News Release

Arctic Bay Airport Officially Opens

IQALUIT, Nunavut (February 7, 2011) – Peter Taptuna, Minister of Economic Development & Transportation, is pleased to announce the official opening of Canada's newest airport in Arctic Bay. Premier Eva Aariak, Minister Taptuna, and other delegates today celebrated the opening with a ribbon cutting and feast in Arctic Bay.

"This new airport shows the Government of Nunavut's commitment to making travel to and from Arctic Bay easier," said Minister Taptuna. "The new airport improves access to cargo, domestic and medical travel. Along with the added convenience of having an airport near the hamlet, the new airport is expected to reduce costs for individuals, the business community and government."

With the opening of the Arctic Bay Airport, individuals and businesses will save between $80 and $100 for each return trip to the Nanisivik Airport. The Government of Nunavut will save about $575 thousand annually by no longer having to maintain Nanisivik airport and the road between Nanisivik and the Hamlet of Arctic Bay. The airport at Nanisivik will now be decommissioned and the road between Arctic Bay and Nanisivik will be reclassified as a Community Access Road.

The Arctic Bay Airport was built as a result of the closure of the mine at Nanisivik. Previously the community of Arctic Bay was served by the Nanisivik Airport located 27 kilometres away. The Government of Nunavut made the decision to build a new airport in Arctic Bay that would directly serve the needs of the community. The 22-million-dollar project was completed in the summer of 2010 and has received certification from Transport Canada.

The Arctic Bay Airport began regular scheduled flights on January 13, 2011.

"Aviation plays a critical role for our communities in the north," added Minister Taptuna. "Airports are an essential service in Nunavut and this facility will greatly benefit the people of Arctic Bay."

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