



Ogrey News photo/Mark Wazard

Lake Simcoe Regional Airport manager Mike Drumm has worked long and hard to see the Weatherwise project come to fruition and says the new hangars will be a boost to the airport and to the creation of new businesses in the surrounding area.

Local airport to soar with new hangars

By Ian McInroy
Ogrey News Network

OROMEDONTE — A new era is taking flight at Lake Simcoe Regional Airport.

Construction of the first of four massive hangars is nearing completion, creating new opportunities for the airport and area businesses.

Weatherwise Aviation, an England-based company, is developing aircraft hangar and maintenance facilities at the airport with buy, lease or rent options.

The 380,000-pound skeleton of huge steel beams and girders rising near a wooded area south of the terminal building is completed. Slated to open later this spring, the 33,000-square-foot hangar is an impressive sight from Line 7 off Highway 11.

"We're taking the next step in the evolution of the airport," says Barrie city councillor Steve Trotter, who is president of the airport commission.

It has three representatives each from Orillia, Oro-Medonte and Barrie and all three municipalities share in the operational costs of the facility.

He says the new hangars will be a springboard for new business and commerce at Lake Simcoe Regional Airport and is in line with the commission wanting to privatize the development side of the facility.

"It will increase the opportunities for more (airport) traffic and more traffic means more revenue. We want it to be self-funding from an operations standpoint," he said.

Many area companies already use the airport on a regular and frequent basis, including Honda, Garaga Doors and the OPP, says Trotter. Many Casino Rama performers are ferried to their performances from there — Jay Leno was there two weeks ago — and Hydro One has a base for helicopters as well.

"The airport is a vital element for (all of) them to maintain their operations. It's a tool for others and an attraction for businesses wishing to locate in the area," says Trotter.

Standing near the new structure, the sheer volume is overwhelming.

The nearly 8,000-square-

foot Hydro One hangar would fit neatly inside the new hangar, says Peter Waters, a Weatherwise director, adding that each of the hangars will have a 120-foot by 30-foot high main door as well as two smaller doors.

He says the innovative "buy" feature is an industry first, providing options for partitioned hangar condominium units or the purchase of an entire hangar.

"We really want to nurture businesses to locate and base here (and) they need the infrastructure to service them. You're going to get spinoffs. If you locate \$2-million or \$30-million aircraft at the airport, you're going to have to service them," he says.

Airport manager Mike Drumm has worked long and hard to see the Weatherwise project come to fruition and says the new hangars will be a boon to the airport and to the creation of new businesses in the surrounding area.

"It's a pinnacle for us and it's one of the things we've been striving 10 years for," he says, adding that the new hangars will lure new commerce and industry.



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