



**For Immediate Release**

## **Small Airports Meet to Discuss Lack of Customs Services**

CHARLOTTETOWN (April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008) – As part of the Canadian Airports Council meetings, small airports from across Canada will be meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> in Montreal to discuss the issue of custom services.

“The resource shortage at the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is impacting growth at our small airports,” said Atlantic Canada Airport Authority (ACAA) Executive Director, Monette Connaughton. “CBSA is insisting that small airports and airlines servicing them pay for customs services, while Canada’s largest airports receive these services at no cost.”

Earlier this month, the Greater Moncton International Airport announced their discussions to expand transborder (Canada–US) services have halted until the cost for custom services is resolved. The carrier that operates New Brunswick’s only direct air link into the US already pays \$200,000 a year for after-hours customs services at the Greater Moncton International Airport.

The intent of the National Airport Policy, implemented in 1994, is to allow the local airport authorities to operate in a commercial manner. Yet, when an airport such as the Greater Moncton International Airport is successful in attracting international air service in support of local tourism and economic development opportunities, the federal government in effect stands in the way of the potential opportunities.

“This situation is not unique to the Moncton International Airport”, remarked Rob Robichaud, ACAA President and CEO of the Greater Moncton International Airport. “For instance, the Deer Lake Regional Airport paid \$120,000 in custom services fees in 2007 and the Charlottetown Airport paid \$75,000 in 2007 and is estimating their 2008 costs to double.”

Robichaud explained; “we cannot continue to operate in this manner; it is an uneven playing field and our small to medium sized Canadian communities, particularly in Atlantic Canada, are being penalized by CBSA policy for airport border services. The services provided are not meeting the demand.”

ACAA is calling on the federal Cabinet to immediately provide adequate resources to the Canada Border Services Agency so that air service to international destinations is not lost.

The Atlantic Canada Airports Association represents 14 airports in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. ACAA provides a collective voice for its member airports to undertake collaborative action on policy issues affecting our airports and communities.

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