



September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**To: Regional Vice Presidents  
Branches & Facilities**

## **Thank you**

We knew at the outset of this summer that this would be a very challenging season for ATC in Canada. Staffing levels have remained a challenge from coast to coast and there are numerous units across the country that have been forced to work short almost every single day. We recognize that this situation takes a toll on the controllers in a variety of ways. The fact that you have found ways to keep the planes moving is a huge source of pride for this Union. We wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for the exceptional work of our air traffic controllers over the last few months. Your role may be behind the scenes, but it's undeniably crucial to ensuring the safety and efficiency of air travel.

There are a few examples from the last month that deserve particular attention and praise; we know there are more. At Kelowna Tower, controllers Ryan Christensen, Ryan Steel, Andrew Bonekamp and John Giese, were all displaced from their homes at the height of the wildfires around Kelowna. Additionally, Kris Johnstone and Sonja Worsfold were put on alert for imminent evacuation. These members weren't sure if their houses would be there when they returned from work - yet they continued to show up and assist aircraft involved in the firefighting efforts. These are dedicated professionals to whom we owe our gratitude. Thank you all.

We also want to acknowledge the tireless efforts from our air traffic controllers during the evacuation in Yellowknife as a result of the wildfires there. Your bravery and dedication are commendable. Special thanks go to Mark Hillman and Adam Plooy, who stayed behind to help evacuate the town and were among the last to leave.

The normal day to day demands of this profession are extremely challenging. The added stress presented by short-staffing and exceptional circumstances like these wildfires, truly reveal the character and dedication of our members.

---

THE VOICE OF CANADA'S AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS | LA VOIX DES CONTRÔLEURS AÉRIENS DU CANADA

Another recent example of excellence comes from Oshawa Tower, as controllers (Glen Van Heerden in the ground position and Alex March on the mic in the tower position) went above and beyond to assist a distressed student pilot on her first solo flight. Helping her land safely highlights the value of our profession and the expertise of our members. The pilot in this situation was a girl of only 14 years old. [Click here to find the full story on our social media.](#)

To all our air traffic controllers, although your hard work may go unnoticed by many, please know that there are those who take note and appreciate what you do. Your hard work and skills are indispensable to the aviation system. You are the unsung heroes of the skies and your contributions make air travel better and safer for all.

Thank you.

On Behalf of the Executive Board;

Nick von Schoenberg  
President

Scott Loder  
Executive Vice President