

Putting Gander's best foot forward

Hemmeter rolls out red carpet

World renowned for its air service operations in Honolulu, Hawaii, its 'Gateway to the Pacific,' Hemmeter Aviation International hopes to match its success in Gander - its new 'Gateway to the Atlantic'.

Operating what is known as a Fixed Base Operation (FBO), Hemmeter services corporate jet aircraft flying between North America and Europe. The company's base is the former EPA headquarters, Hanger 22, which it purchased last fall. Hemmeter officially opened its doors Nov. 1.

Thomas Anusewicz, vice-president and general manager, spoke to the Beacon on the role Hemmeter Aviation hopes to fulfill as the newest member of Gander's aviation community.

"Corporate aircraft have been

serviced in the past (at Gander), but the people on those aircraft have not been looked after the way they would like to be, or the way they're used to, or the way they should be," he says.

"We provide professional service for the aircraft, but we also take care of the people, that's the new service we're providing."

And what a service it is! "Our guest service coordinator is standing right by that aircraft when its doors open. There's a red carpet, literally a red carpet, that gets rolled out because it's kind of significant to the type of service that we're giving the people on the aircraft. It could be a gray carpet, but the red carpet tells you that that's the kind of service we're here to provide."

Once on the ground, whatever



Thomas Anusewicz, vice-president and general manager of Hemmeter Aviation.

the needs or desires of the passengers may be, Hemmeter can probably take care of them.

While the aircraft is being refueled, passengers may wait in Hemmeter's designer-decorated lounge and there are private offices for VIPs and crew. And this need not be idle time - there's an open bar, a complimentary telex and 24-hour message centre, a facsimile, complimentary hot and cold beverages, light snacks and continental breakfasts and duty-free shopping available.

If the stop is an overnighter, the guest service coordinators will arrange accommodations, transportation, or for that matter, any other requirements.

If someone wanted to go fishing or on a boat tour of Gander Lake? "We'd try to accommodate them," says Anusewicz.

"We've had people in Hawaii (that were flying in) call up and order a particular type of caviar. I've had to have it flown in from Los Angeles and try to get it there (Hawaii) before their aircraft. Another time, someone wanted a certain type of pastry that no one on the island knew how to make. We finally found someone two islands down who could."

"It might sound a little bit crazy, but if a person would like something and we can provide it, we come out ahead."

Anusewicz says that Hemmeter will be serving many of its Hawaii customers at Gander.

"We see a lot of the same clients. If you have a business jet and you're a large company you can go all over the world. We took a list of all the aircraft that come through here. And we saw that many of those aircraft also come through Hawaii. They already know us. When we tell them that we're now in Gander these people have a definite interest in using us."

Gander, and Newfoundland, says Anusewicz, stand to garner a fair bit of attention from Hemmeter's initiatives.

"On my first visit here, I bought Newfoundland books and they're now sitting on the tables in each of our FBOs in Hawaii. Everytime an aircraft comes in, our guest service coordinators talk to the passengers and crew about what we're doing in Gander. It's important for them to know that we're here in Gander."

The operation is still in the start-up stage and over the coming months Hemmeter will be pursuing a program to completely revitalize Hanger 22 and its nearly 50,000 sq. ft. of offices and shop areas.

In the meantime, the company is operating out of offices in the main terminal of the airport. A first-class VIP and crew facility adjoins the office area. The EPA lettering has been removed from the hanger and shortly the new operator's name will be displayed.

Once renovations are complete, business traffic availing of Hemmeter's service can be taken care of entirely from Hanger 22.

Anusewicz anticipates that Hemmeter can give air traffic coming through Gander "better service" and he also feels they can attract aircraft that are not coming to Gander because "this (type of) service was not offered before."