



## HARD WORK PAYS OFF FOR THUNDER BAY'S NORTH STAR AIR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 16, 2019 – Thunder Bay, ON** – It took just over 20 years of dedication and hard work, but in the end, it was all worth it! North Star Air came out on top this past weekend at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards held at the Valhalla Inn. Over 300 guests were in attendance as North Star Air was crowned the “Large Business Excellence Award” recipient for 2019. Accepting the award at Saturday nights’ gala event was Tom Meilleur, Vice President, along with Jeff Stout, VP of Commercial Operations, Karen Matson, Director of Marketing & Community Relations, and Maureen Massaro, Director of Passenger Services. “We are proud, yet humbled, to accept this award”, says Tom Meilleur. “We’d like to thank you very much. North Star Air started off from humble beginnings when we came to Thunder Bay. Although we’ve expanded extremely out of province, we remain here in Thunder Bay as our head office and we will continue to do so.”

North Star Air is a 604, 703, 704, 705 Airline Operator based in Thunder Bay with additional base locations in Pickle Lake, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, Kapuskasing, ON and Thompson, MB. Founded in 1997, NSA was purchased by The North West Company, a Canadian multinational grocery and retail company specializing in servicing remote First Nations communities without all-season road access. With 2017’s expansion, NSA’s goal for 2018 was to obtain greater control over the logistics channels in the delivery of groceries and retail goods to remote communities. It also marked the expansion to servicing northern Manitoba and Nunavut. Experts in the cargo industry, NSA aggressively pursued the opportunity in these regions, committing a \$5.5million hangar in Thompson in the Summer of 2018. Today, approximately 60% of NSA’s business comes from cargo services, experiencing record growth in cargo movement while servicing 54 remote communities and employing over 240 full-time staff, of which 140 are based in Thunder Bay proper. 2018 also saw the completion of plans for a new state-of-the-art hangar facility in Thunder Bay, which is planned for construction in mid-2019 pending final approvals.

While freight is an important part of NSA’s business model, they have also established a successful, competitive scheduled passenger and charter service in Northern Ontario. To keep up with the growing demand for passenger services, 2018 saw further expansion into larger regional aircraft by adding a second Dash-8 for passengers travelling to and from Northern communities. NSA’s growth is a big contributor to the increase in passenger traffic at Thunder Bay International Airport.

NSA believes exceptional customer service means identifying your customer’s needs and going above and beyond what the customer expects. Aviation, and especially aviation into remote communities, can be extremely challenging. Weather, mechanical issues and limited infrastructure in the communities are some of the complexities and challenges faced every day. NSA provides 100% customer support and satisfaction before, during, and after flight service. Their on-going employee education and training along with 24/7 communications access leads to customer satisfaction, safe travel experiences, and improved service ratings. They provide and require all employees to complete comprehensive training, with a 100% passing grade required on all company indoctrination, government safety measures, respect policies and community culture practices.

NSA is dedicated to employ the best in their field to serve the public, including personnel in Operations, Maintenance and Management. They also make a concerted effort to hire members of their First Nation partner communities who can better communicate with customers, most importantly elders and travelers with special needs. Their front-line staff are instrumental in services development by assessing the needs of their customers, listening to their

1480 Walsh Street West, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7E 6H6

Toll Free: 1-844-633-6294

Fax: 807-475-8040

E-Mail: [reservations@northstarair.ca](mailto:reservations@northstarair.ca)

Website: [northstarair.ca](http://northstarair.ca)

Connecting  
People.Businesses.Communities



Passenger



Charter



Cargo



opinions and feedback and acting on it. “The more we educate, empower and encourage our employees to serve consumers, the greater our overall levels of service and customer satisfaction” states Vice President of Commercial Operations Jeff Stout. “Good customer service means helping customers efficiently and in a friendly manner. Providing excellent customer service is one of the most important things that sets our business apart from our competitors. We always thank our customers for choosing North Star Air”.

With the success in their growth in passenger, charter, cargo and fuel delivery services and the increase in overall operations, 2018 resulted in an exceptional increase in employee numbers in Thunder Bay and region to meet the demands. Adding to 2017’s one-hundred and forty employees, 2018 saw an additional 100+ full time staff hired, with over 70% based in Thunder Bay. With expansion, positions were and continue to be filled in Aviation Management, Flight Operations, Flight Control, Aircraft Maintenance, Pilot types (ATR, DC3, Dash8, Pilatus PC12), Ground Support, Reservations and Charter Specialists, Accounting and Office Administration. 30% of new hires are spread across their network of additional bases located in Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, Pickle Lake, Kapuskasing and Thompson, MB. The grand opening in August of their new 12,000 sq ft hangar in Thompson, allows cargo volumes to increase, resulting in more personnel required. NSA is aggressive in their recruiting methods, successfully hiring well over half of the 2018 Confederation College Pilot Aviation graduating class.

NSA provides employment opportunities to over a dozen First Nations communities with on-site Airport Agent positions. They are an equal opportunity employer committed to the principles of employment equity and inclusion and welcome applications from all qualified individuals. NSA provides a rewarding, stable aviation career with room for growth, earning a very competitive salary, benefits and pension plan.

NSA plays an active role in giving back and making a positive difference in Thunder Bay. They also extend this role to their network of Northern Ontario communities and their First Nation community partners that they provide air service and employment opportunities in. Social and cultural programs such as Arts & Culture, Education, Healthy Living and Sports are programs NSA are passionate about and commit to support.

NSA’s involvement in opening the communication doors of reconciliation within Thunder Bay and our neighboring First Nations communities, saw NSA take the screening of the Indian Horse movie to over 20 remote northern neighbors, resulting in a special screening for residents in Thunder Bay during 2018 Heritage Days.

NSA is committed to providing support services to those less fortunate and in need. Every year they donate time, staff and air services to move hundreds of thousands of pounds of donated goods (perishable and non-perishable food, clothing, toys, hygiene products) to remote locations in support of local and provincial humanitarian efforts (Thunder Bay RCMP Toys for the North, Regional Food Distribution Association and CBC Thunder Bay Sounds of the Season, numerous local churches and other charitable organizations). NSA also takes pride in providing emergency air transfer support to hundreds of dogs, pet food distribution and animal shelter drops into remote communities for local and provincial branches of the OSPCA, Northern Reach Pet Rescue and other local rescues agencies.

1480 Walsh Street West, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7E 6H6

Toll Free: 1-844-633-6294

Fax: 807-475-8040

E-Mail: [reservations@northstarair.ca](mailto:reservations@northstarair.ca)

Website: [northstarair.ca](http://northstarair.ca)

**Connecting**  
People.Businesses.Communities



Passenger



Charter



Cargo



1480 Walsh Street West, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7E 6H6

**Toll Free:** 1-844-633-6294

**Fax:** 807-475-8040

**E-Mail:** [reservations@northstarair.ca](mailto:reservations@northstarair.ca)

**Website:** [northstarair.ca](http://northstarair.ca)

**Connecting**  
People. Businesses. Communities



**Passenger**



**Charter**



**Cargo**