



John Colville, Calgary Herald

Gordon Gregory has a mandate to develop Calgary market

## Cascade starts to spread wings

By Richard Purser  
(Herald staff writer)

Cascade Airways, until now a bit player in Calgary aviation, is out to develop a major role here as its second anniversary on the local scene approaches.

How Spokane-based Cascade came into the Calgary market is a complicated drama. It got here by default and on short notice on April 30, 1983, following Republic Airlines' abandonment of both Calgary and Spokane due to its financial problems.

Spokane was the only Republic destination from Calgary to which no alternative air transportation was available, and Cascade was authorized by the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board to link Calgary and Spokane on a temporary basis until applications for permanent operating authority were considered.

Republic is a big, well-known jet airline with a nationwide system; Cascade is a small carrier then operating only in the four northwesternmost states and only with small turbo-prop aircraft, and little-known outside its own area.

With little hope of obtaining permanent operating authority, it had no incentive to market itself in Calgary.

And, sure enough, the U.S. agency gave permanent Calgary-Spokane operating authority last November to Alaska Airlines, a larger jet carrier, causing Cascade to quit the route.

But Alaska Airlines developed internal operating problems and finally decided it did not want to serve the route.

So, after a damaging 1½-month hiatus with no airline providing any Calgary-Spokane service, Cascade came back onto the route late in December.

It had meanwhile begun acquiring jet aircraft, and on Jan. 13

it gave a concrete indication that it intends to take the Calgary market seriously: It put one of its five British-built BAC-111 jets on the Calgary-Spokane route — and operated it through to Seattle/Tacoma, giving Calgary the first one-plane jet service to that important centre which avoided the tedious Customs stop at Vancouver.

Now, Cascade has appointed a full-time station manager and sales representative here, Gordon Gregory, with a mandate to develop the Calgary market.

And, says Mark Nilson, Cascade's vice-president for market planning, a second Calgary-Spokane flight will be added at the end of this month. It will have a morning departure to balance the present late-afternoon flight, and will operate through to Portland.

Nilson, on a recent visit to Calgary, said the new flight will operate at first with turbo-prop aircraft — the very latest Beech 1900s with which Cascade is replacing the older Swearingen Metroliners that used to provide its service to Calgary.

The new flight will have jet connections at Spokane to Seattle/Tacoma and to Cascade's new Boise-Reno service.

If traffic develops on the new flight during the summer, said Nilson, the airline's 79-passenger jets could take over from the 19-passenger Beeches on that service as well.

Cascade increased its passenger capacity 100 per cent last fall when it bought its jets, said Nilson, so it has a lot to digest and will concentrate for now on nurturing business in its own back yard.

But future possibilities include extension of service to Edmonton and — perhaps next winter — through service from Calgary to Reno via Spokane.