



PRESS RELEASE
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Air service interrupted

Gander Deputy Mayor Zane Tucker says a weekend interruption in domestic air service between Gander and St. John's demonstrates just how fragile Gander's regional air links have become.

Exploits Valley Air Services (EVAS) maintains Air Canada's Gander-St. John's route, making six round-trips daily with its Beech 1900D aircraft. However, a mechanical problem with the aircraft forced cancellation of Saturday's flights. A single flight took place Sunday before the aircraft was again taken out of service. Flights were not expected to resume until Monday evening at the earliest, possibly using a replacement aircraft. The Town of Gander was gravely concerned about the length of time taken to find a replacement aircraft, in this instance leaving Central Newfoundland without air service for four days.

"When a problem with a single plane can cut off air service completely, it's obvious that the people of Central Newfoundland are not being served as well as we could be, or as well as we have been in the past," said Deputy Mayor Tucker. The Mayor's Committee on Domestic Air Services is working to assess all aspects of local and regional air transport, from scheduling to fares and infrastructure. The committee includes representatives of a number of area communities, business associations and other key stakeholders.

"The industry, and particularly the airlines servicing this province, have to realize that a substantial amount of their revenue comes from the central region," Deputy Mayor Tucker explained. "It seems that when they look at their numbers, they're ignoring the fact that much of the demand that appears to be generated from St. John's is, in fact, people from this region who are being forced, whether due to cost or scheduling, to travel first to St. John's to connect with outbound flights. That's bad enough, without also losing the only air link between the two airports. I think we deserve a little more respect as a major contributor to the overall system," he added.

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