

Florida Flyer

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We recently updated our web site so you can navigate more easily and find the information you need



Courtesy of Okeechobee County Airport

A Gulfstream V refueling at Okeechobee County Airport.

Okeechobee County Airport

Okeechobee County Airport, in south-central Florida, is located on 864 acres approximately three miles north of Lake Okeechobee and 45 miles west of Port Saint Lucie. The airport provides a safe and well-maintained facility to serve the business, government, and general aviation needs of its clients.

Prior to World War II, Okeechobee County Airport was a grass strip used for crop dusting. Later, the U.S. Department of War leased the airport from 1942–47 as an Army Air Corp bomber training base. The Army built the major infrastructure of the airport including the two runways. The federal government returned the airport to Okeechobee County in 1947, and the county has operated it ever since.

Airport infrastructure

Okeechobee County Airport has two active asphalt runways, 14/32 and 5/23. Runway 14/32 is 4,000 feet by 75 feet and runway 5/23 is 5,000 feet by 100 feet; both are in good condition, having been repaved in 2003 and 2007, respectively. Both runways have full parallel taxiways. Runway 5/23 has edge lights, precision approach path indicators (PAPI), and area navigation (RNAV) non-precision approaches. An automated weather observing system (AWOS) provides weather data on 118.675 or (863) 467-1148 or by way of the Internet.

Adjacent to the airport's terminal building is the 198,000 square-foot

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MANAGER'S CORNER

by William J. Ashbaker, P.E.

“DayJet’s professional staff worked hard to promote several innovations that go beyond benefit to their own company.”

Florida is losing a valuable opportunity. It is nobody’s fault. Like so many recent unfortunate events in the aviation industry, it is a result of our faltering economy. The loss is a consequence of DayJet Services’ need to shut down their “per seat, on-demand” air service.

Airlines cutting service is too commonplace these days, but this is a little different. DayJet is unique in many ways beyond their approach to offer on-demand customer service. DayJet offered intrastate passenger service. This is a segment of Florida’s air transportation system that is sadly lacking. Further, DayJet’s professional staff worked hard to promote several innovations that go beyond benefit to their own company. Ed Iacobucci, Traver Gruen-Kennedy, Bruce Holmes, Malcolm Murphy, Charlie Durkin, and many more DayJet employees that I have not met worked to encourage innovations and promote projects and programs at the state and federal levels that would benefit Florida’s economy and environment. DayJet was instrumental in the decision by U.S. DOT Secretary Mary Peters and FAA Administrator Robert Sturgell to choose Florida as the first of the contiguous 48 states to receive NextGen.

NextGen is the FAA’s next generation air transportation system. NextGen is a far-reaching modernization of the national air traffic system that will substantially change air traffic control and pilot, aircraft, and airport operating procedures. NextGen uses digital technology to redefine every element of air transport—from communications and surveillance to navigation and air traffic management—to address the nation’s need for increased airspace capacity and efficiency. It will shift air traffic management from old ground-based technology to satellite-based cockpit-enabled operations.

NextGen promises to reduce aviation carbon emissions by 12 to 20 percent while lowering fuel consumption and cost for industry and delays for passengers. With full implementation, it promises efficiencies that will double airspace and airport airside capacity and improve safety. Of course, the idea of reducing aircraft fuel burn that will result in fewer greenhouse gas emissions and reduce aircraft operating costs is getting a lot of attention.

The FAA invited the Florida Department of Transportation, DayJet, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to partner to implement NextGen in Florida over the next five years. DayJet volunteered to equip their aircraft with NextGen technology and gather data on new routes and landing approaches between Florida city pairs. Now that DayJet has discontinued service, this will not be possible.

The project will go on without DayJet’s aircraft. DayJet will continue to provide technical support to the project. In fact, DayJet is assisting the FAA and Embry-Riddle to find an additional partner to provide flight support for the project. But, it will be hard to rekindle the enthusiasm and promise for the future that DayJet brought to the table when they were developing a new approach for air transportation and expanding their fleet of small jets.

There is still a possibility that DayJet may be able to overcome their financial challenges and restart their air service. We certainly hope so. DayJet is a friend to Florida.

At the Hangar

A bi-weekly TV show in the Sarasota area features a variety of aviation topics

The television show “At the Hangar” highlights all things related to aviation, says Nick Carlucci, one of the show’s hosts. The 30-minute show is broadcast every other week on channel 21, BLAB TV, in Sarasota, Florida. Technical terms and aviation jargon are explained in plain English, says Carlucci, so anyone can understand.

The need for a TV show

A few years ago, Carlucci and his aircraft partner Jim Slobodnik realized the need for a non-technical show that presents the positive aspects of the aviation community. Slobodnik knew the local television station manager through a mutual friend, and after some discussions and preparations, the partners aired their first show.

“We have been on the air every other week for seven years,” says Carlucci. “And our only repeat show was on hurricane shutters.” “At the Hangar” has covered hot air balloons, Florida trips from the air, high wing vs. low wing, tours of aviation facilities, maintenance of aircraft, flight safety, and even large-scale remote-control model aircraft. “We did a show on ‘flying for food’ where we toured restaurants at airports,” says Carlucci. “We have highlighted safety products and GPS and its application, and we’ve done a lot of light sport shows.”

Interviews galore

The partners have interviewed pilots, aircraft owners, and Sun ‘n Fun vendors. They interviewed a woman who worked for an aircraft manufacturer during World War II, as well as World War II veterans, including a Tuskegee Airman and a woman who served in the Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Most of the shows are taped in the field rather than in a studio. “We go to air shows, we highlight volunteers, we highlighted an airplane that was the best home-built plane at Oshkosh,” says Carlucci. “We showed the Everglades and

*Right: Nick Carlucci, on the left, and Jim Slobodnik.
Below: Jim Slobodnik (right) with an aircraft owner setting up for a show.*



Photographs courtesy of Nick Carlucci

how it abruptly ends at Naples. We flew to Biloxi and highlighted Hurricane Katrina damage, and we’re going to show post-hurricane recovery on a future show.”

Ditching the plane

Sometimes real-life events bring about an appropriate topic. When Carlucci and Slobodnik were flying their Cessna 172 on a Memorial Day weekend, they lost their engine and had to ditch the aircraft (see “Planning Ahead Saves Lives” on page 8). So, of course, they did a show on ditching aircraft. They now have a new airplane, a Cessna 182, and a new partner, Richard Fowlkes. Fowlkes is a partner in the aircraft ownership, and he has also joined Carlucci and Slobodnik in producing “At the Hangar.”

With such a variety of topics and interviews—and only one rerun in the show’s history—you would think the show requires plenty of time and a sizeable budget. But these guys “don’t get a nickel” for doing the show and they actually work full time during the week. The show’s sponsors pay for the production costs.

The partners tape most of the shows on weekends, sometimes taping two or more shows in a day’s work. On one Sunday during the summer they taped two shows, including one on the difference between washing a car and washing a plane.

Producing the show

Most of the time, Slobodnik

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Okeechobee County Airport, from page 1

lighted parking apron with aircraft tie-downs, which was repaved in 2007. The 24-hour, self-service fuel farm, with two 12,000 gallon tanks of 100LL and Jet-A fuel, is located at the northwest corner of the apron. The county owns and rents ten T-hangars and six box hangars. All other hangars are privately owned on leased land.

Okeechobee County Airport is primarily used by transient aircraft and for pilot training. The airport has identified several projects as necessary to serve levels of demand in the near future, including rehabilitating taxiway A and extending runway 5/23 to 6,000 feet. New runway lights and PAPIs on runway 5/23 and PAPIs on runway 14/32 will be installed this fall.

After the 2004 hurricane season, Governor Jeb Bush suggested that the airport would be ideal for post-hurricane recovery operations if it could be operated 24 hours a day. So, with the financial assistance of the FAA and the Florida Department of Transportation, the airport acquired a 300-kilowatt emergency generator and began operating it in April 2007. The generator is capable of powering the airfield lighting, AWOS, apron lights, fuel farm, and terminal building, plus extra capacity for future needs.

On the airport side

Okeechobee Jet Center is the fixed

Points of Interest

- 42 aircraft are currently based at Okeechobee County Airport
- The airport has an estimated 46,000 annual operations
- The airport's master plan was updated in 2007

base operator that operates the fuel farm and provides pilot amenities. Another company, Wins-Air, provides full-service aviation maintenance. Two paint shops are available: LEJ Refinishing specializes in painting and renovation for small and medium aircraft, and H&R Aircraft Design specializes in exterior and interior services for medium and large aircraft up through Gulf Stream Vs. The airport restaurant, the Landing Strip Café, serves breakfast and lunch daily and dinner Thursday through Sunday until 8:00 p.m.

The Florida Division of Forestry has a fixed-wing and helicopter firefighting unit based at the airport.

Aviation organizations regularly sponsor activities at Okeechobee County Airport. The local chapter of the EAA schedules breakfast fly-ins, and the local Civil Air Patrol unit offers activities including flights to familiarize children with flying. A few months ago,

the Red Star Pilot's Association (see www.flyredstar.org) flew eight Russian and Chinese vintage military aircraft to Okeechobee and displayed them for a weekend, generating a great deal of local interest.

Plans are underway for a new FBO facility with a 36,000 square-foot terminal building and many pilot and passenger amenities. The plan includes hotel suites for corporate flight crews, restaurant and lounge facilities, pilot shop, flight school, corporate business center, conference rooms and seminar areas, along with corporate hangar space and a full-service aircraft maintenance shop. The facility will be located on 14 acres next to the entrance road to the airport.

Economic benefits

Although no studies have determined the actual economic impact, the airport obviously offers economic benefits for the community. Approximately half of the industrial park is leased, and the park's 13 tenants employ 100 or more employees. The county receives approximately \$200,000 a year in land rent from these tenants. A 14-acre section connected with taxi lanes to taxiway B is designated for future commercial aeronautical uses.

Airport and Industrial Park Manager Vernon Gray served 22 years in the U.S. Navy as an aviation meteorologist and 16 years as an aviation operations manager before becoming the manager of Okeechobee County Airport in June 2005. For more information about the airport, see the airport's web site at www.okeechobeeairport.com. ♦

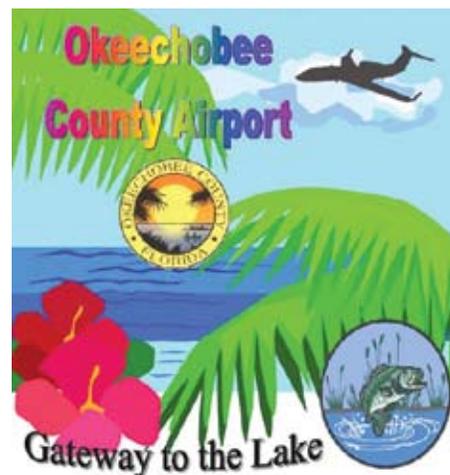
About Okeechobee County

Okeechobee County is one of the largest beef-producing counties in the United States. Farming, cattle ranching, recreation, tourism, and retirement living are important industries. Lake Okeechobee is the second largest freshwater lake located wholly within the continental United States (the largest is Lake Michigan). The lake is a popular spot for fishing, hiking, biking, and airboat rides. The county is also home to several golf courses and campgrounds.

Okeechobee County has approximately 50,000 full-time residents and swells to approximately 65,000 residents during the winter months. The city of Okeechobee is the only incorporated municipality in the county. The Okeechobee County government, headed by a five-member board of county commissioners and a county administrator, employs 238 full-time and part-time employees.



County Courthouse



Banyan Air Service

Nationally recognized FBO has a passion for performance

Banyan Air Service, located at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, has been recognized nationally for several years as a top fixed base operator. Serving the Bahamas, the Caribbean, South America, and the southeastern United States, Banyan is a 24-hour, full-service FBO.

Don Campion, Banyan's owner, was a 24-year-old charter pilot when he started Banyan Air Service in 1979. Campion had a background in aircraft maintenance and was a natural in providing service to air taxi operators. With \$1,000 and rented hangar space, Banyan was in business.

Today, Banyan sits on 85 acres and has more than one million square feet of hangar and office space. Banyan employs more than 150 aviation professionals that cater to aircraft owners, charter operators, corporate flight departments, flight schools, and government agencies.

Banyan's services include FBO services, aircraft sales and management, turbine airframe and engine maintenance, avionics services, aircraft parts, and one of the largest aviation stores in the United States.

Banyan holds FAA/EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) approval for both the avionics and maintenance shops and has approval as a repair station for Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. Banyan also has connections with European businesses and aircraft owners.

In 2006, Banyan moved into a new two-story "Key West style" FBO terminal building. Later this fall a new restaurant and full-service catering venue, Jet Runway Café, will open near Banyan.

Banyan is "a wonderful place to work," says Nancy Bouvier, Banyan's Director of Marketing. "There is always something new happening, and there's never a dull moment."

To learn more about Banyan Air Service, see the company's web site at www.banyanair.com. ♦



Photographs by Avatar Photography

Above: A view of Banyan's terminal building.

Left: Banyan's line service technicians and customer support representatives.

Banyan's Services

Banyan Air Service has six departments: FBO services, maintenance, avionics, aircraft parts, Hangar63 (Banyan's aviation store), and aircraft sales.

- The FBO department includes the line service technicians who fuel and tow the aircraft, and the customer support team who assist with catering, hotel arrangements, rental cars, and Bahamas and Caribbean information.
- The turbine airframe and engine maintenance department is committed to safety in all of its services (troubleshooting, routine inspections, structural modifications). The department specializes in Pilatus, King Air, Twin Commander, Citation, Learjet, and Hawker.
- Avionics handles installation and service for mid-sized and large jet aircraft, such as King Air, Citation, Learjet, Gulfstream, Falcon, and Boeing 747. Services include communication systems, Wi-Fi and high-speed data, entertainment (DVD monitors and iPod hookup), as well as radar and other devices that improve safety.
- Parts distribution offers spare parts, rotables, and components for airframes, engines, avionics, and propellers.
- Aircraft sales specializes in aircraft selection, valuation, negotiation, and management of turbine aircraft.
- Banyan's aviation store, Hangar63, is described as a "wonderful and unique" store that offers all sorts of aviation paraphernalia: headsets, aircraft nuts and bolts, GPS equipment, training aids, cockpit supplies, pilot apparel, toys for children, and more. The store is also home to Tropic Aero, Banyan's catalog and online store (see www.TropicAero.com).

2008 Florida Aviation Awards

Bill Ashbaker, State Aviation Manager, announced the following winners of the 2008 Florida Aviation Awards at the Florida Airports Council Conference in July.

Aviation Professionals

Coleen Baker and Steve Borowski

Coleen Baker has overseen operations at Page Field General Aviation Airport since 1998. She revitalized Page Field and turned it into a premier aviation facility worthy of a General Aviation Airport of the Year award this year.

Coleen's hard work has earned Page Field many honors. Coleen has served on the board of the Florida Aviation Trades Association since 2002, and is currently Secretary/Treasurer. She is a member of the Consortium for Aviation System Advancement, and is one of the two general aviation representatives to the Secure Airports for Florida's Economy (SAFE) Council.

Steve Borowski has been determined to bring Valkaria Airport up to industry standard, while doing so with great respect for the surrounding natural environment and wildlife.

Valkaria Airport in 2008 is far different from the airport in 2005, prior to Steve's arrival. New fencing and security controls are in place, fuel facility and other safety improvements are in progress, a new T-hangar unit is in the design phase, and the airport is finishing the long effort to come into full compliance with the FAA and become eligible for federal funding support.

We congratulate Coleen Baker, Page Field Airport Manager, and Steve Borowski, Valkaria Airport Manager.

General Aviation Airport Page Field General Aviation Airport

In 1923, the city of Fort Myers purchased a plot of land with the intention of making a golf course. However in



Aviation Professional



Aviation Professional



*General Aviation Airport and
Commercial Service Airport*



General Aviation Project

Bill Ashbaker presents the 2008 Florida Aviation Awards. **Top row:** Coleen Baker (left photo), Airport Manager, Page Field, and Steve Borowski (right photo), Airport Manager, Valkaria Airport, accept the Aviation Professional awards. **Above left:** Coleen Baker, Airport Manager of Page Field, accepts the General Aviation Airport award, and Bob Ball, Executive Director of Southwest Florida International Airport, accepts the Commercial Service Airport award. **Above right:** Mary Maher (left), Executive Airport Superintendent of Facilities, and Kevin McNamara (right), Airport Manager, Executive Airport, accept the General Aviation Project award.

1927, the site actually evolved into an airport. National airlines began making stops in 1937 on the St. Petersburg-to-Miami route, but service was suspended because the sod runways were useless during the summer's frequent rains. Page Field in Fort Myers has come a long way from those humble beginnings.

Page Field is a public-use, general aviation reliever airport, contributing more than \$55 million annually to the local economy. Encompassing 616 acres, Page Field serves as a home base to more than 300 aircraft and boasts operations of approximately 90,000 movements per year, making it one of the busiest general aviation airports in Florida. The

airport has two intersecting runways, a new taxiway, a control tower, a precision instrument approach, and an award-winning general aviation facility.

We congratulate airport manager Coleen Baker, airport staff, and Bob Ball and the Lee County Port Authority.

Commercial Service Airport Southwest Florida Int'l Airport

Southwest Florida International Airport is one of the fastest-growing airports in the nation. The airport opened in May 1983 and, for now, is Florida's newest commercial service airport. The crown jewel of this airport is the new \$438 million terminal building, a two-



Commercial Service Project

Above, from left to right: Bill Ashbaker presents the Commercial Service Project award to Michael Clow, Capital Program Administrator; Dave Goode, LPA Group; and Ken Austin, Director of Tallahassee Regional Airport.

story building with three concourses that opened in September 2005. This 798,000 square-foot facility has 28 aircraft gates and the capacity to accommodate 10 million annual passengers. The airport generates more than \$3 billion per year. Southwest Florida International Airport does not have extensive physical constraints and potentially will grow to the international market.

We congratulate airport manager Bob Ball, airport staff, and the Lee County Port Authority.

General Aviation Airport Project

Executive Airport Administration Building

Kevin McNamara describes himself and his staff as vagabonds, moving from one vacant space left over from airlines or businesses to another for many years. After Hurricane Charley blew the roof off the building that they were occupying in 2004, they moved into a double-wide trailer. Finally, late in the summer of 2007, they had a new home, a new 10,000 square-foot administration building.

The new building serves many functions and is divided into three areas. The west end houses the airport administration and operations offices. The middle of the building serves as a community/multifunctional space, and the east end houses Customs and Border Protection. The building is strategically located on the north side of



Executive Airport, near the midpoint of the primary runway.

We congratulate airport manager Kevin McNamara, the staff of Executive Airport and the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority; Schenkel & Shultz, Inc., consultant; and Southern Construction Group, LLC, construction firm.

Commercial Service Airport Project

Tallahassee Regional Airport Runway Cargo Complex

Mike Clow, Capital Program Administrator for the Tallahassee Regional Airport, points out that their 1966 master plan identified the need to consolidate the air cargo activities to improve operations and safety. At that time the cargo operation was in facilities that were outdated, cramped, and in the middle of the general aviation area of the airport.

Ken Austin recognized that this project required a team effort among three groups of people: the airport staff, the contractor and subcontractors, and the engineers. The result of these team efforts was a new cargo complex where all cargo activities were moved into one location. The project moves the cargo activities away from the general aviation activities, increases efficiency for the cargo operators and other commercial activities, and enhances safety by separating the large cargo jet aircraft from general aviation traffic.

We congratulate airport manager Ken Austin, the staff of Tallahassee Regional Airport and the city of Tallahassee; The LPA Group, Inc., consultant; and Allen's Excavation, Inc., construction firm. ♦

Left: Tallahassee Regional Airport Cargo Complex, Commercial Service Project.

Below: Conference room and lobby of the new Executive Airport Administration Building, General Aviation Project.



Calendar

Please contact event organizers before attending in case of cancellation at the last minute due to weather or other factors.

November 17–20, 2008

AOPA's Air Safety Foundation will hold safety seminars in several locations in Florida; for more details, see www.asf.org (click on "Safety Seminars," then "Seminar Schedule")

January 14–16, 2009

11th Annual FAC Environmental and Noise Conference; for more information, see www.floridaairports.org or call the Florida Airports Council at (850) 224-2964

April 21–26, 2009

Sun 'n Fun Fly-In, Lakeland Linder Regional Airport, for information, call Sun 'n Fun at (863) 644-2431 or see www.sun-n-fun.org

For information about CFASPP, see www.cfaspp.com.

At the Hangar from page 3

operates the camera, and Carlucci handles the on-camera work. Fowlkes scouts ideas and sometimes joins Carlucci on the air. When the partners complete a show, they take their finished product to Comcast to process. "Generally we have six shows in the bag, so we don't have to worry about a deadline," says Carlucci.

After several years of producing "At the Hangar" and talking with aviators of all ages and backgrounds, Carlucci is impressed by their openness and honesty. "Everyone we have talked to is straightforward," he says. "This shows how professional the aviation community really is."

"At the Hangar" currently airs every other Saturday, but the time slot changes occasionally. If you live in the Sarasota area or are planning to visit, check the listings for "At the Hangar" on channel 21, BLAB TV (www.blabsarasota.com). ♦

Planning Ahead Saves Lives

A couple of years ago Carlucci and Slobodnik were celebrating the start of summer with a Memorial Day flight over the inland waterway from Venice to Sanibel Island. They had flown this route many times, and the flight typically took about an hour.

In the area of North Captiva Island, while flying at 1,500 feet, they experienced a small hiccup in the engine. Thirty seconds later the propeller froze in flight. They tried to restart the engine but realized they needed to glide and head for the beach, avoiding the mangroves in the area. Because of the holiday the beach was filled with people, so Carlucci and Slobodnik deliberately ditched the plane 30 yards from the shore.

Fortunately, the two pilots were unharmed, and plenty of assistance was available. Firefighters and police officers were already on the beach because of the holiday weekend. Carlucci and Slobodnik immediately talked by phone with the National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA. "The FAA was very responsive and very professional," says Carlucci, "and so was the insurance company."

When the plane crashed, the partners lost a number of items, and their cell phones were useless because they were wet. Phone numbers that had been stored in the cell phones couldn't be recovered. Carlucci now carries a list of phone numbers on a laminated card in his wallet, and when he flies he also carries his wallet in a sandwich bag for protection from water.

Planning ahead made a tremendous difference for these aviators. "We routinely talk about and practice emergency procedures," says Carlucci. "And because of prior planning, we knew how to respond when the accident happened."

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