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Queen Charlotte fishing lodge welcomes "the jet age"

(RICHMOND, B.C. -25 April, 2008) - British Columbia's world acclaimed salmon fishing in the remote northern reaches of the Queen Charlotte Islands, will take another giant stride this season as Air North 737 charter jet service speeds the sports adventurer guests to Masset, en route to Queen Charlotte Lodge (QCL) on Naden Harbour. From Masset, Helijet takes over with a luxury high-speed shuttle to the Lodge.

"This is yet another step in our determination to make our area - and Queen Charlotte Lodge in particular - the pre-eminent salmon fishing destination in the world," said QCL's managing partner Paul T. Clough. "When we announced the Helijet service in 2005, the speed and luxury comfort excited our whole industry. We are now confident that Air North as a partner, with their legendary experience in wilderness air and cargo service and their 737 comfort for most of our guests, will take us to yet another level."

The announcement of the service was made at a VIP reception this morning at Vancouver International Airport. Shortly after the guests assembled in YVR's Plaza Premium Lounge, an Air North 737 taxied to the gate just below them. The pilot was airline cofounder and President, Joe Sparling, whose 30-year story building the Yukon's Airline is a reminder of Western Canadian bush pilots and aviation icons, Max Ward (Wardair), Russ Baker (Pacific Western Airlines) and Grant McConachie (CP Air).

Meeting informally afterwards with guests and reporters, Sparling said, "We are looking forward to a long-term charter relationship with Queen Charlotte Lodge and working together to develop this outstanding northern British Columbia tourism and adventure resource."

The Air North charter service for the QCL season, which runs from June through September, consists of both a 737-200 jet and a Hawker -Siddeley 748 turbo-prop. The turbo-prop will leave earlier than the jet with each group, carry passengers and cargo, and take longer to get to Masset, but actually get its passengers out fishing sooner. The majority of guests will be on the 737, the number each trip determined by the runway length at Masset, the total weight aboard and the vagaries of weather.

"Our planning with Air North has been exciting for us, because these are people who need no education about the difficulties imposed by our wilderness location, completely beyond the reach of roads, power and telephone lines," Clough said.

The companies have a great deal in common. QCL is proud of its association with the Haida and respect for their traditions. Whitehorse headquartered Air North is 48.8 per cent owned by the Vuntut Development Corporation, the economic arm of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, based at Old Crow in the distant north. The airline is as enthusiastic about promoting salmon fishing on the Yukon River and its tributaries as QCL is about its area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

DUANE FOERTER, Queen Charlotte Lodge 604.420.7197 or 800-688-8959

e-mail dfoerter@queencharlottelodge.com OR DEBRA RYAN, Air North 867.668.2228 or CAN 800-661-0407 e-mail ryand@flyairnorth.com

www.queencharlottelodge.com

www.flyairnorth.com