

Float plane service takes off from Comox

By Marcel Tetrault
Echo Staff

Downtown Vancouver is now just 45 minutes away.

For an introductory price of \$149, you can get there without the hassle of ferry or airport line-ups and without having to deal with a drive from the airport in Richmond or from the ferry terminal at Horseshoe Bay.

"This is an exciting day for the Town of Comox and the Comox Valley," said Comox Mayor Jim Brass in a release. "This service will allow Lower Mainland residents, visitors and business travelers to access all the opportunities the Comox Valley has to offer."

The initial flight into Comox, on a deHavilland Beaver with a full load of six passengers, was greeted by dozens of local politicians and business people.

Brass presented a First Nations print of the Comox glacier to West Coast Air president and CEO Rick Baxter and the passengers were all quite pleased to receive a complimentary box of Hot Chocolate chocolates from Comox Coun. Paul Ives.

Baxter said that his company sees a lot of potential in the Comox Valley and he expects the service to be a popular one — "we're in it for the long term," he said.

"With the diverse industry in the Comox Valley, we see this as a great opportunity," said Baxter.

"It's a thriving business community with ... significant development opportunities — it's clear that travel time needs to be minimized. We're excited about this new route and linking the two communities."

Mike Hawitt of Comox Bay Marina and Resort, who flew in Tuesday morning and returned with Baxter on the 1:30 flight, said that the new hotel that will be built on the waterfront will definitely take advantage of the new harbour-to-harbour air service.

"We're really pleased about having the float plane service for the hotel," said Hawitt, noting they intend to do their part to attract visitors from Vancouver.

"Definitely we would put together packages for weekend romantic get-aways and fishing trips," he said.

Three flights will leave the Comox harbour every weekday at 8:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. On weekends, there will be one flight that leaves at 1:30 p.m.

Flights arrive at the harbour at 8:05 a.m., 12:50 p.m. and 5:05 p.m. on weekdays and at 12:50 p.m. on weekends.

Flights cost \$149 plus tax each way.



The very first West Coast Air flight from Vancouver harbour arrives in the Comox harbour on a beautiful Tuesday morning, the sun glinting off the Comox glacier in the background.

(Photo by Ross Robinson/Invest Comox Valley)

Friends of the Library's big book sale on this weekend

The annual Comox Valley Friends of the Library sale is here.

Volunteers have collected thousands of books, and hundreds of videos, CD's and tapes.

Sale times are 9:00 to 5:00 on Friday and Sat., April 4 and 5, and 10:00 to 2:00 on Sunday, April 6 at the Comox Recreation Centre.

Everything is priced to sell, children's books are 25 cents, pocket-books are 50 cents, large paperbacks \$1 and hardcovers \$2.

Also back again this year is a separate space for specially priced nicer and unusual items, starting at \$4.

On Sunday, April 6th it's \$2 per bag full of all items.

Thanks to everyone who donated items to us, we have now finished collections for this year. Donations may still be dropped off for

next year at any Comox Valley branch of the Library, but we will not be picking up any more for this year.

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West Coast Air president and CEO Rick Baxter (right) greets passenger Mike Hawitt, owner of the Comox Bay Marina where the plane docks, as the businessmen prepare to lift off in the company's deHavilland Beaver for the return flight to Vancouver on Tuesday after arriving on the inaugural flight earlier that day.

There's another glass blower

The glass blower pictured on the back page of the April 1 issue of the Echo was mistakenly identified as a master glass blower from Taiwan.

While there is a master glass blower from Taiwan at Cumberland's Taiwanese Lantern Festival this year, the glass blower pictured in the Echo last Tuesday was in fact Cumberland resident Ben Evers.

This weekend is your last chance to visit the spectacular Lantern Festival in Cumberland's CRI Hall. Don't miss the Barbie display across the street in the Cultural Centre.

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