Evacuation Assistance Coming Together in Crisis

People Made the Difference

Kirstan Jewell

June 2019

EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

EIA

we'll move you.

the city, leaving the damage to only be described as 'catastrophic'.

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UPWARDS OF 80,000 PEOPLE LIVING IN FORT MCMURRAY, ALBERTA HAVE BEEN FORCED TO EVACUATE THEIR HOMES AFTER FOREST FIRES HAVE ENGULFED MUCH OF THE CITY.

80,000+
People displaced

2,400
Buildings destroyed by the morning of May 11

229,000
Hectares burned by the morning of May 11

The city of Fort McMurray has been destroyed by 10 percent with more than 2,400 built structures destroyed, and 229,000 hectares burned due to blazing wildfires. By the evening of Tuesday, May 10, there are 25 wildfires still burning across the province which remain at least 25 kilometres from Saskatchewan.

On Friday, May 6, mandatory evacuation orders continued to expand and fires continued to rage, with approximately 1,600 building structures destroyed and at least 101,000 hectares burned by the raging fires. Along evacuation routes, fuel was reported to have been scarce while residents left not knowing if they will return to find their home and community intact. With windy and warm weather conditions worsening the blaze, by the afternoon of May 4, it was already reported that Fort McMurray's Waterways neighbourhood is 90 percent destroyed, while the Abasand community has been destroyed by 50 percent.

By the afternoon of May 6, 40 wildfires are burning and winds are reported at 40 kilometres per hour with temperatures forecasted to reach 29° by May 7, making it difficult for emergency crews to manage the ongoing fires.

As of May 27, fires continue to burn in Alberta and more than 2,000 firefighters are working to control the situation. More than 566,188 Alberta hectares and 3,200 Saskatchewan hectares have been burned, and fire crews working on the situation have come from as far as South Africa, Newfoundland and the United States to extinguish 20 ongoing wildfires.

Several Canadian charities are responding with relief to help evacuation efforts while rescue crews work to put out the blaze.

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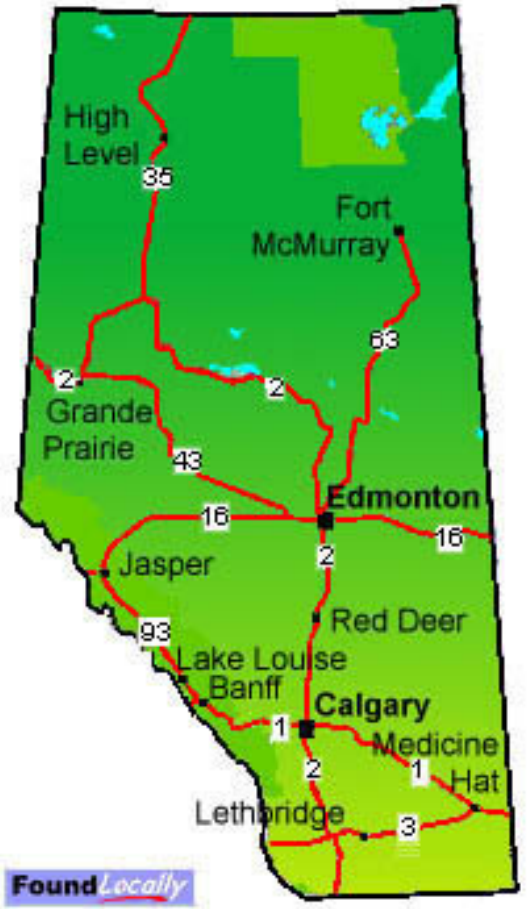
11:21 AM
07/11/2016

One Road In, One Road Out
YMM and some private airstrips

- Some went South, some went North
- South to Edmonton
- North, etc., to work camps
- YMM Airport, Firebag and CNRL private airstrips

- YEG annual passenger volume 7M



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YEG Emergency Action – May 3

- Neighbouring community in crisis
- Activated integrated Incident Command (EOC)
- Care and concern for YMM friends, residents, passengers and family

Clear Goal and Priorities

- Save lives
- Incident stabilization/property conservation
- Business continuity / recovery
- All the while taking care of people

YEG Timeline

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May 3, 2016 – 1900 – 0700
1st Operational Period

- 1917- EOC activated – Medivac of Fort McMurray Hospital – AHS
- 1950 - Initial incident action plan (IAP) developed:
  - 105 patients
    - Stretcher bound patients thru air ambulance to AHS Air Ambulance Hangar;
    - Remaining patients onboard Westjet 737 transported from Firebag to YEG. Walking and wheel chair bound patients
    - Ground loading

- 2100 – Additional information streaming in of mass evacuations of residences and oilsands personnel flying to YEG
- Lack of accurate information a constant issue – relied on experience, training, best judgment and values

- 2130 – Update to Province AEMA:
  - Advising of inbound evacuee's, and
  - Reception centres
  - City of Edmonton identified as the main location to receive evacuees
  - In contact with Edmonton EOC – ETS busses deployed to airport to begin assisting with transportation from airport to Edmonton receptions centres.

- 2300 – CATSA at YMM advised all staff have evacuated
- All flights from Wood Buffalo region are dirty flights
- 0001 – Aircraft arriving thru the evening, night and morning.
- 0200 – Medivac aircraft - time delayed
- 0300 – Training rooms activated for reception centre for incoming evacuees
- 0545 – WJ Medivac aircraft arrived at YEG. EMS, ERS, Security, Ops staff assisted with deplaning, triage, dirty flight, and transfers to ambulance groundside
  - Total time of 2.5 hours to deplane and transport last hospital evacuee
  - Very sick patients on board
  - Psychiatric ward - patients

1900 -0700

- 0700 – End of first operational period – updating new crew for next operational period. 12 hours. Long shift.

Our People Made the Difference

- Excellent at Incident Command
- Best in class training and simulations on various scenarios
- Experienced with sprints and crisis management
- Judgment, expert coordination with little information, little time and lives at stake
- Fatigue easily managed in acute periods

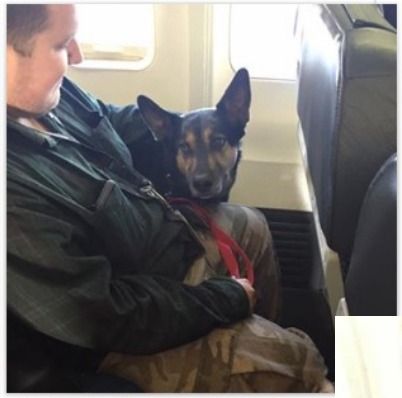
May 4 – YMM airport hit by fires

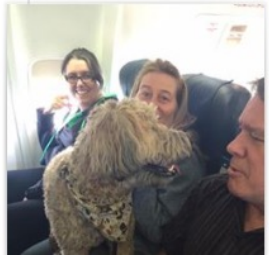
- Airport closed May 3
- YMM EOC operational
- YMM Airport Fire remained
  - Some YEG are contractors – concern for our employees (along with our friends at YMM)
- Fire surrounded airport
  - Structures north of airport fence lost
  - Airport Fire saved most structures on airside
  - Lost fire hall
  - Lost water pressure part way thru suppression activities
  - Pulled back and remaining water in trucks protected terminal
- Worry and severity concerns for our neighbours – how will everyone get out?
- YMM Airport closed from May 3 to June 10th

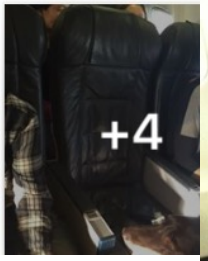
EOC Extended Activation from May 3 – 8th

- Total of 14 operational periods
  - Operational periods reduced to 8 hours
  - 116 hours total operation time
- 335 flights planned: Resource deployment strategies to support Fort McMurray Residences / Industry impacted
  - Air carrier support
  - City of Edmonton Reception center
    - Transportation
  - Normal PAX transportation arrangements
  - Transiting thru EIA onto other destination
    - Airport reception centre
    - Victim services support
- Maintain normal business continuity during event
  - Adjusting to waves of inbound evacuee's
  - EOC members and go teams – self care

Safely evacuated....130 passengers, 5 cats, and 19 dogs! And 2 turtles!

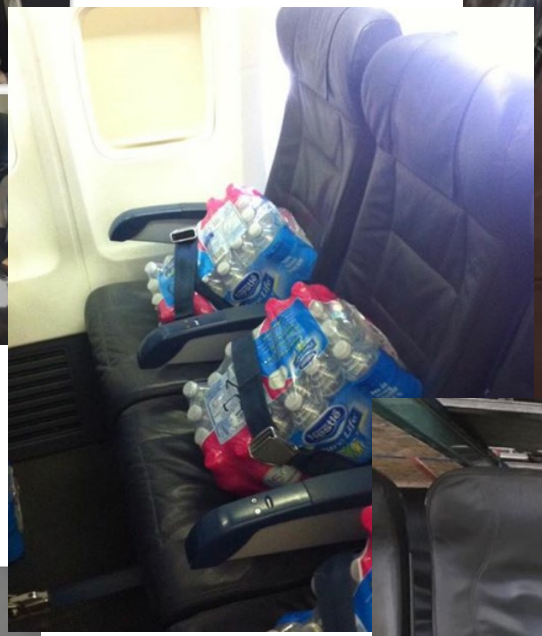






WestJet sitting on the ramp in Shell Albian Sands. When it comes to helping our province and our people we all fly the same sky.

Our Edmonton Flight Ops team has been kitty-sitting "Meow Meow" for one of our passengers that travelled with us from Fort McMurray. They figured that if she's going to be part of our team she might as well have proper identification. Meow Meow, it's been a pleasure to have you with us this week. :)



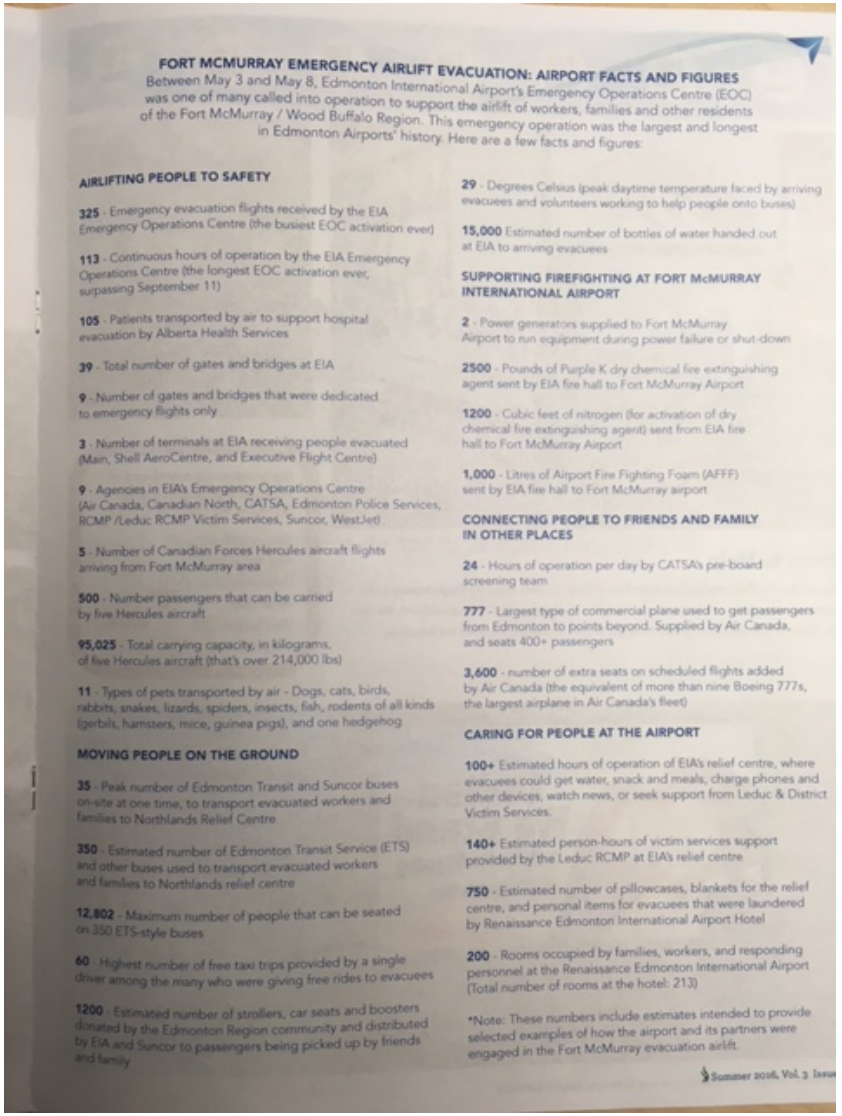
CANADIAN NORTH

Incident Action Plan - Ongoing

- Assist with evacuees landing in YEG to support services or final destinations
  - Up to 25,000 initial expectation, moved closer to 60,000
  - Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Develop and maintain active arrival schedules of all aircraft out of Fort McMurray area
  - Several airlines / charters were involved
  - Military involved
  - Required hourly updates 24/7
  - Updates included sliding scale for arrivals
- Assist evacuees at 3 airport locations
  - Main Terminal
  - Executive Flight Centre
  - Shell Aerocentre
- IAP updated frequently to assist with communication issues / gaps
- EIA looked to by regional community to understand impact being sent into YEG.
- Social media “Klout”
- Edmonton Police Liaison sent to our EOC

Facts

- 325 emergency flights
- 113 continuous hours of operation for EOC
- 105 patients
- 9 of 39 gates dedicated
- 5 Herc flights (500 passengers per flight)
- 1200 strollers, car seats and boosters



FORT MCMURRAY EMERGENCY AIRLIFT EVACUATION: AIRPORT FACTS AND FIGURES

Between May 3 and May 8, Edmonton International Airport's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was one of many called into operation to support the airlift of workers, families and other residents of the Fort McMurray / Wood Buffalo Region. This emergency operation was the largest and longest in Edmonton Airports' history. Here are a few facts and figures:

AIRLIFTING PEOPLE TO SAFETY

325 - Emergency evacuation flights received by the EIA Emergency Operations Centre (the busiest EOC activation ever)

113 - Continuous hours of operation by the EIA Emergency Operations Centre (the longest EOC activation ever, surpassing September 11)

105 - Patients transported by air to support hospital evacuation by Alberta Health Services

39 - Total number of gates and bridges at EIA

9 - Number of gates and bridges that were dedicated to emergency flights only

3 - Number of terminals at EIA receiving people evacuated (Main, Shell AeroCentre, and Executive Flight Centre)

9 - Agencies in EIA's Emergency Operations Centre (Air Canada, Canadian North, CATSA, Edmonton Police Services, RCMP /Leduc RCMP Victim Services, Suncor, WestJet)

5 - Number of Canadian Forces Hercules aircraft flights arriving from Fort McMurray area

500 - Number passengers that can be carried by five Hercules aircraft

95,025 - Total carrying capacity, in kilograms, of five Hercules aircraft (that's over 214,000 lbs)

11 - Types of pets transported by air - Dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, snakes, lizards, spiders, insects, fish, rodents of all kinds (gerbils, hamsters, mice, guinea pigs), and one hedgehog

MOVING PEOPLE ON THE GROUND

35 - Peak number of Edmonton Transit and Suncor buses on-site at one time, to transport evacuated workers and families to Northlands Relief Centre

350 - Estimated number of Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) and other buses used to transport evacuated workers and families to Northlands relief centre

12,802 - Maximum number of people that can be seated on 350 ETS-style buses

60 - Highest number of free taxi trips provided by a single driver among the many who were giving free rides to evacuees

1200 - Estimated number of strollers, car seats and boosters donated by the Edmonton Region community and distributed by EIA and Suncor to passengers being picked up by friends and family

29 - Degrees Celsius (peak daytime temperature faced by arriving evacuees and volunteers working to help people onto buses)

15,000 Estimated number of bottles of water handed out at EIA to arriving evacuees

SUPPORTING FIREFIGHTING AT FORT McMURRAY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

2 - Power generators supplied to Fort McMurray Airport to run equipment during power failure or shut-down

2500 - Pounds of Purple K dry chemical fire extinguishing agent sent by EIA fire hall to Fort McMurray Airport

1200 - Cubic feet of nitrogen (for activation of dry chemical fire extinguishing agent) sent from EIA fire hall to Fort McMurray Airport

1,000 - Litres of Airport Fire Fighting Foam (AFFF) sent by EIA fire hall to Fort McMurray airport

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN OTHER PLACES

24 - Hours of operation per day by CATSA's pre-board screening team

777 - Largest type of commercial plane used to get passengers from Edmonton to points beyond. Supplied by Air Canada, and seats 400+ passengers

3,600 - number of extra seats on scheduled flights added by Air Canada (the equivalent of more than nine Boeing 777s, the largest airplane in Air Canada's fleet)

CARING FOR PEOPLE AT THE AIRPORT

100+ Estimated hours of operation of EIA's relief centre, where evacuees could get water, snack and meals, charge phones and other devices, watch news, or seek support from Leduc & District Victim Services.

140+ Estimated person-hours of victim services support provided by the Leduc RCMP at EIA's relief centre

750 - Estimated number of pillowcases, blankets for the relief centre, and personal items for evacuees that were laundered by Renaissance Edmonton International Airport Hotel

200 - Rooms occupied by families, workers, and responding personnel at the Renaissance Edmonton International Airport (Total number of rooms at the hotel: 213)

*Note: These numbers include estimates intended to provide selected examples of how the airport and its partners were engaged in the Fort McMurray evacuation airlift.

Summer 2016, Vol. 3

Strengths

- Our brand internally – we'll move you
- Skills and training
- Employee support for self-care and well-being
- Communication!
- Our brand – externally
- Stakeholder relationships
- Community outpour
- Klout score – trusted information provider

We Learned, Even with the Best…

- Incident Command is hard to sustain for longer with a core group of specialists
  - This was our longest EOC activation in our history
- Fatigue, scheduling, tiering resources, more reliance on HR for capability identification and volunteer recruitment
  - Saved key resources for "supervisory" functions, plugged in others beyond the expertly trained
- "Tournament tough" culture

- Victim services very beneficial
- Mission and sense of purpose help rally people
- Incident command not broadly understood beyond Ops, more IC orientations being provided so all staff know what to expect
- Truly “tournament tough”

Ground Transportation & Transition

- Most travellers had nothing, and no plan or place to go, many without money due to earlier job loss
- Parking did an exceptional job of coordinating emergency vehicles, vehicles and traffic in general
- Managed City busses at 3 separate airport locations
  - Main terminal
  - Executive Flight Centre
  - Shell
- Setup reception areas at all 3 locations staffed 24/7

Concessions

- Importance of having supplies available for when arriving PAX fly in. Some passengers had gone without food/water for several hours
- Provided food at all three reception centre locations – paid by airport.
- Have blankets, pillows, etc. on site for future similar occurrences

Communications

- Internally – rally employees, kept up to date, generous employee volunteering
- Social media "Klout" – trusted source based on brand and reputation
- Need for updated information provided for evacuees – updated hotel accommodations, check-in times/cost, etc. this information should always be current and up to date. Know if when a caller calls to ask a question, the answers are directed to the right contact for that information.

Community

- Outpouring of community support for YMM and YEG
- Whole region wanted to get involved with relief effort
- Province / municipalities had plans in place for receiving
  - Red Cross was #1 request
  - Donations became a big draw
  - Fixed Based Operators – huge impact

Success Story

- Everyone out safely
- Employee pride

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Questions?

Office of the Prime Minister
Cabinet du Premier Ministre