

Moosomin Municipal Airport Project

CONTACT

Municipality: RM of Moosomin No. 121

Phone number: (306) 435-4950

Email: cao@rmofmoosomin.com

Year awarded: 2025

Project timeline: 2018 - Present

Project video: <https://youtu.be/4KI0JC7Y4X0>

THE PRACTICE

What was the issue?

Timely diagnosis and treatment of stroke is critical to recovery, as noted by the implementation of the Saskatchewan Stroke Protocol in 2017. Prior to the RM of Moosomin No. 121 airport project stroke patients need to be transported by ground ambulance to Yorkton for a CT scan before treatment, losing valuable time for appropriate treatment. A local airstrip allows for immediate transfers to tertiary hospitals in Saskatoon or Regina, helping ensure life-saving interventions occur within the crucial first hours. The project also addresses urgent pediatric needs tied to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon, the province's only pediatric emergency facility. The new airport will enable fast, safe transfers for youth patients, including neonatal incubator cases, and allow for specialized medical teams to reach Moosomin when needed.

What was the project?

The RM's airport project was inspired by an urgent need to improve medical accessibility and patient outcomes in southeastern Saskatchewan. The proposal includes a paved and lighted runway near the Southeast Integrated Care Centre (SICC) that directly supports two centralized medical services, stroke care and pediatric emergency transport, both requiring rapid air access.

The initiative reflects the RM's vision for equitable access to emergency care and regional collaboration. By creating a direct air link to advance medical centers, the project will save lives and strengthen healthcare infrastructure for the entire southeast region.

THE PROCESS

Who was involved:

- *Municipal Council*
- *Municipal Administration*

- *Moosomin Flying Club*
- *Community Builders Alliance*

The project was developed through collaboration between the RM of Moosomin, contributing municipalities, and Burns Maendel Consulting Inc., the engineering firm leading design and construction planning.

Contributing municipalities included:

- *RM of Maryfield No. 91*
- *RM of Walpole No. 92*
- *RM of Wawken No. 93*
- *RM of Martin No. 122*
- *RM of Silverwood No. 123*
- *RM of Rocanville No. 151*
- *RM of Spyhill No. 152*
- *Town of Fleming*
- *Town of Moosomin*
- *Town of Rocanville*
- *Town of Wapella*
- *Town of Wawota*
- *Town of Whitewood*
- *Village of Fairlight*
- *RM of Ellice-Archie (MB)*
- *RM of Wallace-Woodworth (MB)*

The concept originated from the RM's recognition of the need for improved medical transport access in the region. The RM council played a central leadership role in the planning, coordination, and execution of the airport project. As the owner of the Moosomin Municipal Airport, council established the Airport Development Committee that included each contributing municipality to guide the design and construction decisions. This committee oversaw the selection of the engineering firm with the Reeve and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) serving as the primary points of contact throughout the process. The RM used several key resources to ensure a strong development plan including regular consultation with aviation users, local landowners, and emergency medical stakeholders to ensure the runway met safety standards, addressed drainage and land use considerations, and aligned with future expansion needs. At one stage, five neighbouring municipalities provided equipment and manpower to help build the runway, ensuring the project stayed on schedule and within budget.

To support the significant \$10+ million investment a dedicated Fundraising Committee was created. This group included the Reeve, CAO, members of the Moosomin Flying Club, and representatives of the Community Builders Alliance. They took on the task of engaging partners, corporate sponsors, and private donors to secure project funding.

Challenges Faced:

The project faced several challenges since its inception in 2018. The fundraising campaign was launching when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, forcing all activities to pause and delaying early momentum. The pandemic also led to economic uncertainty and inflation, which significantly increased the overall project costs.

Additionally, changes within the provincial cabinet created delays in securing government support and required additional meetings to maintain advocacy for the project. Similarly, leadership changes with major corporate partners created challenges in confirming financial commitments.

Evaluation:

At the time of submission, a formal evaluation process had not been completed as the project continues to be in progress.

THE RESULTS

The project has had a unifying and inspiring effect on the region highlighting what can be achieved through collective efforts. Collaboration among multiple municipalities and a shared funding model included contributions of 50% from provincial and municipal governments, 25% from larger corporate partners, and 25% from smaller businesses and private donors. This cooperation has built momentum for other regional initiatives and reinforced the belief that working together makes communities stronger.

Beyond the economic and social benefits, the greatest impact is peace of mind. Knowing that the new airport can now provide life-saving medical transport for the 12,000+ residents served by the SICC has instilled pride, security, and optimism throughout the region.

LESSONS LEARNED

What began as a straightforward plan to expand the runway for air ambulance service has grown into a much larger project with significant economic and operational impacts. The development has led to the need for additional infrastructure, including hangar space, a long-term expansion plan, and the creation of an Airport Management Board to oversee daily operations separate from the RM council.

The main lesson learned was the importance of viewing every major project through a broader, long-term lens that considers on-going demands on time, resources, and management. While the scope of the project has expanded beyond the initial expectations, the result is a vital regional service that provides immense value to ratepayers and the entire southeast region.