



## Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2013

Contact: Mike Kanarick  
802.735.7962

### **Mayor Miro Weinberger Appoints Gene Richards as Permanent Director of Aviation**

**Burlington, VT** – Mayor Miro Weinberger today announced the appointment of Gene Richards as the permanent Director of Aviation at Burlington International Airport. Richards, a former Chair of the Airport Commission, has been serving as the interim Director of Aviation since Weinberger appointed and the City Council confirmed him in July 2012. Weinberger has asked the City Council to approve the appointment at its June 3, 2013 meeting.

“When I appointed Gene as the interim Aviation Director, I did so with great confidence that he would make significant progress at the airport,” said Weinberger. “Gene has far exceeded my high expectations and succeeded in preparing the airport to fully realize the opportunities ahead. From his work reorganizing the airport staff to the airport refinancing bonds to creating a much more welcoming atmosphere through new restaurants and concessionaires to opening a nursing mothers room to securing daily Delta service to Atlanta, Gene has worked tirelessly day and night to take our airport to the next level. I have every expectation that Gene will continue to make tremendous contributions to our airport, our City, and our entire region.”

“My passion for the airport has only grown in the 10 months I’ve been serving as Director,” said Richards. “I love my job. I get up every day excited to return to the airport to get more work done for the people of Burlington and Vermont and for our out of state visitors. I am grateful that the Mayor has entrusted me with the opportunity to serve our airport community and, together with our amazing airport staff team, we’re ready to keep moving forward.”

At today’s announcement, which took place on the airport mezzanine, Weinberger and Richards were joined by the following City leaders and airport advocates:

- **Jeff Munger, Chair of the Burlington Airport Commission:** “Gene was a dynamo as Commission Chair and has brought the same energy and passion as interim Director. With this appointment as permanent Director, BTV is headed in the right direction. The sky’s the limit under his command.”
- **Karen Paul, Ward 6 City Councilor and Co-Chair of the Airport Strategic Planning Committee:** “Over the past year, Gene’s leadership has been instrumental in guiding our

airport, arguably our region's greatest economic engine, to a sounder financial position and restoring relationships with our airline partners and vendors. Gene's work ethic and the excitement he brings every day to his role at BTV are contagious; he has brought new life to the airport. Gene will be key to implementing the Strategic Plan due to be released in a few weeks."

- **Kelly Devine, Executive Director of the Burlington Business Association:** "From a city, state and tourism standpoint, there are many opportunities to leverage the airport's value as an economic development tool. On behalf of the Burlington business community, I want to thank Mayor Weinberger for focusing on how we can make the most of this vital economic driver. The Burlington Business Association welcomes Gene's permanent appointment and shares the Mayor's vision that a much-improved airport will create jobs and help grow Burlington's economy."
- **Ann Beland, Burlington General Manager of JetBlue:** "I've enjoyed working with Gene in his role as interim Director and appreciate all the improvements he and his staff have made, as well as Gene's responsiveness in addressing concerns. I look forward to working with Gene and his airport team as JetBlue continues our good relationship with the City Of Burlington and the Airport."

**Pam Mackenzie, Chair of the South Burlington City Council, and Kevin Dorn, the interim City Manager of South Burlington,** joined Weinberger and Richards as well. Weinberger was glad to welcome Burlington's neighbors to the announcement, stating: "I really appreciate that Pam and Kevin have joined us today. The ever-improving relationship between our two cities is a testament to their leadership and offers promise for future productive collaboration to benefit our communities."

Although unable to attend the announcement, **Tom Torti, President and CEO of the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce,** offered the following statement: "The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce is very pleased with the appointment of Gene Richards as the permanent Aviation Director. Since assuming the role of interim Director, Gene has made tremendous strides to align finances, to vastly improve the customer experience, and to reach out to additional carriers. The airport is a key economic development tool for the region and the state. Gene Richards understands this and is working to improve operations on a daily basis."

*Please see attached documents, including:*

- *Memorandum from Mayor Miro Weinberger to City Councilors requesting approval of the appointment of Gene Richards as the permanent Director of Aviation at Burlington International Airport*
- *Resume of Gene Richards*

###



## Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Burlington City Council

FROM: Mayor Miro Weinberger

DATE: May 23, 2013

RE: Appointment of Permanent Director of Aviation

---

Together, last July, we appointed Gene Richards the interim Director of Aviation of the Burlington International Airport. Gene has flourished in that role, generating progress at the airport on many fronts. Now, I respectfully request that the City Council approve Gene as the permanent Director of Aviation at your June 3, 2013 meeting.

Last July, I wrote the following to you in my interim appointment request:

The months immediately ahead represent an important time for the airport. The airport is attempting to refinance \$12 million of short-term debt, stabilize and improve the outlook of credit rating agencies, and increase revenues in multiple ways. Gene has been a force for change, a person who has driven the improvement of the past 18 months. He is the right person to run the airport until a permanent Aviation Director is named approximately six to nine months from now.

During the past 10+ months as interim Director of Aviation, Gene has far exceeded my high expectations. He has worked tirelessly to address long-standing issues, stabilize the airport's finances through both revenue and expense measures, improve airport facilities, and improve air service. Gene brings exactly the kind of passion, skills, community understanding, and character needed to succeed as the next permanent Director of Aviation.

#### **Gene has made substantial progress on BTV's serious financial issues**

The airport has been facing a number of serious financial concerns for several years. In 2010, these concerns caused Moody's to downgrade the airport to junk bond status. Gene – an experienced businessman and real estate professional – has been working on many fronts. His achievements include:

- Successfully refinancing \$12 million of short-term debt and an additional \$12 million of long-term debt, addressing significant liquidity concerns, and reducing borrowing costs approximately \$300,000 a year.
- Methodically addressing large numbers of long-neglected and lapsed leases, and restructuring space to create more leasable area, generating substantial new income.
- Negotiating large revenue increases from rental car tenants, the airlines, and concessionaires.

Restoring the airport's finances will require airport management to sustain and build on these successes. A permanent appointment will allow Gene to finish the financial fix he has started so well.

### **Gene already has completed substantial capital improvements at BTV**

In Gene's short-time at the airport he has dramatically improved the facility:

- He negotiated deals that have resulted in substantial investments from private partners that have substantially upgraded the airport's food service facilities, and soon will entail dramatically enhanced retail facilities.
- In under a year Gene has created a nursing mother room, a yoga facility, scores of new charging stations, and enhanced restrooms. These enhanced traveler amenities have in large part been achieved, despite acute financial pressures, through creative sponsorships and donations.
- The north concourse TSA area was expanded to significantly improve the efficiency of the safety screening process.
- Gene has completed a roof replacement that had long plagued the facility.

The financial and operational success of BTV hinges in large part on facilities, maintenance, and leasing efforts. Gene's extensive property management experience will continue to serve him well as a permanent director.

### **Gene is working hard and making progress stabilizing and enhancing air service**

The airline industry was hit very hard by the 2008 recession, and BTV – like virtually all established airports – has experienced significant enplanement reductions in the years since. Gene is working on multiple fronts to reverse this trend:

- He and his team secured an important air service grant and used it to secure new daily Delta air service to Atlanta that will begin in June.
- Even before becoming interim Director of Aviation, as an extremely active Airport Commission Chair, Gene helped secure Porter service from Toronto, the first international service in many years.
- Gene has worked hard to establish good relationships with the airlines. Local airline representatives have expressed considerable confidence in Gene's work.

These efforts should begin to be reflected in rising enplanements in the months ahead.

### **Gene has dramatically improved the workplace culture of the airport and staff morale**

Gene's enthusiasm for his work and "can do" attitude are infectious and are impacting City operations beyond the airport. Even as an interim Director, Gene has become a leader among the City's department heads. I fully anticipate that, as permanent Director of Aviation, Gene's positive impact on overall municipal operations will expand considerably.

Further details of Gene's career can be found in the attached resume.

Thank you for your consideration of Gene Richards as Burlington International Airport's next permanent Director of Aviation.

# Gene Richards III

---

168 Summit Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
H. 802.658.5620 | C. 802.343.9909  
E. [generichards@generichards3.com](mailto:generichards@generichards3.com)

## **Strengths & Qualifications:**

**Business Development:** Efficiency expert with demonstrated skills in reviving business performance and profitability through improvements in sales, marketing and financial strategies. Successful history of inspiring vision within an organization and achieving business objectives through cross-functional support, task coordination and drawing on people's strengths. Able to effectively identify and analyze markets, and generate creative campaigns and promotions with limited resources.

**Operations Management:** More than 25 years of experience managing operations, organizational change and projects in business and banking. Well-developed analytical, planning and negotiating skills. Enjoy managing multiple workloads in changing and stressful environments. Committed to providing superior customer service.

**Personnel Management:** Highly motivated, hard-working self-starter and team builder. Experience leading outstanding groups of people, eliciting interest, enthusiasm, and drive.

## **Professional Experience:**

### **CEO and Founder, Spruce Mortgage**

*Spruce Mortgage; Burlington, VT - 1995 to Present*

- Manage team of 13 and all residential real estate loan operations.

### **Business Development Consultant; Burlington, VT**

**1995 to Present**

Successful record of improving operations, devising and implementing strategic plans, increasing market share and developing motivated work teams while creating positive work environments. Select clients/projects include:

*Post Script, Inc.: Burlington, VT – 1996 to 1997*

- Advise advertising firm on sales and marketing strategies. Develop market analyses.

*Merchants Bank; Burlington, VT – 1995 to 1996*

- Researched, analyzed and compared client banking products and services to those of competing banks. Recommended new products and specific improvements to enhance customer service and satisfaction.

### **Key Bank; Burlington, VT (formerly Bank of Boston & Bank of Vermont)**

**1989 to 1995**

*Vice President – Mortgage Department*

**1990 to 1995**

Managed team of 12 and all residential real estate loan operations. Priced products, originated and processed loans, managed closing and sale to the secondary mortgage market.

#### **Key Accomplishments:**

- Through exceptional sales team effort tripled business volume from \$50 million to \$150 million within two years. Sales division cited as number one and two among all Bank of Boston affiliates in U.S.
- Created first-of-its-kind sales culture in a conventional bank environment, reducing staff from 42 to 12 while improving productivity and morale.
- Developed Old North End Housing Program, a Community Reinvestment Act project improving low income housing. Successful program was adopted by banks throughout New England.
- Member of Executive Management Team responsible for Bank operations and hiring of Bank President.
- Launched low-cost, innovative promotional campaigns: (e.g. Eagle Program - placed marketing computers at realtor locations state-wide; Realtor Limo Tour - a multi-limousine tour of properties bringing realtors and bank originators together).

<b>Vermont State Manager of Regional Sales</b>	<b>1989 to 1990</b>
Directed loan production of 20 originators throughout Vermont.	
<b>Key Accomplishment:</b>	
➤ Identified and implemented strategies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies, including the conversion of entire real estate operation to a PC-based computer system.	
<b>Merchants Bank; Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1980 to 1989</b>
<b>Manager of Residential Real Estate Underwriting &amp; Processing</b>	<b>1986 to 1989</b>
Managed staff and workflow of residential real estate underwriting and loan processing department. Maintained Bank's mortgage loan quality process and knowledge of underwriting requirements. Assisted Real Estate Department Manager with departmental operations and projects.	
<b>Key Accomplishments:</b>	
➤ Introduced and implemented quality standards which improved financial products, replenished cash reserves and increased revenues available for reinvestment.	
➤ Consolidated underwriting, loan processing and clerical staff developing effective team approach.	
➤ Developed broad knowledge of banking (1980-86), rapidly advancing from various customer service positions to consumer loan collections, residential real estate underwriter, and manager.	
<b>Airborne Apartment Co.; Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1985 to Present</b>
<b>Owner/Manager</b>	
Manage 50 rental unit properties. Interview and screen prospective tenants. Review lease agreements and educate tenants regarding tenant/landlord rights and expectations. Answer tenant inquiries; address and resolve problems. Manage accounts payable and process general bookkeeping	
<b>Key Accomplishments:</b>	
➤ Maintain excellent relations with tenants; majority of new tenants are referrals from current tenants.	
➤ Near zero rate of vacancy over 24 years, generating positive cash flow.	
<b><u>Community Service:</u></b>	
<b>Boys &amp; Girls Club; Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1993 to 2003</b>
<i>Capital Campaign Chairman/Board Member</i>	
➤ Facilitated a \$750,000 fundraising campaign. Fundraising team successfully turned around nonprofit on the brink of bankruptcy	
➤ Coordinated alliances with community businesses to donate products and services.	
➤ Developed fundraising strategies, OCFYHB slogan, manuals, goals, and training for board members and a network of fund-raisers.	
<b>Community Health Center of Burlington, Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1985 to 1988</b>
Board Member	
<b>March of Dimes, Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1985 to 1991</b>
Board Member	
<b>Arthritis Foundation; Vermont &amp; Northern New York Chapter</b>	<b>1989 to 1995</b>
<i>Chair of Budget/Finance Committee/Board Member</i>	
<b>United Way – Bank of Vermont, Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1989 to 1995</b>
<i>Employee Campaign Chairman</i>	
<b>American Red Cross, VT/NH and New England Division</b>	<b>1995 to 2007</b>
<i>Board Member/Finance Committee</i>	
<b>Lund Family Center, Burlington, VT</b>	<b>1996 to Present</b>
<i>Chair of Board/Finance Committee/Board Member</i>	
<b>Stern Center for Language &amp; Learning, Williston, VT</b>	<b>1996 to Present</b>
<i>Chair of Board/Finance Committee/Board Member</i>	

**Community Service (cont.):**

**Maple Leaf Farm, Underhill Vermont** 2011 to Present  
*Chair of Capital Campaign*

**Professional Associations:**

**Church St. Marketplace, Burlington, VT** 1996 to 2007  
*Board Member/Finance Chair*

**Vermont Development Credit Union, Burlington, VT** 1995 to 1997  
*Board Member*

**Burlington Airport Commissioner, Burlington, VT** 2007 to Present  
*Board Member/Commission Chair*

**Act 250 Commissioner for the State of Vermont, Chittenden County** 2003 to Present  
*Board Member*

**Burlington Country Club, Burlington, VT** 2007 to Present  
*Chair of Human Resource Committee/Board Member*

**Education & Training:**

St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT  
Course in Personal Financial Planning Level I and II

American Institute of Banking, Montpelier, VT  
Completed course work in: Principles of Banking, Installment Lending, Real Estate Finance and Computer Processing. Additional training: Facilitation, Dealing with Difficult People, various banking seminars.

**References available upon request**