



# 2024 Annual Impact Report

**RiseAir** 

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# Mission

We enrich the lives of people living, working and investing in our communities by providing the safe and reliable connections they need.

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# Vision

Rise Air will be the first choice in aviation services in Saskatchewan and beyond.

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# Values

## SAFETY

Safety is core. Above all, we are safe.

## SERVICE.

We care for each other and we care for our customers.

## INTEGRITY

We are ethical. We are professional. We do what we know to be right. We are loyal to each other, to our communities and to our customers.

## SUSTAINABILITY

We strive for long-term success. We grow by respecting the environment, generating returns for our shareholders, reinvesting in our fleet, and developing people.

## PASSION

We are passionate about our work. We do what we love, and we enjoy what we do.

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## Treaty Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that we are situated on the territories of Indigenous peoples who have occupied these lands for thousands of years, including the First Nations of Treaty 6 (Saskatoon, Prince Albert, La Ronge), Treaty 8 (Black Lake, Fond du Lac, Stony Rapids, Uranium City), and Treaty 10 (Lac La Ronge, Hatchet Lake, Wollaston Lake, Buffalo Narrows), as well as other non-Treaty First Nations and Métis. We recognize that we benefit from the lands. We are dedicated to ensuring that the spirit of reconciliation is honoured and respected.



# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

## A Year of Progress and Positioning for Future Success

As we reflect on the past year and prepare for the future, I'm proud of what we're accomplishing together. Rise Air has made remarkable strides in safety enhancements, operational excellence, fleet modernization, and community engagement, all supporting our mission of delivering essential air services that sustain the communities we serve.

Rise Air is more than an airline: we are an air transportation system. There's little infrastructure in the north, so together with our affiliate and partner Snowbird Aviation Services, we step up to operate airport services where they otherwise don't exist. These range from fuel facilities and de-icing to terminal buildings, cargo warehouses and hangars. We operate in a tough part of the world, and our

success depends on teamwork, professionalism, grit and determination, and above all, our focus on safety.

Safety will always be at the core of what we do. It's not just a department or a process—it's our collective commitment to continuous improvement. Perhaps the best evidence of our progress is Rise Air's Gold status in the International Flight Safety Foundation Basic Aviation Risk Standard (BARS) program, the highest rating the program awards.

In 2024 we made the largest investment in our history, becoming the Canadian launch customer for the ATR 72-600, the world's most advanced regional turboprop, ordering three factory-new aircraft. When these planes enter service in 2026,



**“Together, we are not just flying planes; we are building connections and sustaining communities.”**

Derek Nice  
Chief Executive Officer

they will elevate passenger experience with a quieter cabin, larger overhead bins, wider seats and an upgraded cabin heating and air conditioning system. They will be more reliable, with modern avionics and navigation systems and advanced Canadian-made PW127XT engines, while reducing CO2 emissions by 13%.

This investment is not just about new aircraft—it reflects our commitment to be the airline of choice in Saskatchewan and beyond.

In 2024 we partnered with Ya'thi Néné Land and Resources and Prince Albert Grand Council to launch the \$2.4 million Dziret'ai Pilot Training Program, with financial support from Cameco Corporation, Orano Canada, SSR Mining and the federal and Saskatchewan provincial governments. Open to Indigenous students from across Saskatchewan's north, this game-changing program provides flight training, living expenses, cultural and personal support, guidance, mentorship, and a clear pathway to careers as professional pilots at Rise Air.

This initiative is about more than training pilots—it's about fostering leadership and economic growth in Indigenous communities, ensuring that their air services are operated by those who call them home. Our commitment to the north extends beyond air travel. We are integral to the vitality of most communities, providing medevac flights, transporting cargo and mail, and flying in essential workers. We hire local employees, invest in infrastructure, provide transportation to residents in need, and support schools, cultural groups, and NGOs.

Our success depends on the ideas, talent and teamwork of our 300 employees. In 2024 we celebrated their contributions with our largest-ever Long Service Awards Dinner, where we recognized

employees with service spanning five to 35 years, and a Family and Friends Day that brought together over 450 people from Saskatoon, Prince Albert and across the north.

We support our employees by providing training and educational opportunities. Perhaps the best example is our "Take Flight" program. Every year up to ten employees are eligible for flexible work schedules, up to \$30,000 of financial assistance to help them become pilots, and the opportunity to fly with Rise Air on graduation. I congratulate our first graduates Malkeet Palyia, Carl Barcelon, and Jaden White as they start their flying careers as First Officers on the B200 King Air and Beechcraft 1900D respectively.

Our success depends on the collective effort of everyone on our team. Together, we've built a professional, resilient organization that meets high safety standards while embracing the complexities of our unique operating environment. As we look ahead, we remain committed to the communities we serve, the customers who trust us, and the employees who make it all possible.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Derek Nice  
Chief Executive Officer  
Rise Air





# Where We Fly



# Year in Review



## Achieved BARS Gold Status

Our high safety standards were recognized by the Flight Safety Foundation, which awarded us the coveted international Gold standard under its BARS (Basic Aviation Risk Standard) Program.



## Introduced Second ATR 42-500

We increased our ATR 42 fleet by introducing a second high-performance ATR 42-500, featuring upgraded engines, faster cruise speeds and a quieter cabin.



## Enhanced Air Ambulance Services

We renewed our contract with the provincial and federal governments to provide air ambulance services to communities throughout Saskatchewan's north, and purchased a new Pilatus PC12 medevac aircraft to upgrade service into the region's smallest airports.



## Became Canadian Launch Customer for ATR 72-600

We became the Canadian launch customer for the 68-seat ATR 72-600, the most advanced regional turboprop airliner in production today, placing a first order for delivery in November 2025.



## Introduced New Systems to Drive Higher Reliability and Enhanced Safety

We upgraded our Safety Management System with new state-of-the-art Centrik software and introduced the AIMS automated flight crew scheduling system.



## Launched Dziret'ai Pilot Training Program

We launched the Dziret'ai Pilot Training Program in partnership with Ya'thi Néné, Prince Albert Grand Council, Cameco Corporation, Orano Canada, SSR Mining and the federal and provincial governments, providing flight training and financial support for 12 Indigenous students from Saskatchewan's north who will be future Rise Air pilots.



## Invested in Higher Training Standards

We introduced advanced simulator training for all Beech 1900D, King Air and Twin Otter pilots and implemented new ground de-icing and aircraft fuelling programs.



## Grew Our Commitment to Northern Communities

We provided over \$650,000 of tickets to support northern community members in need, increased our commitment to Santa in the North, and sponsored a nutrition program for school students in Stony Rapids.



## Take Flight Program

The first graduate from our Take Flight Program, which provides financial support for Rise Air employees training to be pilots, became a King Air First Officer in Saskatoon.



Promoting employment in the north.

## Our Owners

Certified by the Canadian Council of Indigenous Business, Rise Air is the largest Indigenous-owned airline in Western Canada, supporting the long-term economic development of the 16 northern Saskatchewan Dené and Cree communities that have ownership in Athabasca Basin Development and Prince Albert Development Corporation.

Rise Air is 100% owned by Indigenous organizations. With 75% ownership of Rise Air, Athabasca Basin Development invests in businesses to build wealth for its ownership communities, which include the Dené First Nations of Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake, and the communities of Camsell Portage, Stony Rapids, Uranium City and Wollaston Lake.

Prince Albert Development Corporation, the economic development arm of the Prince Albert Grand Council, holds the other 25% interest in the airline. There are twelve Prince Albert Grand Council member communities, including Black Lake Dené First Nation, Cumberland House First Nation, Fond du Lac Dené First Nation, Hatchet Lake Dené First Nation, James Smith Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Red Earth Cree Nation, Shoal Lake Cree Nation, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, and Wahpeton Dakota Cree Nation.

### Community Benefits

We deliver long-term economic value for our shareholders by building the transportation links essential for their social and economic development. That means providing the flights needed by community members travelling for work and for education, urgent medevac services, transportation of food and medicines, and supporting exploration and production in the resource sector. Often this means filling in gaps in infrastructure by building and operating terminal buildings and hangars, providing de-icing and bringing in aviation fuel, and even, in one case, owning the airport itself.

We create jobs and provide pathways for careers in the aviation industry. We employ community members across our northern bases and in our flight operations, maintenance and corporate groups in La Ronge, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. Our vision is to partner with our communities to build a future that includes Indigenous pilots flying aircraft maintained by Indigenous engineers into airports staffed by Indigenous ground crew.

Our commitment also means supporting cultural activities such as caribou hunts and other travel across their traditional lands; help for in-need community members through our Marsi fares; and sponsorship of education and sports activities, food for schools, and Santa in the North.



**Rise Air Board Advisory Committee:** L-R (Back Row): Dean Classen (Uranium City), Vice-Chief Joseph Tsannie (Prince Albert Grand Council), Mayor Daniel Powder (Hamlet of Stony Rapids), Louis Mercredi (Fond Du Lac Denesuline First Nation) (Front Row): Tiffany Toutsaint (Fond Du Lac Denesuline First Nation), Kristy Jackson (Chair, Board Advisory Committee), Terri-Lynn Beavereye (Black Lake Denesuline First Nation). Not shown: Peter Gazandlare (Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation)

# The Voice of our Communities

Rise Air’s mission is to enrich the lives of people living, working and investing in our communities by providing the safe and reliable connections they need. We can only achieve this mission if we understand the impact of our decisions on the communities we serve. Our Board Advisory Committee is the key link between us and our customers.

The Committee’s eight members are drawn from all the Athabasca Basin communities and from Prince Albert Grand Council and Athabasca Basin Development. They provide advice and feedback to us about our services and policies and help update community members when we make key decisions that affect them.

“Forming this committee two years ago was a strong demonstration of the Rise Air management team’s commitment to actively listen to the communities they serve. This committee is important for the company’s customer service but, more importantly, it gives the communities a strong voice in the things that matter to them,” says Kristy Jackson, Advisory Committee Chair.

The committee meets quarterly, inviting various members of Rise Air’s management team and other stakeholders to participate, depending on the issues being discussed. Committee members have a powerful voice—often addressing interests which are outside of their home community to help support improvements for all Rise Air customers.

Since being established two years ago, the committee has addressed many topics, from the safe transportation of perishables to on-time performance, care for Elders and discussions with the mayor of the City of Prince Albert regarding their airport operations. “The airline has demonstrated a willingness to listen to the communities they serve; for example, introducing new technology and changes to processes as a direct result of the feedback provided,” says Kristy. “We recognize that there still is work to do, but we can see the positive impact on service for Rise Air’s customers. We look forward to future committee meetings and continuing to build on these successes.”



# Developing Skills for Safer Skies

Captain Brady Tetzlaff was shaking. He was flying in severe icing conditions, one of his two engines had failed, and he was struggling to keep control of his Beechcraft 1900D. He could see the ground 12,000 ft below, and his instruments told him he was 100 km from Saskatoon, but he didn't know if he would make it.

Brady walked away from that incident. Although he could see northern Saskatchewan's lakes and forests

through the windshield, and his instruments told him he was at 12,000 ft, and his plane was being buffeted by turbulence, he was still on the ground—not in Saskatchewan, but far away in Denver, Colorado.

"Flight simulators accelerate our training," says Brady, one of Rise Air's most experienced captains. "We learn how to handle difficult situations that we could never practise in real aircraft. They make us better pilots."



**“ Meeting our high training standards is expensive, but we believe this is an essential investment in our success. ”**

**Carla Wayman**  
Vice President, Flight Operations



A.T.S. Flight simulator, Colorado

“Simulators enable us to rehearse and perform emergency procedures that would not be safe to complete in a real airplane,” explains Micah Ouwens, Rise Air’s Flight Operations Training Manager. These procedures can include engine failures, stalls and various electrical or pneumatic system failures. By practicing these critical manoeuvres in a safe, controlled environment, pilots are better prepared to handle them in the air, significantly improving risk mitigation.

Simulators are exact replicas of aircraft cockpits mounted on computer-controlled hydraulic jacks that move up and down and side to side, creating the sensation of flight. They have high-definition visual displays that wrap 180 degrees, recreating the view pilots would see in a real aircraft. They “fly” the simulators in the same way they would a real airplane.

“Simulators are really sophisticated machines,” says Micah. “So sophisticated that they can cost more than the aircraft they simulate. That’s the biggest reason why there are so few in service. The simulators we use are far away in Toronto, Montreal and the US.”

However, simulator training is only one of the final steps in the long path every student takes to become a professional pilot.

Becoming a commercial airline pilot requires significant training and dedication. First, a student must obtain a Private Pilot License (PPL), which includes on-the-ground classroom study of aerodynamics, aviation regulations and weather, and flight practice with an instructor. After a period, a student pilot will be required to fly on their own (solo). The student will complete a solo check-ride, which is a practical flying test, to ensure that they

can fly safely without an instructor. Once they pass this, they will proceed to the formal licence check-ride at which point they will secure their PPL.

After obtaining the PPL, they can begin training for a Commercial Pilot License (CPL).

The CPL requires more extensive flight training, including flying at night and practising advanced manoeuvres. Students must also then pass a written exam and a flight test. Rise Air requires pilots to have a multi-engine instrument rating, which allows them to fly multi-engine aircraft in all weather conditions, relying on cockpit instruments and ground-based navigation aids to maintain control and reach the destination.

A new pilot has invested more than \$80,000 and up to two years to reach this point, but once hired by Rise Air, we spend up to \$40,000 more to provide them specific ground and simulator training on the type they have been hired to fly, followed by a grueling final check-ride.

According to Micah, although simulator training is not mandatory under Canadian regulations for pilots

flying aircraft with less than 19 seats, “we want the higher safety standards simulators help us achieve.”

“It’s important to emphasise that our pilots undergo extensive training beyond the use of simulators. Transport Canada requires all our pilots to complete comprehensive training on a wide range of subjects, including airborne and ground icing, dangerous goods, underwater egress for float pilots and crew resource management, among others. They complete over 30 different courses every year.”

Even all this training is not enough for a new pilot to be allowed to fly for us “on the line.” Once the ground and flight training are complete, each pilot spends up to three months flying on the line under the supervision of a Training Captain. This line indoctrination (“line indoc”) covers all the day-to-day operation of the specific aircraft, the airports where we fly, and the policies and procedures used on a day-to-day basis at Rise Air.

Rise Air’s Training Captains are the airline’s most experienced pilots. All have spent years flying in Saskatchewan’s north, experiencing everything that mother nature can throw at them. Some, a small handful, have been chosen by Transport Canada to be Approved Check Pilots (ACPs).

When working as an ACP, these pilots no longer represent Rise Air but instead become representatives of Transport Canada, responsible for testing other pilots to verify that they meet the high standards necessary to fly in the north.

All training completed by our pilots is tracked and maintained by our flight operations team.

“Meeting our high training standards is expensive,” says Carla Wayman, Rise Air’s Vice President, Flight Operations, “but we believe this is an essential investment in our success.”

**“Flight simulators  
accelerate our training.  
We learn how to handle  
difficult situations that we  
could never practise in  
real aircraft. They make us  
better pilots.”**

**Captain Brady Tetzlaff**  
Rise Air Pilot



## Cori Hayden: Achieving Engineering Excellence

Can there ever be a role for Indigenous women in aviation engineering at Rise Air? Ask Cori Hayden, and she'll respond with an emphatic "Yes." Everyone working with her would agree. Cori is one of four female engineers in Rise Air's Technical Services team who are together blazing a trail for others to follow, and Cori's story is inspirational.

"I got into aviation because of the mechanical aspect of it. I grew up spending time in the garage with my dad, and I just knew I wanted to do something similar. I saw the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) offering the Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Program and thought, the bigger the engine, the more fun! I completed the two-year program as a single mother of two kids;

it was without a doubt the hardest two years of my life," says Cori.

"SIIT is the gold standard in maintenance engineering training," says Chris Samoila, Rise Air's Vice President of Technical Services. "We strongly support the program and hire their graduates when we can. Cori had a great head start even before we hired her."

Moving to La Ronge and starting work at Rise Air's maintenance base would be intimidating for anyone, but especially for a young Indigenous woman from Cote First Nation entering what is still a male-dominated world. "When she arrived in February 2022, we decided Cori would be treated the same

as anyone,” says Damon Cross, the Base Engineer responsible for the La Ronge operation. “We welcomed her into the team, giving her the same jobs we were all taking on.”

According to Cross, Cori was a quick learner, eager to take on any task offered to her. “She’s smart, but she’s also knowledgeable, kind, gentle, and approachable. She’s become one of the keys to our success.”

In August, Cori achieved a personal milestone when she qualified for her Aircraft Maintenance Engineer license and shortly after was awarded Aircraft Certification Authority (ACA) approval. As Cross proudly announced, this accomplishment was a significant moment not only for Cori herself but also for Rise Air, and especially for the entire La Ronge Maintenance group.

“Cori’s success is a big deal,” Cross continued. “Her story is not just about getting a license; it’s about setting an incredible example for aspiring aviation professionals. What makes her journey even more impressive is that she finished her Canada Aviation Regulations (CARs) exam months before the required timeline, followed closely by her ACA exams. By the time she accumulated the necessary

work experience, she was ready to take the next step in her career, demonstrating her foresight and dedication to her professional development.”

This remarkable pace reflects her commitment and hard work. It is especially commendable considering that, as a First Nations woman in aviation, she is breaking barriers and paving the way for others in her community. Balancing the demands of a young family alongside her responsibilities at work, Cori has shown that determination and passion can lead to extraordinary outcomes.

With her new qualifications come big responsibilities. As an ACA, Cori is personally responsible for certifying that the maintenance on an aircraft has been done properly, in accordance with federal government-approved procedures, and that the aircraft is airworthy and ready for flight

Chris Samoila conveyed his congratulations to Cori, expressing admiration for her diligence and focus throughout the licensing process. In his statement, he noted, “I do not remember anyone else who negotiated the process from Apprentice to AME and ACA as well as she has.” This acknowledgment demonstrates the respect she has earned from her colleagues in the industry.

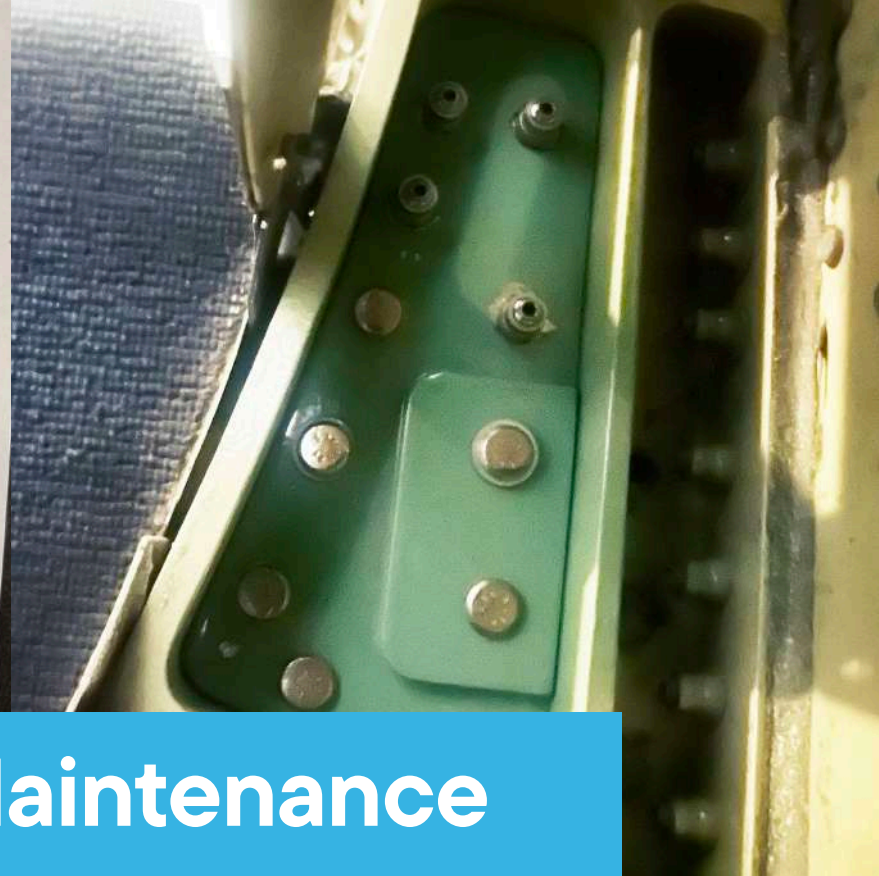
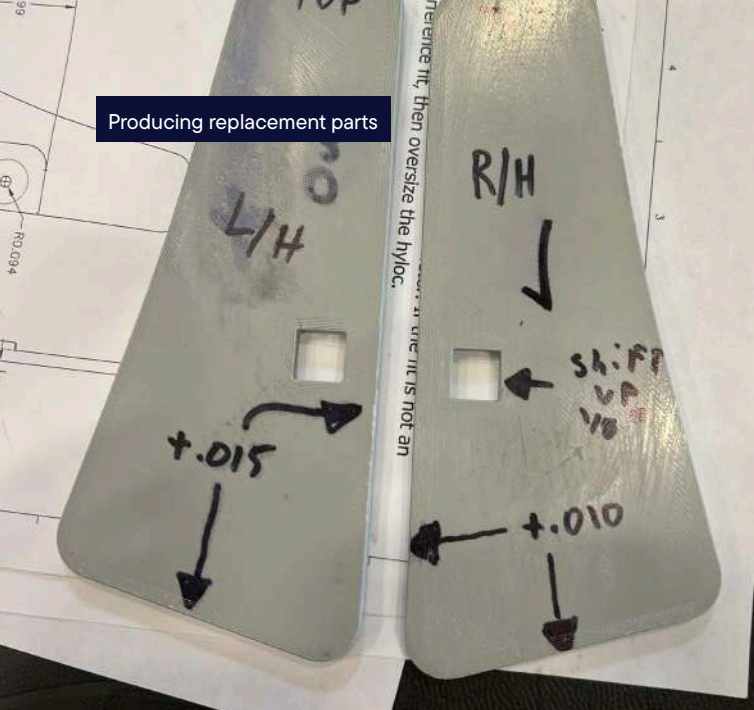
Ever humble, Cori expressed her gratitude for the recognition but was quick to state, “I believe that with the support I’ve received from everyone along the way, and with hard work and dedication, anyone can achieve what I did.” Cori continued, “From the SIIT training to my work today, my kids have been my motivation and continue to inspire me. I truly don’t think I would be where I am today without them. I just want to provide for them, give them a happy upbringing, and hopefully inspire them one day to also find a career they love.”

The last word goes to Damon Cross: “We appreciate having Cori on our team, not because she’s Indigenous or a woman, but because she is one of our best engineers, and she does good work. I hope we will have more just like her.”

**“Her story is not just about getting a licence; it’s about setting an incredible example for aspiring aviation professionals.”**

**Damon Cross**  
Base Engineer the La Ronge Operation

Producing replacement parts



# Innovation in Maintenance

The aviation industry is constantly innovating, but often in areas that travellers don't see. Here are three examples of innovation at Rise Air that lowered operating costs, simplified maintenance and drove greater safety.

## 3D Printing Revolutionizes Aircraft Repairs

In early 2024, our maintenance team faced a challenge when they discovered damage on a Beech 1900D aircraft. "This was a unique issue, not seen on other planes," says Peter Mendoza, the manager responsible for aircraft maintenance at our Saskatoon base. "We were looking at a delay of at least eight months for the aircraft manufacturer to produce replacement parts. We knew this wouldn't be acceptable to our customers, so we decided to find another solution."

We turned to an airworthiness engineer to help us design our own repair scheme using plates which could be fabricated by an aerospace company in Calgary.

"Our problem was in accurately measuring the area where the plates would be installed and then milling

the replacement plates from an aluminum block to the exact dimensions we needed," says Mendoza.

The solution was a 3D printing process never used before. We began by developing initial design concepts and then utilized Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software to create three 3D-printed prototypes. These prototypes served as precise templates, providing accurate measurements that could be input into a CAD system that controlled the fabrication of replacement aluminum plates. This approach was successful, ensuring a perfect fit for the repair within the confined space of the aircraft fuselage.

In the past we relied on traditional wax templates for such repairs. However, by embracing 3D-printing technology, we streamlined the entire process. By eliminating the need for wax templates, their subsequent setting time and the associated shipping delays to the fabricator, we achieved significant time and cost savings.

We saved even more time by transferring the digital file electronically from our computer to the CAD system in Calgary, which enabled immediate

production. The final part fitted perfectly, seamlessly integrating into its intended location, precisely adhering to the specified dimensions.

This project illustrates the transformative power of technology in addressing complex maintenance challenges—but the real innovation came from the creativity of our maintenance engineers, who pioneered a technique that will have application throughout our industry.

### **Exploring Pulsed Light Technology to Mitigate Bird Strikes**

Wildlife has always presented a hazard to aviation operations in Saskatchewan’s North, but the problem is growing as birds are now delaying their migration and returning earlier every year.

This led our Flight Operations and Maintenance teams to see a unique opportunity created through the installation of new LED lights on aircraft. Other airlines were already programming these new lights to pulse, increase aircraft visibility at busy airports, but we realised that this same technology might also help to reduce the risk created by birds at remote sites.

By incorporating various flashing light patterns, we can enhance aircraft visibility to birds, thereby mitigating the risk of bird strikes. We tested this concept by installing a pulse lighting system on an ATR 42-500 operating scheduled flights in the Athabasca Basin, which has already led to a reduction in bird-related events.

While further data collection and analysis are ongoing, the preliminary findings are highly encouraging. This successful trial paves the way for potential widespread implementation across our fleet.

This initiative underscores the importance of continuous innovation and data-driven decision-making to enhance safety across our operation.

### **Streamlining Maintenance with Innovative Bearing Technology**

“Flaps” are movable devices fitted to wings to reduce aircraft landing and takeoff distance. The Flaps extend and retract on tracks at the rear of each wing. The maintenance of these tracks is expensive, costing Rise Air more than \$300,000 a year.

Ontario-based engineering company Marsh Brothers Aviation has developed new technology that eliminates the need for the greasing of rollers and bearings in the flap track assembly. We are one of three airlines trialling the new system, replacing the original greased needle roller bearings and phenolic/steel/Teflon washers on one of our aircraft with Marsh Brothers’ self-lubricating, grease-free polymer bearings.

Chris Samoila, Vice President, Technical Services, states, “Marsh Brothers’ King Air Flap Roller Kit offers a cost-effective replacement solution that enhances maintenance reliability for flap tracks while simultaneously reducing service costs and downtime.”

“By eliminating the reliance on greased needle bearings, we address several critical maintenance issues. These bearings, typically used in original installations, are prone to attracting dust and dirt, which can impede their movement and accelerate wear and tear on the flap track. The new high-tech plastic components exhibit virtually zero friction and that translates into less wear and tear, higher reliability and lower maintenance costs.”

This year-long trial involves operating the aircraft under normal conditions, with thorough inspections of the systems every 200 flight hours. Once the technology has been validated in service, it will be introduced across our King Air fleet.

## Family and Friends Day

Never have so many excited five-year-olds clambered onto a Rise Air ATR as we saw in Prince Albert on September 14th, when employees and their families boarded their flight to Saskatoon for our Family and Friends Day. They were joined by others from bases across Saskatchewan's North, all gathering for our biggest annual employee celebration event.

Our success depends on the commitment and effort made by all our employees, and the support they get from their families and loved ones. Family and Friends Day is our way of saying "thank you."

On this special day, our terminal, hangar and ramp were opened up to everyone. We offered sightseeing rides over Saskatoon in our newest ATR 42-500 and live entertainment; landing practise in a Rise Air King Air on a desktop simulator; face painting and a bouncy castle; and the highlight for many, a choice of lunch from two food trucks.

"It was wonderful to finally meet so many of the colleagues I'd only talked to on the phone," says Connie Fossenier, Stony Rapids Base Manager.

Nine-year-old Charlotte, attending with her dad Chris Samoila, Vice President, Technical Services, spoke for many of the kids on that day, saying "I



Raphael Olaniyi and Ibinabo Abule

didn't know where to begin; I loved everything, but the best was seeing the office where my dad works."

For many, the highlight was the electrifying appearance on our live stage of Rebecca Strong, fresh off her million-dollar prize-winning performance on Canada's Got Talent, following performances by drum circle Young Scouts with traditional dancers.

"We started planning for Friends and Family Day back in April," says lead organizer Michelle Fehr, who in her day job provides critical administrative support to the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team. "It was a lot of work, but it was worth it to see over 450 employees, family members and friends having such a wonderful time."



Nick Hudak deicing training in Summer 2024.

# Investing in Northern Aviation

Most Canadian airlines rely on government agencies and other suppliers to operate airports and airport services wherever they fly. Rise Air is different. “There’s almost no infrastructure where we operate” says Kristi Knight, Director, Commercial. “But we can’t let that stop us from meeting the needs of the communities we serve.”

That philosophy has led the airline’s ground services affiliate Snowbird Aviation Services to step in by establishing terminal buildings, hangars, aircraft fueling services and ground de-icing at 13 airports across Saskatchewan’s north. Rise Air even owns the airport in Southend, which it operates in partnership with Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Health Services and the local community.

“We have capital projects underway at most of those airports,” says Kim Goertzen, General Manager of Snowbird. “We’re reinvesting in our infrastructure so that we can continue to provide dependable service.”

In the coming year Wollaston Lake in Saskatchewan’s far northeast will see Snowbird’s biggest investments, including a new terminal, bigger fuel storage facility, and more capable de-icing equipment, as it prepares for the upgrade of Rise Air’s scheduled flights from Saskatoon and Prince Albert to the ATR 42-500. This airport is the primary gateway for the Hatchet Lake Denesuline Nation, which has no road access for most of the

year. Reliable air service is critical for the viability and sustainability of the community.

Rise Air’s new terminal is a modular steel building fabricated in Saskatoon and moved on the ice road to Wollaston Lake, where it will be installed on a new foundation. According to Nick Hudak, Snowbird’s Facilities Manager, “the modular design was the clear choice because it’s easy to move, saves money and energy, and can be expanded or adapted as needed.”

The terminal building, scheduled to open in August 2025, features a larger, more comfortable waiting area for passengers, accessible entrance, and Wi-Fi internet service. It will offer more storage space for checked baggage and cargo shipments, allowing more efficient and secure freight handling. Best of all, it will have built-in generators to ensure operations continue during the frequent power outages that affect the region, which have previously disrupted airline services.

“We’re always focused on how we can provide better service and want to create a more comfortable and welcoming place for those waiting at the airport. This building is just one example of how we’re investing in the area,” says Hudak.

A project like this, however, does not come without some hurdles. “We’ve been working through



various planning stages and navigating the unique challenges of building on airport land,” adds Hudak. “There are certain stipulations like building height and other regulatory requirements that come into play.” As for when the new terminal will arrive in Wollaston Lake, it all comes down to timing. Like most northern travel, it’s dependent on weather conditions and the operational period of the ice road that varies year to year.

The runway at Wollaston Lake is one of the shortest in the province. “Today we are often forced to limit the passengers and cargo we carry into Wollaston because we have to leave Prince Albert with enough fuel to fly to Wollaston and back to Prince Albert again. Or we require a fuel stop in Points North or La Ronge, which makes the flights longer.” Says Jen Makowsky, Rise Air’s 705 Chief Pilot.

Rise Air is fixing that problem by installing new fuel storage tanks, which increase its capacity to fuel aircraft. Makowsky explains the impact this will have. “Once fuel is available in Wollaston, we’ll require less fuel from Prince Albert, which means we can carry more passengers or not have to make an additional stop.”

Wollaston Lake is also one of the three airports where Rise Air will be upgrading de-icing capabilities in 2025, including the introduction of a new de-ice truck with a boom, similar to the equipment at southern airports.

The airline has also introduced a new ground de-icing training program at all northern airports. Sure-Ops, as the new program is known, is quickly becoming the new standard among aviation service providers across Canada.

Known for its in-depth training and rigorous de-icing protocols, this program trains team members on the most effective processes to ensure that aircraft are free from contaminants such as frost, ice, snow, or slush before takeoff. The program trains staff to thoroughly understand the critical surfaces of aircraft, how they affect flight performance, and the importance of removing all contaminants to ensure safe operations.

“With the Sure-Ops program, our team has gained a much deeper understanding of de-icing, which builds confidence not only in our staff but also in our flight crews and customers,” explains Mike Morin, Ground Operations Inspector and Training Facilitator for Snowbird Aviation Services. “The more robust training helps ensure that aircraft are free from any hazardous contaminants before takeoff, which in turn provides peace of mind for our passengers.”

The investments being made at Wollaston Lake and other airports reflect Rise Air’s ongoing dedication to the safety of its team members and customers, affirming that as the industry evolves, the airline continue to prioritize safety above all else.



Information Systems and Technology team (L-R) Ravindu Chamara, Keevin Berg, Nick Hagan, Jayson Nidea, Raphael Olaniyi.

# Systems, Supercharged

If you talk to most people about technology in the airline industry, they immediately think about the computer screens in the cockpits of aircraft like Rise Air’s new ATR 72-600s. But that’s not the whole story—today’s technology drives every aspect of airline operations, from passenger reservations and check-in to safety systems to communications to aircraft maintenance records. “The latest developments are turbocharging everything we do,” says Keevin Berg, Rise Air’s Director, Information Technology and Systems.

Berg is working with Taylor Sutherland, Rise Air’s Crew Scheduling Coordinator, to implement AIMS, a new system that will transform how we assign flight crew to aircraft. According to Sutherland, “there are hundreds of regulations that govern when pilots can fly, what kind of training they need and when they need it, and how much rest they have. We also comply with the pilot union agreement and respect

flight crew requests for vacations and other time off.” When it comes online in 2025, AIMS will address this complexity by using logarithms to develop optimum schedules up to a year in advance, helping Rise Air increase schedule reliability, employee productivity and flight crew work life satisfaction.

Safety governs every area of Rise Air’s operations, so the airline marked a big milestone in 2024 with the introduction of its new Centrik Safety Management System. Centrik, which is cloud-based, reduces reliance on outdated paper-based processes and accelerates responses to safety-related concerns. It manages risks, regulatory compliance, safety reporting and training, with modules that track everything from pilot currency and expiry to safety data sheets for dangerous goods. “Centrik has revolutionized how we manage safety across our operations,” says Alex Deckmann, Manager, Safety and Quality. “Employees can easily report safety

risks and events from anywhere they are, we can assign investigators and develop timelines, and all levels of management can see the status of every potential risk on a real-time basis.”

An area of growing focus for most airlines is the transportation and handling of Dangerous Goods—chemicals, batteries and other items in baggage and cargo that can potentially affect the safety of flight. In 2024, Rise Air improved the management of Dangerous Goods by implementing a more comprehensive, automated, cloud-based system that replaced manual paperwork and processes that required multiple updates across various sites and vendors.

The new system centralizes all data and automates compliance checks. It reduces the risk of human error and streamlines workflows, allowing for faster processing while increasing oversight and ensuring full compliance with all applicable safety regulations.

Rise Air is also strengthening customer service by introducing new on-line self-service access to the Skyline operations management system any time, day or night, to book flights, track cargo and access live flight information. Customers will soon be able to book cargo shipments on-line too. Maddie Cherneski, Manager, Reservations, is excited by these changes. “They strengthen the communications with our passengers and give them tools that will reduce their stress.” Cherneski adds that she and her team are also encouraging passengers to provide a contact number so that the airline can text real-time updates on the status of their flights.

With these and other sophisticated systems forming the backbone of Rise Air’s operations, the airline is sensitive about cyber-attacks and data breaches. Berg believes his cyber security team is one of the best in the industry. “In 2024, the CrowdStrike

outage impacted companies across the globe, including many major airlines, but our response was swift and effective, with no customer-facing disruptions.” He goes on to say “we are continually monitoring and evolving our systems to ensure they remain secure in the face of threats, helping us to protect both customer data and operational integrity. We take our job seriously.”



**“ These technology advancements strengthen the communications with our passengers and give them tools that will reduce their stress. ”**

**Maddie Cherneski**  
Manager, Reservations



Safety team (L-R) Alex Deckmann, Jiyeon Song, Ibinabo Abule, Larry Denholm, Aaron Larsen, Inset: Kevin C. Barnett.

## Safety and BARS

Fifteen years ago, two of the world’s largest mining companies, BHP and Rio Tinto, both with operations in dozens of countries on every continent, faced a big challenge. How could they evaluate the risks their employees face flying with charter airlines, when every country has different regulations and safety records?

They realised what they needed was a single safety standard that could apply to every aircraft operator anywhere in the world. This led them to reach out to the widely respected non-profit Flight Safety Foundation, which responded by developing the Basic Aviation Risk Standard, or BARS. Today 39 different mining companies and government organizations are using BARS to assess aircraft operators in 55 different countries. Nine of those mining companies have a presence in Canada, including Rise Air customer SSR Mining Inc.

BARS is an international standard that sets guidelines for the entire aviation industry, covering personnel qualifications, flight operations, aircraft specifications, and maintenance practises. It includes a three-year auditing process that measures how closely airlines are aligned to the standard.

“We were a bit nervous when we began the BARS assessment process in 2022,” says Kevin Barnett, Rise Air’s Director, Regulatory Compliance. “A team from an independent safety auditing agency spent a week reviewing every aspect of our operations. Following that review, the Flight Safety Foundation awarded us our initial “Green” status.”

In 2023, after another intensive audit, Rise Air graduated to “Silver” status. Then, in 2024, after its third annual audit, the airline received coveted “Gold” status, the highest recognition that BARS offers.

“There hasn’t been any time to rest on our laurels,” says Barnett. “Even before our 2024 audit was finished, we were getting ready for the next one in 2025. The BARS program is a process that never stops.”

Yet the Flight Safety Foundation is just one of the customer organizations that are constantly assessing Rise Air’s safety culture and regulatory compliance. And according to Barnett, Rise Air is considered by Transport Canada to be a large airline, subject to the country’s most demanding regulatory requirements. “Between our customers and Transport Canada we have an external safety auditor on the premises almost all the time.”



Rise Air MVP: Santa with children in the Athabasca Basin

# Giving Back

## Community is at the heart of all we do.

No matter where people are from, where they live today, or who they love, we celebrate the differences that bring us together.

Rise Air supports programs benefiting children, youth and Elders. From the sponsorship of fishing derbies and winter carnival activities across the north to our long-term support of the Saskatoon Public School Foundation programming, our community investment takes many forms.

This year, we provided transportation for students attending the FSIN Science Fair and the PAGC Prince Albert Fine Art Festival. We sponsored the Athabasca Basin Student Dinner in Prince Albert, where we recognized the incredible work done by students throughout the year, the Athabasca Health Authority youth event and the Fond du Lac Community Empowerment Conference.

## Santa in the North

Our Santa in the North again delivered smiles across the Athabasca Basin.

Every Christmas for 24 years, Santa and his helpers have flown on dedicated Rise Air aircraft to bring gift

bags and treats to children in communities across Saskatchewan's north. This year, Santa visited Black Lake, Fond du Lac, Hatchet Lake, Stony Rapids and Uranium City.

Children at community schools received a gift bag containing a book from an Indigenous author or illustrator, a healthy snack—a traditional mandarin—and a candy cane. For children from daycare to elementary school, additional age-appropriate gifts were included in the bags and extra books and gift bags were donated to school libraries.

For a second year, Santa was joined by the Saskatchewan Roughrider Foundation, bringing players to meet the children and deliver mental wellness and literacy programming.

We give thanks to the following partners for joining us to make Christmas in the North even more special: Graham Construction; Orano Canada; Cameco Connects; Athabasca Basin Development; Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority; Points Athabasca Contracting LP; the Saskatchewan Roughrider Foundation; Saskatoon Co-op; Fermi Exploration; KPCL Dirt Movers (Kelly Panteluk Construction Ltd.); Uranium City Bulk Fuel; our



Touchdown for Dreams Celebration

media partners, Eagle Feather News and Symmetry Public Relations; and our colleagues at Snowbird Aviation Services and Rise Air.

Additionally, Athabasca Basin Development, Optek Solutions, Team Drilling, Flyer Electric, Points Athabasca Contracting LP, Points North Group of Companies, Athabasca Basin Security, Long Lake Insurance, and Arctic Beverages LP came together to support the book portion of Santa in the North.

Thank you as well to the following volunteers who made the journey north: Kian Schaffer-Baker, Jorgen Hus, Peter Godber, Charbel Dabire, Morgan Fleury, Karina Peterson, Ibinabo Abule, Raphael Olaniyi, Bella McMahon, Allison Strong, Natania Bartlett, Anne Gent, Noah Callaghan, and Melody Flahr. Additional thanks to Leanne Martin and family, plus the Dziret'ai Pilot Training Program volunteers for sorting and packing the gifts.

Dan Gold, Rise Air's Director of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations, states, "While the weather forced us to change the schedule, Santa, the Roughriders and volunteers made it to all destinations, delivering a record-setting 1,540 gift bags, reflecting the growing number of excited

children meeting Santa on the day." Gold continued, "We couldn't do this without our amazing partners, sponsors, volunteers and, importantly, the schools themselves for supporting this annual event."

Mr. S. Claus added, "We had a wonderful time with all the children. Their energy and happiness were the fuel we needed to bring our "A-game." I learned that phrase from my new friends from Regina—Go Riders."

### **Touchdown for Dreams**

The 2024 Cameco Riders Touchdown for Dreams program celebrated its 13th year of granting dreams to Saskatchewan women facing life-threatening cancer. Rise Air was again a major partner, providing volunteers and recipients with air transportation to Regina.

Since its launch, 88 courageous women have had their unique dreams fulfilled, creating lasting memories for them and their families. These dreams range from cross-country motorcycle trips and tropical vacations to home renovations and reliable transportation for treatments. Beyond dream fulfillment, the program fosters a strong sense of community among recipients, who share their experiences and support each other through



Community dinner in Stony Rapids

**“ The Marsi Fare supports those in need who otherwise couldn’t travel on our scheduled flight network. ”**

**Madeline Cherneski**  
Reservations Supervisor

challenging times. This camaraderie is highlighted during the annual Roughrider Pink Game, where pink merchandise sales fund future dreams.

The program is made possible through Cameco’s partnerships with the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan and Rise Air, and the support of many dedicated volunteers.

### **Supporting Programs That Align with Our Values**

In 2024, we increased our commitment to causes and programs that reflect the values we uphold. In addition to our sponsorships and donations throughout northern Saskatchewan, we now support organizations that deliver programming promoting diversity in aviation.

The Northern Lights Aero Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing and supporting women in aviation and aerospace by providing mentorship, scholarships and resources to help them succeed in a historically male-dominated industry.

We participate in the annual Girls Take Flight event at the Mitchinson Flight Centre. This year, we had two aircraft on display: an eight-seat King Air B200 and a 44-seat ATR 42-500, staffed by women who work in different areas of Rise Air.

Rise Air also supports Aviation Pride Canada, a 2SLGBTQ+ organization that advocates for the inclusion and representation of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in the aviation and aerospace sectors.

The Dziret’ài Pilot Training Program is the biggest commitment to Indigenous inclusion in Rise Air’s history. In collaboration with our partners, we’re building a pathway for First Nations youth to become the pilots that will deliver future air service to their home communities throughout Saskatchewan’s north.

In June 2024, Rise Air sponsored the first Two-Spirit Powwow that took place in Saskatoon. The



organizers put on an exceptional event, and we were honoured to be invited to participate in the Grand Entry.

Colleagues from Snowbird Aviation Services and Rise Air also participated in the Lac La Ronge Pride Parade and Festival. The parade passed our water base, where our floatplanes operate each summer, on its way to David Patterson Park, which was filled with live music and entertainment, bringing joy to the community.

### **Arts and Entertainment**

This year, Saskatoon’s 25th Street Fringe Festival made its way north on tour. Rise Air supported the community members in the Athabasca Basin who participated in the events.

In July, the Napatāk Ramble Music Festival brought people together for a multicultural event south of La Ronge that introduced attendees to live music from many genres and provided hands-on craft activities for people of all ages. Rise Air was a platinum sponsor.

### **Community Engagement**

Recognizing the importance of listening to our customers, this year we started rolling out BBQ events and casual come-and-go consultations in northern communities. We’re thankful to everyone who attended in Uranium City, where we heard a variety of opinions and suggestions about issues ranging from flight schedules and ticket prices to check-in times and timely delivery of cargo. We look forward to announcing more events in 2025.

### **Marsi Fares**

Named after the Dené word for “thank you,” the Marsi Fare program is dedicated to supporting community members from the northern communities of Black Lake, Camsell Portage, Fond du Lac, Hatchet Lake, Stony Rapids and Uranium City. This program is an integral part of recognizing and honouring the communities and their members, who form the majority shareholder group of Rise Air for their partnership and support, and to extend our sincere appreciation for their loyalty.

The program was developed to assist community members in need who typically cannot afford to travel by air. “The Marsi Fare supports those in need who otherwise couldn’t travel on our scheduled flight network,” says Madeline Cherneski, Reservations Supervisor. “When you speak to our customers who are using the Marsi Fare, they’re often dealing with something happening in their lives, and we take extra steps to support them.”

Marsi Fare vouchers are provided to the leaders of each community, who gift them to those community members they know are in need. Rise Air has distributed over \$1.2 million of free travel since the program was created in 2021.

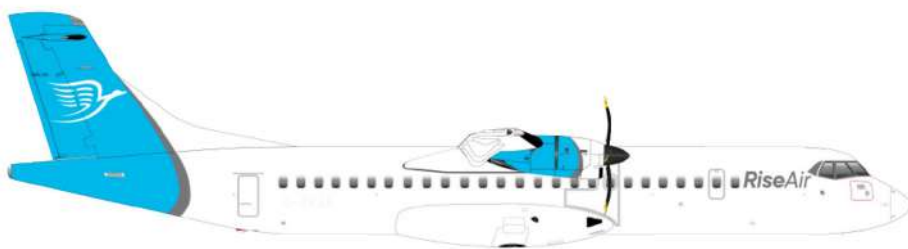
### **How to apply for support**

Organizations can apply throughout the year for funding, flight donations or requests for us to participate in their fundraising events. To apply for support, visit [www.riseair.ca/about-us/community-involvement](http://www.riseair.ca/about-us/community-involvement).

# Our Fleet

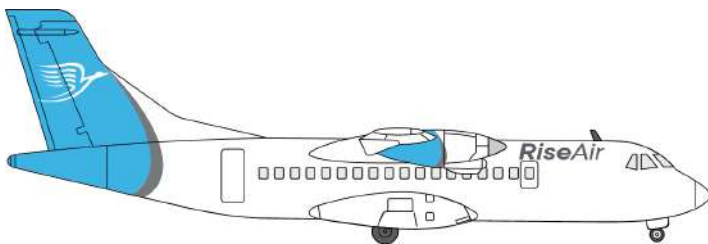
Rise Air's fleet provides comprehensive transportation and logistics solutions, positioning us to serve diverse customer needs, including scheduled flights, freight, charter, medevac, and workforce transportation. Entering our 70th anniversary year, Rise Air is strategically investing in the future by welcoming three new ATR 72-600 aircraft in 2026, enhancing our capabilities and

phasing out older models. Our proven expertise in operating aircraft across wheels, skis, and floats – is a cornerstone of our success. In recognition of our heritage, we also proudly operate our historic De Havilland Beaver.



**ATR 72-600**

Passengers: 68  
Range: 1,400 KM  
Speed: 510 KPH



**ATR 42-500**

Passengers: 44  
Range: 1,300 KM  
Speed: 556 KPH



**SAAB 340B**

Passengers: 44  
Range: 1,300 KM  
Speed: 556 KPH



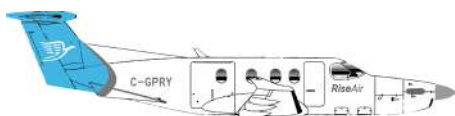
**Beechcraft 1900D**

Passengers: 19  
Range: 2,414 KM  
Speed: 509 KPH



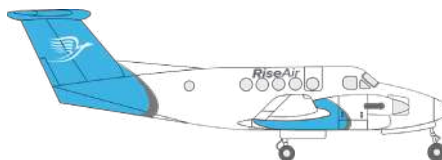
**De Havilland Twin Otter**

Number of Passengers: 14  
Range: 1,450 KM  
Speed: 275 KPH



**Pilatus PC-12**

Number of Passengers: 9  
Range: 3,400 KM  
Speed: 528 KPH



**Beechcraft King Air**

Number of Passengers: 8  
Range: 3,400 KM  
Speed: 500 KPH

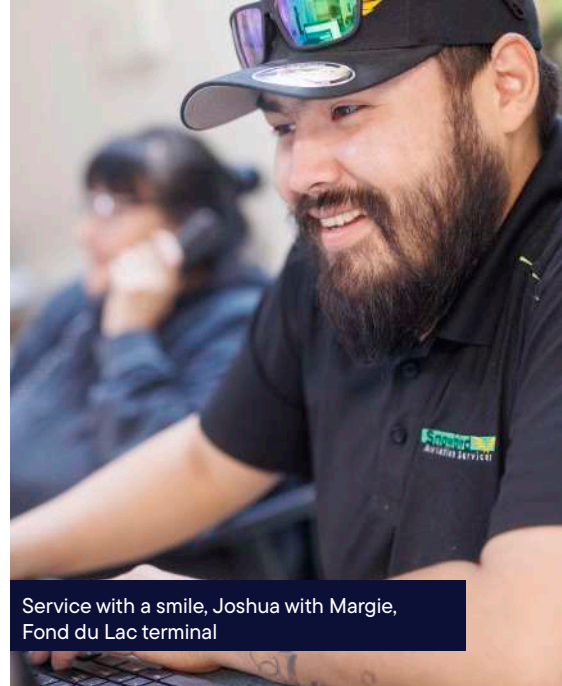


**De Havilland Beaver**

Number of Passengers: 4/6  
Range: 732 KM  
Speed: 230 KPH



Chief Sayazie speaking at the launch of the Dziret'ai Pilot Training Program



Service with a smile, Joshua with Margie, Fond du Lac terminal

# We're Going Places.



Staff recognition: Long Service Awards



Santa in the North with our volunteers and the Saskatchewan Roughriders



Marc Okihcihtaw, Boston, and hoop dancer from Montana, Charles Denny.

