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Canada Jetlines becomes third low-cost airline to come to Abbotsford

By Sean Boynton

A third low-cost airline has announced plans to fly in and out of Abbotsford International Airport. John Hua has the details

Cost-conscious passengers travelling from Abbotsford International Airport will soon have another choice of airline.

Canada Jetlines, Canada's latest ultra-low cost carrier, will introduce service between Abbotsford and Hamilton next summer, with plans to expand the network beyond that route soon afterwards.

The service will join Flair Airlines and WestJet's upcoming Swoop as low-cost alternatives to the major airlines.

Abbotsford's mayor Henry Braun says his city's airport can become an ideal destination for low-cost flying.

"This isn't a fancy airport, but it is a very efficient airport, which means we can pass off those costs to the air carriers," he said.

Much like other low-cost airlines, Canada Jetlines plans to keep ticket prices down by charging extra for extra baggage, seat selection, and onboard drinks.

But travel experts say low-cost airlines like these don't often last long, and warn customers to be extra cautious when purchasing their ticket.

Paying with a credit card is the safest bet, they say, or through a travel agent, along with the travel insurance.

"We've seen these airlines not succeed," travel expert Claire Newell said, citing past airlines like Greyhound Air, Zoom, and Air Canada's Tango.

"Our fingers are crossed that they will, but you need to protect yourself."

Nevertheless, the city believes the airport and its low-cost airlines will improve Abbotsford's economy by bringing in more tourist traffic. The mayor is happy to see the airport step up to that challenge.

"This was a diamond in the rough, and we're polishing that diamond," Braun continued about the city-run airport.

"You're going to start seeing some fantastic things happening here."

Ticket sales for the Abbotsford-Hamilton route are set to begin in the spring. Canada Jetlines said in a release it plans to expand service to the U.S., Mexico and the Caribbean.