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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

### **CANADIAN ROCKIES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IMPROVES ACCESS**

CRANBROOK – Cranbrook’s Canadian Rockies International Airport will bring more visitors to resorts and tourism opportunities in the Kootenays and Rockies, Tourism, Culture and the Arts Minister Bill Bennett announced today at the grand opening of the expanded airport.

“The tourism and economic potential for this expanded airport is enormous,” said Bennett. “The Kootenay region is only half a day away for over 65 million travellers from the U.S. alone, and now, opportunities for overseas flights are increased as well.”

The runway was extended from 6,000 feet to 8,000 feet and can now accommodate passenger aircraft from any point in North America. The runway also has improved lighting and navigational aids. The expansion of the air terminal building includes new international arrivals and departures areas and the completion of a new Canada Border Services facility.

“The airport upgrade has improved access to the wide number of recreational activities available in the Kootenays and Rocky Mountains,” said Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Kevin Falcon. “Even more people will be coming through this airport to enjoy some of the best golfing in the province, and some of the best skiing and mountain biking in the world.”

MP Jim Abbott said the new airport will add new impetus to the region’s efforts to diversify its economy. “This new international airport will open Cranbrook and the Kootenays to the world,” said the Member of Parliament for Kootenay Columbia. “It will stimulate tourism development, making it easier to move people and products in and out of our region.”

The runway extension was completed in November 2006, while international arrivals and departures opened in October 2007 and April 2008, respectively. Delta Airlines begins flying between Cranbrook and Salt Lake City, Utah, this December.

“For some time now the world has been aware of Cranbrook and southeast British Columbia,” said Ross Priest, mayor of Cranbrook. “Today we officially open the Canadian Rockies International Airport to welcome the world to our city.”

“The completion of the terminal expansion and runway extension at the new Canadian Rockies International Airport is a vital milestone to the visitor industry of the entire Kootenay Rockies region,” said Chris Dadson, president of Kootenay Rockies Tourism. “This one visionary project opens up dozens of new markets to our communities’ exceptional array of tourism products and experiences. The industry looks forward to welcoming many new guests from every corner of the world, in the years to come.”

The Province contributed \$4.5 million to the City of Cranbrook through the Transportation Partnerships Program, as part of the \$12.5 million upgrade to the Canadian Rockies International Airport. The Province's contribution was matched by the federal government, with remaining funds contributed by the city and regional partners.

The Province has invested \$26.7 million in 32 airports across B.C. through this program, and has approved another \$12.2 million in airport investments over the next year and a half.

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