

Airport flying through renovations



Mary Danford, left, joined the BCA Flying Club in 1993. Though she has retired from flying now, Danford still owns her reputation as a brave and adventurous flyer. She reminisced with BCA project manager Pat Murdock, right, laughing about the time she came over Eagles Nest and her instructor reached over and turned the key, shutting off her airplane. He told her, "Now float it back in if you're so brave." / SARAH SOBANSKI Staff

By Sarah Sobanski

The Bancroft Community Airport (BCA) is putting \$124,000 into renovations.

After raising \$62,000, the BCA has succeeded in gaining the federal government's Canada 150 grant, which matched the raised money for 50 per cent of the airport's restorative needs. The money is going to upgrading the airport's hangar and clubhouse. "It's certainly exciting. We feel we are contributing to the community. We're moving from yesterday to tomorrow," said BCA project manager Pat Murdock. He hoped the upgrades would add to the recent momentum in community interest in the airport. He added, "We're trying to encourage community participation. The end game, of course, is to make it successful for emergency services. That's the biggest thing. We've all got grey hair, and we're losing our hair. We need to get some younger people engaged as well for recognition of the value of this airport."

Renovations include laying new cement floors and walkways for the hangar and clubhouse. The BCA is aiming to make both wheelchair accessible. It also wants the hangar to become a space for community organizations to host events.

"The airport was developed in 1963, that's what 53 years ago? Virtually nothing has been done to it since then. It's just like it was in 1963 except for a few private hangars built out there. As far as the airport proper is concerned nothing has really changed except for some maintenance. Yet, the Town of Bancroft has grown incredibly since 1963," explained airport executive secretary Gary Gaudreau.

"It's catching up to the needs of the community," agreed Pat.

These upgrades are just the beginning however. The BCA also wants to pave its parking lot, install a new septic system and partner with community organizations to better integrate the airport as a pillar of the community.

"There are things we'd like to do around here, that weren't covered by the Canada 150 grant. We'd like to pave that parking lot for example. If you come here in the spring, it's like a swamp, you'll go up to your axels in mud. It's bad," said Gaudreau.

Gaudreau said the airport plans to apply for the government's sister grant, the province's version of the 150 grant to continue renovating.

For those looking to get involved, BCA director Hugh Erwin noted that even those who can't fly can join the airport's membership. "As a non-flying member, it's very interesting," said Erwin. He joined because of his love for aviation and the camaraderie.