



port has quite a bit of property that we can develop with different investors to make most of these projects economically viable.”

Aside from its capital projects, the Airport’s day-to-day operations are financed by the airlines that serve Bonaire and the passengers who travel on them. Among the international carriers are KLM, the oldest with six frequencies per week; TUI, flying out of Holland; Delta, out of Atlanta; and United out of Houston and Newark. Insel Air and Divi Divi Air both fly between Bonaire and Curacao, another island in the Netherlands Antilles chain. And Nicolaas reports that the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has recently approved a modest increase in airport fees for the next five years in order to help support those operations.

But he also maintains that in order not to put too much burden of the Airport’s costs on its customers, it needs to devise different ways to raise more non-aeronautical revenues. And some of his proposals are eye-opening. “We’re very focused on how we can further use the Airport properties to bring the community to the airport by creating other types of amenities that

are not only used by passengers, but also used by the public in general,” he says. “For example, we’re looking to construct a bowling alley at the airport. We have the space, so why don’t we bring some people to the airport to bowl? We’re looking for partners to do that.”

Nicolaas also suggests that the Airport could host a hotel and convention center as part of a greater airport city and that Bonaire is particularly well-positioned for this type of growth. “The opportunity that Bonaire Airport is offering is to be part of Holland, not just part of the region as a Caribbean airport,” he declares, “and because you’re part of Holland, you can easily do business with Europe. If you want to be part of any European type of exchange business, Bonaire is the place to be. Another thing is that Bonaire is in the unique situation of having a Class 1 runway, with the availability of space to develop. Also, we’re so suitably located from the U.S. – it’s only a two and a half hour flight from Atlanta, or four hours from Newark.”

Eighty years after the first flight touched down on this small, Dutch island in the southern Caribbean, Bonaire International Airport is poised for another period