

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **New YKA LINK Initiative Aims to Expand Air Routes and Elevate Interior BC's Tourism Economy Through Regional Collaboration**

**KAMLOOPS, BC; June 17, 2025:** – Kamloops area tourism partners have officially launched **YKA LINK** (Leveraging Investment, Networking, and Knowledge), a bold new tourism and air service development initiative. Designed to position Kamloops Airport (YKA) as the central gateway to one of British Columbia's most diverse travel corridors, the initiative unites regional partners to drive destination awareness and increase visitation.

YKA LINK is a first-of-its-kind alliance between Kamloops Airport, the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), Tourism Sun Peaks, Tourism Kamloops, the Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD), along with support from Destination BC. The initiative was introduced to delegates at the BC Aviation Council (BCAC) 2025 Conference, held in Kamloops in early June, and aims to be a catalyst for coordinated marketing, route development, and infrastructure alignment across the North Thompson Nicola Valleys, Shuswap and Cariboo regions.

"Increased air access into Kamloops is a vital step forward for tourism across the Southern Interior. Every new flight brings greater opportunity, not only for Kamloops but for communities across our region to connect with visitors, strengthen our visitor economy, and showcase the authentic experiences that define British Columbia's interior. Enhanced connectivity through YKA supports year-round travel, fosters economic resilience, and plays a critical role in attracting both leisure and business travelers to our diverse and growing tourism landscape." Ellen Walker-Matthews, CEO, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

As highlighted during the BCAC 2025 conference, regional tourism leaders presented the initiative to provincial stakeholders as part of a larger effort to align air service development with Destination BC's *Invest in Iconics* framework and local infrastructure priorities such as the *Build Kamloops* initiative and Sun Peaks long term strategy.

Key goals of YKA LINK include:

- Enhance Regional Visibility
- Support Experience Development
- Advance Regional Collaboration
- Attract New Air Service

Kamloops Airport is uniquely positioned to serve as a central hub for the Interior, offering seamless access to ski resorts, wilderness parks, Indigenous tourism sites, and cultural destinations. The region's growing demand from both leisure and corporate travelers, combined with investments in infrastructure and events, supports the business case for enhanced air service.

"Kamloops Airport is pleased to be partnering in LINK to drive destination awareness and strategic, long-term development of air service. Regional airport connectivity is critical to sustaining and building our tourism industry, which powers employment and economic prosperity for the entire region," said Jim Moroz, Managing Director, Kamloops Airport.

"At Tourism Sun Peaks, we see air access as part of the entire guest journey — not just the first step, but a shared responsibility. YKA LINK gives us the opportunity to collaborate across the region and ensure that when visitors choose to fly here, we deliver a seamless, remarkable experience from runway to resort," said Naomi Kerchinsky, Tourism Sun Peaks.

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