

LOCAL NEWS

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Plane crash highlights importance of upgrading airport in Port Hope Simpson: Jones **LATEST NEWS**

The Telegram

The plane crash and death of pilot Jim Hudson on Sunday demonstrates how important it is for the airport facility in Port Hope Simpson to be upgraded, in accordance with the Southern Labrador Regional Airport Pre-Design study commissioned by the provincial government in 2005, Opposition Leader Yvonne Jones said today.

On Sunday, Hudson was killed when the plane he was flying crashed during an attempted medevac at Port Hope Simpson. While the cause of the crash is still under investigation, heavy fog in the area is believed to have been a contributing factor.

"I have known and had the privilege of flying with Jim Hudson quite frequently over the past number of years," Jones said.

"Jim Hudson was a professional, experienced pilot who was dedicated to his job and our region. This was again demonstrated on Sunday when he sacrificed his own life in an attempted medevac. My thoughts and prayers are certainly with his family and all of his friends at this difficult time."

Jones says that after having discussions with the family, it is obvious that there is a sense of frustration that no action has been taken to establish a regional airport in Port Hope Simpson, with the required upgrades as was recommended in a 2005 report.

The Department of Transportation and Works commissioned EDM Consultants Limited to move forward with an assessment of infrastructure needs for a regional airport including such things as runway size, navigation and approach aids, and whether the runway should be relocated because of dangerous terrain near the existing site.

One of the conclusions of the report was that, "Installation of good navigational aids and an enhanced lighting configuration, as recommended, would result in a very effective airport."

"Unfortunately, we will never know if this tragedy could have been prevented if the appropriate infrastructure had been in place," Jones said. "There has been a demonstrated need for a new regional airport in southern Labrador and this latest incident reinforces the importance of such a facility."

