

Closure of Mascouche Airport

By Jean Messier

The announcement that Mascouche airport in Quebec was closing on Nov. 15, 2016 was not a surprise to anyone since the municipality had announced a relocation project months ago. However on November 10 the mayor of Mascouche surprised everyone by announcing that it put an end to the project of relocation of the airport in the vicinity of the current site - considered recently by all parties as an ideal location.

As a consolation prize to lessen the consequences of the mayor's disengagement, the city is now offering to pay compensation of \$3.2M to a non-profit organization, yet to be created, to purchase land and build a new airport. It is therefore up to the group of pilots and stakeholders of the Corporation of Mascouche airport, the responsibility to find a suitable location, funding and take steps to complete the project.

All this in less than two years; a challenging task based on experiences elsewhere with starting an airport from the ground up.

It is disappointing that the closing date is scheduled without any assurance that a new airport will be operational by the November 2016 deadline, which is not without creating significant stress to the users, owners of aircraft and commercial operators (flight training school, aircraft services, etc.) who all depend on an airport for their operations and livelihood. Many jobs will be lost.

"We are disappointed that the planned move by the city did not happen as expected but still satisfied with the agreement that the Corporation of Mascouche airport has negotiated with the city.

Mayor Tremblay and his team have always recognized the important contribution of an airport for the Mascouche community and they have assured their support to facilitate the location of the new airport.

COPA remains involved. Yvan Albert and Pierre Boudreault of COPA Flight 71 Mascouche stated that they will be vigilant to remind the elected officials of their commitments.

"The closure of Mascouche airport unfortunately adds to the list of airports whose closures are already scheduled elsewhere in Canada such as Waterville (Nova Scotia) and Buttonville (Toronto). These challenges are enormous and COPA continues to devote our energy to defend our right to fly and keep our airports operational. The stakeholders of Mascouche airport can count on the COPA's expertise in support of a new airport in Mascouche."

Jean Messier, COPA Eastern Vice Chair and Québec Director for the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association