough business decisions which resulted in the loss of several routes such as Hamilton, Atlanta and Cleveland, while several carriers reduced frequencies. And the Ottawa-based Zoom airlines ceased operations.

In an effort to help the airlines, the Authority reduced the terminal fees it charges carriers by 5%.

Almost all of the items I have touched on speak to an amazing effort to improve the experience for all clients and visitors.

Customer service has long been a priority for the Airport Authority, and I am happy to say that the airport was once again honored for providing excellent service.

The Airport Service Quality Awards program again ranked Ottawa 2nd place in the world for airports that serve between zero and 5 million passengers.

The results are something everyone at the airport can be proud of.

From the Infoguide and Airport Watch volunteers, to the airline check-in agents; the cleaning staff to the pre-board screening officers and everyone who goes out of their way to help a passenger find their way; we all share the awards.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Authority team, our partners, tenants and the volunteers for their continued commitment to excellent customer service.

Outre l'information que nous recevons par le programme de l'ASQ, nos clients nous font également parvenir un grand nombre de courriels, de cartes et de lettres pour nous faire part de leurs commentaires.

Nous suivons de près ces commentaires, y répondons et en tenons compte pour assurer notre amélioration continue.

In other words, we appreciate the ideas and suggestions so please keep them coming.

This meeting is about 2008.

But, I would be remiss if I didn't say a few words about 2009 and the economic situation we find ourselves in.

There is no doubt that the industry and our passengers have been affected by the recession, and it's anyone's guess as to when things will turn around.

We are seeing it in our passenger volumes, in our revenues, and we're all individually affected in one way or another.

I would say that the Ottawa Airport and the Airport Authority is in a better position than some.

But that does not mean that we are not taking steps to mitigate the impact.

In fact, we have been planning since the first signs of the recession.

We have put a hold on capital projects that are not absolutely necessary, we have cut spending across the board and we are making do with less – much the same as most households are doing.

Will our clients see a difference? They may.

Il est difficile de prédire ce qui se produira au cours des prochains mois mais, peu importe la situation, nous l'affronterons de plein fouet et en ressortirons meilleurs et plus forts.

Let me wrap up my remarks by saying thank you to Peter and the entire Board of Directors for their support and continued trust.

The time they dedicate to serving this airport and our community in the best, most responsible way imaginable is very much appreciated.

Thank you, merci.