

# The CRJ is 30 years old today



It was on May 10, 1991 at 9.45 a.m. that the first 50-seat Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ) took off from Montreal's Dorval Airport four days after the official rollout before 1,800 employees and guests. Test pilots Doug Adkins and Don Stephen flew the aircraft (Serial 7001, C-FCRJ) to an altitude of 12,000 feet and a top speed of 220 knots. The 1 hour 25 minutes ended when the aircraft landed at Canadair's long-term home at Cartierville Airport, not from Dorval where a new CRJ factory had been constructed established. The first flight was immediately followed by a second flight in the late afternoon of May 10 when the aircraft 100 climbed to an altitude of 35,000 feet.

## A landmark aircraft

At the time of this first flight, many aviation experts were still skeptical about the other market opportunities for a 50-seat regional jet. And yet, the CRJ will bring about several major achievements in its wake: it established Montreal as one of the few cities in the world that produces commercial jetliners.

The development of the «Canadair Regional Jet» was a major force in propelling the Montreal aerospace cluster to third place in the world, with tens of thousands of Quebecers working on the aircraft program over the who worked on this plane program.

The family was gradually expanded to include the more powerful 50-seat CRJ200 and larger seat capacity CRJ700, CRJ900 and CRJ1000.

Almost 70% of all CRJs manufactured have been sold to US companies. It helped to expand the "hub and spoke" networks of many airlines to small and medium size cities that never had jet service before. The CRJ family remains a cornerstone of the domestic regional route networks of Air Canada, American, Delta and United in North America.



## Pride

The CRJ has long been the pride of Montreal, Quebec and Canada and this was reflected in the quality of the aircraft produced. Before the start of the pandemic, more than 1,000 were still in service. And the CRJ has become more popular during the pandemic since they are the right size to match the reduced global airline passenger demand. Everyone who worked on the CRJ program has reason to be proud of all that has been accomplished.

More than 2,000 CRJ models rolled off the final assembly lines at Dorval and Mirabel airport over the past 30 years, including aircraft marketed as business aircraft (e.g. CRJ Special Edition, Challenger 850 and 870) and 1,950 commercial aircraft, the last of which was a CRJ900LR (serial 15499) delivered to Skywest at Mirabel Airport on February 26 for operation on behalf of Delta Air Lines with the registration N840SK. Although production of the CRJ has now ended, MHI RJ Aviation of Montreal, (a division of Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries), now holds the rights and provides 24/7 after-sales service and spare parts support.



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