



PHOTOS BY GLENN BAGLO/VANCOUVER SUN

A worker checks the roof structure on Vancouver International Airport's expansion project.

Airport expansion 'ahead of schedule, under budget'

Official credits hard work, planning and procuring contracts as quickly as possible

BY BRUCE CONSTANTINEAU
VANCOUVER SUN

Vancouver International Airport Authority officials said Thursday the \$200-million international terminal building expansion — due for completion next June — should be ahead of schedule and slightly under budget.

The revelation is no small feat at a time when trades shortages and spiralling costs have forced many B.C. builders to accept delays and pump millions of dollars more than planned into their construction projects.

Bob Cowan, the airport authority's senior vice-president of engineering, said the project's four new gates should be completed two months early, by March, while the total project budget would be about five per cent, or \$10 million, less than forecast.

He attributed the accomplishment to hard work, early planning, and procuring contracts as quickly as possible.



Bob Cowan

"Sometimes projects go over budget because there's not enough thought put in early on — you haven't done the conceptual design or thought out the scheduling or the contract procurement," Cowan said in an interview. "There are costs and risks with all those elements."

He said the cost of some building trades went over budget, but other items cost less than expected — including the elevators, escalators and some structural steel.

Cowan insisted project planners did not engage in any kind of "hero budgeting" by deliberately inflating estimates so they'd look good when costs came in lower. He also stressed that no major design shortcuts were made to the building to get it on budget.

"What you see is exactly what was presented to the board," Cowan said. "In fact, I would argue that it's more."

The international terminal building expansion is part of a \$1-billion airport construction program that includes its \$300-million contribution to the Canada Line, a \$117-million building linking the domestic and international terminals (to be completed by next July), and upgrades



Construction workers install the last pane of glass for the expansion of the international terminal at Vancouver International Airport on Thursday.

to the baggage system.

Airport officials say the changes are needed to accommodate future growth that is expected to see the number of passengers using the airport increase from 16.9 million this year to 21 million by 2010.

Builders installed the final piece of glass on the international terminal expansion's exterior Thursday, officially enclosing the building.

The expanded terminal features four new gates, including two that can accommodate the new Airbus A380 aircraft that can carry up to 555 passengers. It will also have 21,000 square metres of retail and food and beverage space, along with a 140,000-litre aquarium, a jellyfish tank, and a stream that runs down the middle of the retail area.

Cowan said about one million people a

year are expected to see the aquarium, which will be maintained by the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre and feature B.C. rock fish, starfish and other indigenous sea life. The jellyfish tank will house 100 moon jellyfish.

"The building theme follows the existing theme of land, sea and sky," Cowan said. "The whole idea is to create a warm experience that is truly British Columbia."

The new building will have 400 metres of moving walkways to facilitate passenger movement, and YVR Project Management president Ray Zibrik said the entire project contains 2,500 stone columns, 4,300 tonnes of structural steel, 70,000 cubic metres of concrete and more than 5,000 panes of glass.

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The terminal building expansion is part of a \$1-billion airport construction program, which will include the Canada Line rail link to Vancouver.

Rising dollar blamed for slowdown

ECONOMY | Residential construction and real-estate activity cooling in Q2

BY ERIC BEAUCHESNE

Economic growth — undercut by falling exports — has slowed significantly and more than expected, reinforcing the view among analysts that the Bank of Canada will not raise interest rates further.

Some speculate the central bank might start cutting rates.

Statistics Canada reported Thursday that growth in the country slowed to an annual pace of only two per cent in the second quarter, with no growth whatsoever in the final month.

That was well below the three-per-cent forecast for the quarter by the Bank of Canada, and down from 3.6 per cent in the first quarter.

"You can't blame Canada for the economic slowdown. Canadian domestic demand is still red hot. But there are troubles in markets beyond our borders," CIBC World Markets economist Avery Shenfeld said.

However, he noted that the domestic side of the economy cannot remain immune to the slump in exports which will eventually rob the economy of jobs and income.

TD Securities economist Marc Levesque noted that the pace of growth was the slowest in more than two years.

"In sum, a lacklustre pace of growth, but one that reveals once again the extent to which Canada's external sector is struggling to adjust to the stronger Canadian dollar," Levesque said, warning the economy will likely con-

tinue to operate below its near three per cent potential over the coming few quarters.

"In fact, another two per cent quarter could well be in store," he said.

"Although all the ingredients are there for the domestic side of the Canadian economy to fare relatively well over the next few quarters, slower U.S. growth will take a toll on the export-oriented sectors of the economy — as if the impact of the stronger Canadian dollar was not enough."

Manufacturing, mining and oil and gas production all weakened, partly reflecting waning foreign demand for Canadian products, as exports declined for the second consecutive quarter.

The "disappointing" economic report card, however, didn't stop the dollar, already above 90 cents US, from resuming its climb back up toward the more-than-30-year highs of just over 91 cents US reached earlier in the year. The dollar closed at 90.47 cents US, up from 90.15 Wednesday.

While the slowdown was mostly blamed on the slump in exports, Statistics Canada said it also reflected reduced but sustained growth in consumer spending and business investment, as well as a cooling in the housing market.

Residential construction and real estate activity fell to more normal levels from a hot first quarter, business investment in new machinery and buildings slowed, as did consumer spending, it said.

CanWest News Service

Emerson attacks anti-softwood vote

Liberals, NDP showing anti-Americanism, trade minister claims

BY STEVE MERTL

International Trade Minister David Emerson is attacking opposition threats to vote against softwood lumber legislation, saying they reflect the parties' basic anti-Americanism.

Both the Liberals and New Democrats have warned they're prepared to topple the minority Conservative government when the bill to implement the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement comes to a vote.

"I know that both the NDP and the Liberals are staunchly anti-American in their inner core," Emerson said in an interview Thursday. "I do not understand why partisanship versus the greater public interest and the interests of the softwood lumber industry would prevail."

Emerson, a Liberal minister before defecting to the Tories after their January election victory, said he was especially puzzled by his old party's position on the softwood deal.

"I would have thought that any self-respecting political party that sees itself wanting to get back into a leadership role in Canada would

want to be constantly asking themselves what is in the best interests of the country, not what is in the best interest of some internal partisan factions," he said.

Emerson, former CEO of top lumber exporter Canfor Corp., said the alternative to a negotiated settlement is continued costly trade litigation, more American trade complaints, Canadian mill closures and job losses.

He and the Tories have been under opposition attack for negotiating what critics consider a bad deal with the U.S. government and American lumber producers.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said last week the government would move ahead with legislation — needed to impose the border tax — when Parliament resumes later this month after a "clear majority" of exporters expressed support for the agreement.

The federal New Democrats have signalled they plan to vote against the legislation, which Harper said would be considered a confidence motion that could potentially bring down his minority government. Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale said Wednesday he's seen nothing that would convince him to support the deal, and his party would be willing to trigger an election.

Canadian Press

Permedia launches video content tourism site



Vancouver-based permedia shoots daily, half-hour morning updates on what's new in city.

Vancouver Aquarium says video spots provide 'unique' exposure

BY MARKE ANDREWS
VANCOUVER SUN

Vancouver company permedia international inc. has launched a video-content website designed to promote Vancouver tourist attractions, restaurants and businesses, and has plans to do the same in San Francisco, New York City, Toronto, London, and Paris.

VancouverTV.tv only has a handful of video spots on the two-week-old site, but there will be more coming in the next few days as permedia videotapes new content.

"It's a method of marketing your business or your attraction or your service on video over the Internet," says Richard Jenkins, CEO of permedia, which has

been operating for about two years. "This is way more visual information than you get from a text website. This is as close as you can get to being there."

Having spent 17 years in the industry, Jenkins wanted the online television outlet to have advanced streaming technology, but be very simple to operate so that even technophobes can access it on their home computers.

Jenkins says if a restaurant contacts permedia to do a spot, they meet with the owner and manager to see what the video should contain, then meet with the chef to find out what he's passionate about. A staff crew videotapes inside the restaurant, attempting to capture the feel of the place and what some of the servings look like. They may also talk to diners at the restaurant.

The spot is then edited at the permedia office. The video is placed on vancouverTV.tv, which can be accessed by home com-

puter, laptop, cellphone, iPod or Blackberry. The client is free to do whatever she wants with the video, including putting it on the restaurant's own website. Spots are generally short, under two minutes in length.

Permedia, which currently has 16 employees, charges about \$1,000 a day for its services, which Jenkins says is a bargain compared to the cost of producing a television commercial.

In addition to running the video spots, permedia uses its Gastown studio to shoot a daily half-hour morning show which updates what's new in the city.

Viewers can download any of the station's content on their electronic devices.

"If you're travelling from Europe or Asia on holiday, you can download the guide for the Seabus, for instance, and you've always got that on [your cellphone] without having to flip through guidebook or a map."

Permedia recently spent a

day and a half shooting footage for a dozen clips at the Vancouver Aquarium. A viewer can click on various buttons to find out about the aquarium's conservation programs or how to train dolphins.

Brenda Jones, manager of public relations for the Vancouver Aquarium, is happy with the results.

"[VancouverTV.tv] provides the aquarium with a unique opportunity to talk about things that people might not necessarily know about us," Jones says.

This is Jenkins's second venture into online television, having last year launched ExecutiveTV.tv, a similar service aimed primarily at the technology industry. Its clients include Microsoft and Fujitsu.

In addition to commercial clients such as Aqua Riva and the Vancouver Aquarium, permedia has also done public service spots for institutions such as the Vancouver Food Bank.

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Another permedia video promotes the Pacific Centre shopping mall in Vancouver.