

Tofino Air ready to fly out of Gibsons

TRANSPORTATION

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A float plane service between Gibsons and Vancouver is expected to get off the ground within the next two weeks.

Tofino Air Lines Ltd. is in the final stages of starting a regular service from Gibsons Harbour, and is targeting the middle of the month for a launch date.

The company has lined up a de Havilland Beaver and was originally looking at Monday, Aug. 12, for starting the service, but that date seemed unlikely as the aircraft was still going through inspection as of Wednesday, Tofino Air general manager Buffy Barrett said.



Tofino Air is adding Gibsons to its Sunshine Coast service, with plans to operate two round trips per day starting in the middle of the month.

The service will offer two round trips per day between Gibsons Harbour and the Vancouver Harbour Flight Centre at Coal Harbour.

Barrett said a survey found that a large percentage of interested respondents wanted to leave Gibsons around 8 a.m. and return at 5 p.m., so the company is looking at a possible 8:30 a.m. departure from Gibsons.

"We don't have it bang on yet, but we're looking at one round trip in the morning and one round trip at the end of the day," Barrett said.

The cost, she said, will be \$68.75 one way, plus port fees of \$5 in Gibsons and \$9.50 in Vancouver, bringing the total to \$83.25 plus GST.

The plane seats five people and will board and unload passengers in Gibsons from the new concrete float on the north side of the wharf.

For more information on the new service, call Tofino Air's Sechelt base at 604-740-8889.

Barrett said the company is also considering extending its Sechelt-to-Vancouver route with a run between Coal Harbour and Vancouver International Airport, but no final decision has been made and public feedback is still being sought.

Meanwhile, plans by English Bay Launch to run a foot passenger service between Gibsons and Vancouver have run into a couple of snags, but the company is still in discussions with the Gibsons Landing Harbour Authority, Mani Machado, the Town's chief administrative officer, said Tuesday.

"My sense is it won't happen this summer," Machado said. "The harbour authority and Community Futures met with them last week and their interest in coming to Gibsons is still very strong, but the timing is not certain yet."

The company said in May that it would use its 48-passenger catamaran, Spirit of Bruno Gerussi, for most runs, but could also bring in a 70-passenger mono-hull for some trips.

Machado said one of the holdups for the company has been "some issue with the certification of the vessel with Transport Canada."