

**For Immediate Release
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Former WestJet Executive ready to connect Lethbridge airport to the world

With more than 20 years of senior management experience in domestic and international aviation, tourism and business development, John Hamilton is well prepared to lead the Airport Enhancement and Marketing Initiative (AEMI) at the Lethbridge County Airport.

“I am pleased to be part of an initiative that will have a significant economic impact on the city of Lethbridge and the surrounding communities,” says Hamilton. “Enhanced services and investment will increase the connection that Lethbridge has with the rest of the world by allowing for more accessible, competitive business and personal travel. I am looking forward to working closely with community and business leaders as we move this project forward.”

A 2006 Economic Impact study by Economic Development Lethbridge (EDL) revealed that the Lethbridge County Airport contributed approximately \$210 million annually to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the local economy. Recognizing the need to ensure continued success and growth of airport services, the County of Lethbridge and the City of Lethbridge began to work together in 2009 to achieve the airport vision of a modern, thriving air service centre providing the southern Alberta community with a gateway to the world.

Henry Doeve, County of Lethbridge Councillor, says, “In association with Economic Development Lethbridge, we have spent the last three years determining the value and tremendous potential of this airport. Our involvement in this initiative demonstrates our commitment to ensuring air services are in place that will continue to attract new business and development to our region.”

City Mayor Robert Tarleck says, “This project is part of our collective effort to provide strong air service for our citizens. Other airports have been proactively marketing over the past few years and our airport needs to have a marketing investment if we are going to remain competitive. Our commitment to the growth and sustainability of our region, led to the creation of this innovative partnership.”

AEMI is led by a joint steering committee of the two councils and will focus on activities that promote the airport. The Councils are investing \$250,000 per year, over the next three years, (80% City/20% County) to achieve the airport vision.

Cheryl Dick, CEO of EDL, adds, “Our board is also very supportive of this effort and understands that airport enhancement is a key contributor to a dynamic investment environment. Research indicates there is significant potential for this facility to develop into a thriving resource for our region. We are looking forward to supporting John in his new role.”

Hamilton’s experience will be instrumental in moving the initiative forward over the next three years. The purpose of AEMI is to proactively promote and market the Lethbridge County Airport to increase aviation services and airside business development in the interest of achieving the airport vision: a modern, thriving air service centre providing the southern Alberta community with a gateway to the world.

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(see page 2 for contact information)

For more information, contact:

Henry Doeve,
Councillor, County of Lethbridge
(403) 328-5525 (office)

Mayor Robert D. Tarleck,
City of Lethbridge
(403) 320-3823 (office)

Cheryl Dick,
CEO, Economic Development Lethbridge
(403) 331-0022 (office)
(403) 330-3136 (cell)

John Hamilton,
Airport Enhancement Director
(403) 892-7318 (cell)