

## Tampa Executive Airport: What's All the Hub-ub?

by Sara Behnke

**H**illsborough County Aviation Authority's (HCAA) most expansive General Aviation property, Tampa Executive Airport (VDF) is fast-emerging as the quintessential hub for business and leisure travelers alike. In the midst of record growth, this economic engine is positioned for rapid ascent.

### An Economic Engine

Looking out at the new \$8 million runway from the comfort of the freshly-renovated terminal lobby at VDF, it's easy to see what all the buzz is about. Conveniently nestled between Interstates 4 and 75, this state-of-the-art facility is just six nautical miles northeast of Tampa's bustling downtown business district - and like the local economy, business is booming. The Airport has generated a 90% growth in revenue between fiscal years 2014 and 2019 alone, while currently supporting 1,297 jobs with an annual payroll of \$55+ million, and an overall economic impact of over \$147.5 million.

### With Growth Comes Opportunity

Subsequently, dramatic enhancements have been made to VDF's impressive facilities. With the help of State and Federal funding, a massive overhaul of Runway 5/23 was completed in May of 2021 promising a smooth and safe landing for pilots and guests who fly in and out of the airport. The upgrades include milling and overlay, lighting and electrical, as well as a fresh new coat of paint markings. This, coming just a couple months after construction finalized on the re-imagined terminal building which showcases modern architecture that ushers in a new era of contemporary elegance and style.

### Convenience Meets Class



Photo Courtesy: Hillsborough County Aviation Authority



Photo Courtesy: Hillsborough County Aviation Authority

Boasting floor-to-ceiling glass walls that offer stunning panoramic views of the runway, the handsomely-appointed terminal lobby offers the perfect vantage point to unwind and absorb the ambience. Sleek furnishings and fixtures are carried gracefully throughout the facility. Luxurious new bathrooms provide a comforting amenity that business travelers are sure to appreciate. The new Executive Conference Room, complete with leading-edge technology, will wow even the savviest of clients. These amenities, coupled with top quality customer service from Skyport Aviation, the Fixed Base Operator (FBO), are sure to provide an overall experience that is truly first class. Skyport has a persistent commitment to quality and service. Business activity is rapidly increasing due to Skyport's stellar reputation which draws in new tenants and broadens the appeal of our airport to a diverse group of aviation enthusiasts.

### Humble Beginnings

In the 1950s, avid aerospace enthusiasts, the Vandenberghe brothers, gazed out onto their father's 105 acre vegetable farm with wonder and imagination. They were envisioning their very own personal airfield - a grass runway and, perhaps, a few hangars they'd build out of scrapped metal for friends and family to use. With few resources and a lot of passion, the brothers realized their dream and Vandenberg Field (VDF) was born. Over the years, the brother's ingenuity was fueled by hard work and vision. More hangars were added due to popular demand and the bumpy runway was transformed into a paved airstrip. HCAA recognized the potential and, after three years of negotiations, purchased the property in 1985 for \$4.8 million. In 1998, HCAA constructed 5000 ft. Runway 5-23, unlocking the potential for corporate aircraft activity and revolutionizing the use and future of the airport. The plan was a success and business air traffic flourished. Appropriately, the airport was renamed Tampa

Executive Airport.

### A Shared Vision

Today, HCAA shares the imagination of growth and innovation that the Vandenberg brothers had before them. As HCAA remains dedicated to the spirit of this legacy, we forge ahead with a vision. Looking out on the vast, now 411 acres, of sprawling land, VDF is situated for success within an ever-soaring aerospace industry. HCAA is experiencing a surge of interest in private development at the airport and they are primed for expansion with business showing no signs of



Photo Courtesy: HCAA

slowing. The state of Florida currently has the highest number of student pilots in the U.S. with growing demand for new pilots in the industry. Tampa Executive Airport is in a better position than ever to focus on the needs of this trend with flight schools and avionics training centers poised. As more technological advances such as electric aircraft fill our skies we are reminded of the fast-paced advancements in our industry. HCAA is actively developing our Vision and Master Plan to ensure that VDF is always a leader and ahead of the innovation curve in aviation.

# Atlas Aviation: Soaring to New Heights

by Sara Behnke

Entrepreneur Deric Dymerski worked most of his early career learning the ropes and climbing the ladders in large corporate FBOs like Signature and Landmark. In 2002 he took the leap to go solo and won the bid with the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority (HCAA), the owner of Peter O. Knight Airport (TPF) in Tampa, to be their new Fixed Base Operator (FBO).

The airport is situated at the tip of gorgeous Davis Islands with sweeping views of the blue skies, the bay, and the Downtown Tampa skyline. Dymerski couldn't have chosen a more unique and versatile location to start his business. It was a small business that grew fast! Between the magical ambience and Dymerski's aviation business savvy, TPF took off! Hangars are full and every square foot of office space is leased. Everyone wants to be there. So, what is an FBO to do when demand can't be met? He expands to another airport of course.

In 2018, Atlas Aviation won the bid with HCAA to become the FBO for another one of their airports, Plant City Airport (PCM). What was once a quiet agricultural airport is now a buzzing hub of business. Due to high demand, Atlas recently added another aircraft to their flight school fleet at PCM, a 2020 Cessna 172, along with their two Cessna 162 Skycatchers. A new medical transport unit calls PCM home as do four Aero Commanders serving an air cargo operation. If you're in town on a Sunday, come check out PCM and have a bite to eat. Atlas hosts a food truck to attract transient aircraft to fly-in to eat and



Photo Courtesy: Atlas Aviation

welcome people in the community to come and check out all the new fun stuff going on at the airport.

But Dymerski doesn't go at it alone. He has Tami, his wife and backbone of the operation, 40 employees, and Mike Quinn, his general manager and business dynamo. Mike hustles between airports day after day conjuring new business, dealing with tenants, overseeing the many branches of services, and crunching numbers. In his free time, he is Vice President of the Florida Aviation Business Association, an organization dedicated to educating, promoting, and advocating for general aviation businesses in the state of Florida.

Atlas Aviation is a full service FBO with flight training, aircraft rentals, scenic tours, and maintenance services at both airports. Because of the high quality customer service they offer, Atlas has been wildly successful in attracting new businesses and tenants. From helicopter tours to a brand new based charter service, pilot or not, there is something new and exciting to experience at the airports. Atlas has helped transform these airports into important economic drivers for the region. Collectively, the airports support 1,184 jobs and have an annual economic impact of \$152,915,000. As non-towered airports, fuel sales are used to track increased operations. Since taking over operations at PCM, fuel sales have increased 60% and Atlas Aviation continues to soar to new heights!



Photo Courtesy: Atlas Aviation



# Global Pilot Academy: Integrity-Quality-Affordability

by Sara Behnke

While visiting Tampa Executive Airport (VDF), guests will notice right away the hustle and bustle of Global Pilot Academy (GPA). The air is filled with the buzz of their Cessna and Piper airplanes taxiing on and off the ramp, and on the horizon you will witness the elegant dance of their touch-and-goes on the nearby runway. Just beyond that, you will hear the grinding and humming of power tools from the in-house maintenance shop, Global Aero Maintenance.

Global Pilot Academy was founded in the summer of 2014 with a single plane, one instructor, and only a handful of part-time students. In only 7 years, GPA has grown their fleet to 22

airplanes and 12 full-time flight instructors. This Part 141 flight school is a big operation. Part 141 schools are specifically approved by the FAA and require a distinct structure and curriculum. They are also rare and in high demand. Global Pilot Academy is the only Part 141 flight school in all of Hillsborough

County. Students face a rigid schedule at a rapid pace. The FAA designed Part 141 to guarantee the highest level of student training, so rest assured that GPA is producing elite pilots. The students that attend GPA mean business. They seek professional

careers in aviation and most end up as commercial pilots. The school was founded on a vision of providing affordable high quality flight training which opens up the opportunity of flight instruction to a broader array of students. GPA is an international school with students coming all the way from China to Canada and everywhere in between. Like many businesses, the training school was hit hard by the pandemic. International travel restrictions have cut the number of international students in half. There is hope on the horizon however. When international travel returns, so will their students. And with demand for pilots on the rise, Global Pilot Academy expects to bounce back better than ever.



Photo Courtesy: Global Pilot Academy



Photo Courtesy: Global Pilot Academy

## SAFETY AND INSPECTIONS

by David Smith, ACE, CPM, Airport Inspection and Safety Manager

In this edition of the Florida Flyer, I would like to highlight a safety topic that is an important aspect of disseminating information to flight crews and protecting the general public. That topic is the issuance of Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) by airport operators.

The issuance of NOTAMs is an extremely important means for getting information out to aircraft flight crews who operate at our Florida airports. Flight schools located here in Florida train a large student pilot population every year and roughly half of all visitors to Florida arrive by air transportation. This makes the issuance of accurate NOTAMs in a timely manner very important for the safety of aviators and the general public. There are several conditions on the

airport that would require the issuance of a NOTAM. These include but are not limited to navigational aid outages, unlighted obstructions, changes to a landing area's dimensions, taxiway/runway closures, changes to runway identifiers, weather reporting equipment status, Airport Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) index changes, and other hazardous conditions.



Photo Courtesy: David Smith

As mentioned above, the issuance of accurate NOTAMs is just as important as issuing notices in a timely manner. This not only promotes a safe operating environment but helps the airport operator in 'doing their part' to ensure a safe flight. Additionally, accurate NOTAMs becomes very helpful as we enter hurricane season and during natural disaster events. Decision

makers in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) are constantly looking to task missions and relocate resources during

natural disasters. Having the status of the airport reported via NOTAMs helps to reduce workload of SEOC staff and airport staff by reducing the amount of phone calls. The Florida Aviation Database (FAD) contains a disaster reporting tab that should also be updated regularly during these events.

Flight Service maintains a list of authorized individuals who can issue NOTAMs for each airport. This list should be updated as needed and reviewed regularly. The FAA has a few Advisory Circulars (AC) that can be referenced for additional information. There is FAA AC 150/5200-28F, Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) for Airport Operators and FAA AC 150/5200-30D, Airport Field Condition Assessments and Winter Operations Safety. A NOTAM can be filed with Flight Service at 1-877-487-6867.

If you would like to know more concerning the state requirements for airport safety at your facility, please refer to Chapter 14-60, Florida Administrative Code. Chapter 14-60 is available on the Florida Aviation website at <https://www.fdot.gov/aviation/flpub.shtm>.



**Photo Courtesy: David Smith**

Please feel free to contact me at: [DavidP.Smith@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:DavidP.Smith@dot.state.fl.us) if you require further assistance with this matter or have questions concerning Florida's airport licensure program.

## Manager's Corner

by Aaron Smith, State Aviation Manager



The regular 2021 Legislative Session has ended with FY2021/2022 aviation appropriations set at \$325.8 million. Of this, approximately \$249 million intended for the Aviation Improvement Program and \$76 million for the Spaceport Improvement Program. Once the Work Program is adopted, July 1, we'll have better visibility on specifics.

HB 77 / SB 1082 relating to diesel exhaust fluid, a.k.a. DEF, also passed. The language will reside in Chapter 330, F.S., and requires all public airports to require DEF safety mitigation and exclusion plans for applicable fixed-base operators. So what's next? Upon becoming law, FDOT will convene a workgroup of public airport representatives to develop DEF uniform industry standards by November 1, 2021. The workgroup may consider adopting the Florida Airports Council's DEF BMP's already in use and available at <https://www.floridaairports.org/>. Airports should anticipate making the DEF safety mitigation and exclusion plan for each fixed-based operator available for review during inspections after January 1, 2022, to avoid potential

with issuance of the airport license. FDOT may adopt rules in Chapter 14-60, FAC to develop uniform industry standards form for the DEF safety mitigation and exclusion plan. With the passage of HB 57 / SB 1194 and upon the bill becoming law, airports will be exempt from the CEI requirements currently in s.337.14(7), F.S. This statutory change will necessitate a revision of FDOT's Public Transportation Grant Agreement. We will be working diligently to revise grant agreement provisions prior to issuance of FY2022 grants.

Please go to <https://www.fdot.gov/aviation/flpub.shtm/planning>, to review the latest FDOT Aviation Office COVID-19 impact studies, or various other aviation related studies and resources.

Lastly, I want to thank Lisa Waters, CEO, and staff of the Florida Airports Council for facilitating two monthly FDOT/Airport meetings. Their willingness to assist is very much appreciated.

## Recap of SUN 'n FUN 2021

by Michael McDougall, Aviation Communications Manager

Since Covid-19 took away the opportunity to have Sun 'n Fun last year, countless aviation enthusiasts were excited to return back out to the Lakeland Linder International Airport to see some exciting aerial demonstrations by the Blue Angels, Aero Shell Smoke Squadron's, C-17 Globemaster, the exhibitors, food trucks, and more! The exhibitor space was only about 70% occupied and turn out this year was just a little over 200,000 people total for the week according to Bonnie Perkins, Exhibit Manager for SUN 'n FUN. Surprisingly, this was more than they were anticipating this year. The SUN 'n FUN airshow began in 1974 and has grown to be one of the largest, most successful, and sustaining

airshows in the world. Year after year you will find many amazing and different aircraft from military to civilian and vintage to the modern day including home built aircraft. SUN 'n FUN is also not just for pilots. There is something to do for everyone in the family along with those that are just completely fascinated with aviation. Many visitors also enjoy going to the Florida Air Museum located at the airport to escape the heat. Each year the airshow is proud to display their STEM program and career fair activities. The Lakeland Linder International Airport along with the successful partnership with SUN 'n FUN are committed to making the future brighter not just for the airshow, but for those that want to pursue an aviation career. If you missed this years

airshow, SUN 'n FUN is already scheduled next year for the dates of April 5-10 2022.



Photos Courtesy: FDOT

# FAA Implemented South Florida Metroplex on April 22

by the Federal Aviation Administration

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on April 22<sup>nd</sup> implemented the first phase of the South-Central Florida Metroplex, the agency's plan to move flights more safely and efficiently across the southern half of the state. Metroplex procedures will allow flights that are more direct and have more efficient climb and descent profiles.

The agency published 54 new procedures on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Seventeen of the procedures require additional training of air traffic controllers and automation upgrades at air traffic control facilities before they can be implemented. We expect this to occur by mid-August. While these procedures are being published as a package, they are not intended for simultaneous use. They will be available for pilots and air traffic controllers depending on weather and operational requirements. Air traffic controllers occasionally may direct aircraft off published routes for safety, efficiency or to reroute them around weather systems. The comprehensive project will improve the efficiency of airspace in the South-Central Florida Metroplex area by optimizing aircraft arrival and departure

procedures to and from airports. New routes include some changes in aircraft flight paths and altitudes in certain areas, but will not result in any ground disturbance or increase the number of aircraft operations at any of the airports. The agency designed the new procedures to follow existing flight tracks when possible.

Community involvement was a critical part of the Metroplex environmental process. The FAA conducted extensive outreach to the public before issuing its final decision on the project. The agency held 29 public workshops and two public comment periods totaling 120 days in 2019 and 2020. The agency also evaluated and responded to 3,239 comments in the Final EA. The FAA issued the Finding of No Significant Impact-Record of Decision (FONSI-ROD) for the South-Central Florida Metroplex project in October 2020.

South-Central Florida is one of 11 Metroplex initiatives nationwide, and it is the final project to be implemented. The FAA will implement the second and final phase of the project in August 2021. [Source: https://www.faa.gov/news/updates/?](https://www.faa.gov/news/updates/?)

# Fort Lauderdale International Airport: "A look into the Future"

By Jason Watkins

The comprehensive Master Plan Update (MPU) for the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) was completed to define the airport's next chapter as it is expected to resume its growth and elevate the customer experience while fulfilling the air and multi-modal transportation needs of Broward County and the South Florida Region. FLL plays a vital role in the regional transportation system for accommodating aviation demands such as airline passenger travel, cargo operations, and corporate aviation.

The MPU process, initiated in late 2015, involved extensive analyses of FLL's existing conditions, future activity, growth and demand, with the facilities needing to meet the forecast demand and incorporated extensive stakeholder engagement.

## Implementation Program

The MPU process resulted in the identification and adoption of a three-phase implementation program. The timing of various improvements would be aligned to demand, funding





**Photo Courtesy: Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport**

opportunities, and affordability. The long-term buildout of the terminal area that culminates from the completion of all three phases will result in FLL's gate inventory growing to approximately 95 gates, facilitated by new concourse piers west of Terminal 2 and an expansion of Terminal 4 to the west. Phase 1 of the implementation program, which spans the first 10 to 14 years, is intended to immediately begin addressing FLL's landside and terminal capacity needs. The westward expansion of Terminal 4 along with the implementation of Terminal 5 represents an incremental approach to capacity enhancement to allow FLL to accommodate future passenger growth while preserving flexibility for the ultimate redevelopment and expansion in later phases. The expansion of Terminal 4 is coupled with an FIS facility and an expanded passenger processing facility to provide additional flexibility and capacity to serve both domestic and international traffic. In addition, increasing FLL's landside capacity, particularly in the near term, is a key recommendation of this MPU. Select elements of the recommended Phase 1 development plan are highlighted below.



**Photo Courtesy: Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport**

### Gate Expansion (Terminal 5)

Terminal 5 is proposed east of Terminal 4 on an apron that currently provides overnight aircraft parking and ground service equipment (GSE) storage. Terminal 5 consists of a two-level structure, with security screening, ticketing, passenger amenities, and hold rooms located on the second level. Support spaces, baggage processing, and airline operations functions

would be located on the ground level. Terminal 5 will also have a dedicated landside roadway system including curbside pickup/drop-off, and a multilevel pedestrian connector which provides pre/post-security connectivity between Terminal 5 to Terminal 4.

### Landside Automated People Mover (APM) System

An APM has been identified to provide an improved level of service by minimizing passenger walking distances and providing seamless connectivity between terminals and landside facilities, while also providing connectivity to a future intermodal center. The APM is proposed to operate on an elevated dual-lane guideway with a maintenance and storage facility (M&SF) located on airport property.

### Redeveloped (New) Palm Garage with Supplemental Arrivals-Level Curb-front Roadway

The existing Palm Garage was identified for redevelopment to expand and enhance public parking, ground transportation, and commercial development. As envisioned, the redeveloped Palm Garage would have seven to nine levels of parking, expanding capacity to approximately 3,500 to 3,700 parking stalls, and a ground transportation center on the lower levels. The redevelopment would also accommodate the required corridors for the APM system and a supplemental arrivals-level curb-front roadway needed to alleviate congestion.



**Photo Courtesy: Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport**

### Commercial Center and Airport Hotel

A commercial center and airport hotel featuring passenger amenities such as food and beverage, retail, and other entertainment spaces and passenger gathering areas are proposed to be developed adjacent to the new Palm Garage.

### Intermodal Center (IMC)

The IMC is proposed to be located within the FDOT right of way site (or the area commonly referred to as the "donut"), the IMC is envisioned to include an eight-level structure integrating various regional public transportation modes, vehicular parking, commercial development, APM connectivity, and eventual connectivity to Port Everglades.

The FLL MPU's framework and implementation strategies have never been more important than now given the global economic climate impacted by COVID-19. The MPU will serve as a roadmap for efficiently accommodating aviation demand throughout a 20+ year planning horizon while preserving the flexibility necessary to respond to an evolving industry.





*Photos Courtesy: Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport*

# The Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport: 2 Years of Unprecedented Success

by Susan Reimann

For 2019, Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport (SRQ) was one of the fastest growing airports in the country with a 43% growth rate in passengers. SRQ enjoyed record-breaking increases in passenger and air service growth over a 2-year period growing from 6 airlines serving 12 destinations in February 2018 to 9 airlines serving 39 destinations in February 2020. Much of the growth was fueled by the addition of 3 new airlines, Allegiant, Frontier, and Sun Country along with additional destinations and capacity increases by incumbent carriers serving the airport. In order to accommodate this growth, SRQ added a new cell phone lot and overflow parking lot in 2019. For 2020, an expansion of the long-term parking lot was planned in order to add additional parking spaces. The Authority selected American Infrastructure Development, Inc. to design the parking lot expansion and after going through the bid process, a \$2,244,98.00 contract was award on March 6, 2020, to Mangum Builders of Sarasota, Inc.

same time. Both lots, originally constructed when the terminal was built over 30 years ago, were in urgent need of repaving. With COVID-19 continuing to spread across the country, and an uncertain recovery timeline for airports, the SMAA Board took quick action to approve a revision to change the parking lot expansion project into a mill and overlay project, reducing the contract price to \$1,137,437.00.



*Photo Courtesy: Sarasota Bradenton International Airport*

The timing of this revised project provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to complete a re-paving project that would have the least impact on the traveling public while providing jobs in the Sarasota/Bradenton community. All laborers and companies that performed work on the project were local to the Sarasota/Manatee area. The contractor began the mill and overlay on April 13, 2020, and the project was completed on May 28, 2020.

On March 11, 2020, just 5 days after awarding the parking lot expansion contract, the airport began to feel the effects of COVID-19 with a significant drop in passengers and parked vehicles. The airport's parking lots, which at its peak were filled with 1,822 cars, were left virtually empty with as few as 38 cars. As time went on and the effects of COVID-19 became clear, management realized that the construction needs and urgency for certain construction projects would need to be re-evaluated and prioritized. With the need to expand the long-term parking lot no longer urgent, staff determined that a unique opportunity presented itself to complete a project to mill and overlay both the short and long-term parking lots at the

"With the introduction of Southwest Airlines in February of 2021, SRQ rebounded, breaking their all-time passenger traffic record, first in March of 2021 and again in April. April 2021 saw 294,165 passengers, a 61% increase over April 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. SRQ continues to grow with 10 airlines and 47 nonstop destinations. The airlines continue to bring new destinations, increase their frequency of flights, and add seating capacity. Future projects include expanding the ground transportation area, increasing long-term and rental car parking, and construction of a new inline baggage handling system. SRQ is also in the process of increasing concessionaires, including new restaurants and gift shops."

# Page Field: “A History of Aviation Excellence in Southwest Florida”

by Erin Croop, Marketing Coordinator

In 1924, the city of Fort Myers set aside a plot of land just south of town to build a golf course. Several years later, it would evolve into a quaint airport, serving as a mail route between Tampa and Miami. First referred to as “Palmetto Field” due to its sparse, barren landscape dotted with palmetto shrubs, the makeshift dirt runway would inevitably become inoperable during the soggy summer months. When National Airlines later began scheduled service to Fort Myers in 1937, they would frequently postpone flights due to suboptimal landing conditions.

On March 31, 1942, in the midst of World War II, the 98th Bombardment Group arrived in Fort Myers to establish an Army Air Base of about 400 men. Palmetto Field was renamed Page Field, after Channing Page, a local WWI veteran and flying ace. Area residents woke to the sound of B-24 bombers departing on their first training mission just a few days later, while the base was still under construction. The runways were paved and barracks were built. In January 1943, the 53rd Fighter Wing was moved to Page Field, and the field transitioned into an advanced fighter aircraft training base for the AT-6 Texan, P-39 Airacobra, P-47 Thunderbolt, and the P-40 Warhawk. The highly recognizable P-51 Mustang arrived in March 1945, where training continued through the end of the war.

Post war, what was left in Fort Myers was infrastructure and a bustling city. National Airlines returned with scheduled service, area real estate boomed, and air transportation demand increased due to deregulation of the airline industry. Further expansion of the airfield was no longer possible due to its location being landlocked by adjacent roadways. Page Field served as Fort Myers’ commercial service airport through the jet age, until Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) opened in 1983.

Today, Page Field is an FAA-designated reliever airport for RSW and accommodated more than 126,000 operations in 2020. There is a strong flying community in Fort Myers with 350+ based aircraft and multiple active flying clubs including local EAA and 99s chapters. Both the airport and its award-winning fixed-base operator (FBO), Base Operations at Page Field, are operated by the Lee County Port Authority with a commitment to keeping general aviation accessible to the community. That means living up to its mission, “To provide premier aviation services and world-class facilities at exceptional value.”

Built in 2011, Base Operations at Page Field has established itself as one of the top FBOs in the country. The modern, 22,000-square-foot FBO terminal pays homage to the airport’s WWII heritage, decorated with locally curated historical photo murals, a museum-style display of relics from that period, and a full-scale P-51 replica suspended from the lobby ceiling. A new, 24,000-square-foot bulk hangar with crew offices was completed in 2019 and sits next to a second 24,000-square-foot multi-use hangar that was completed as part of the original FBO project.

For nine years, Base Operations has been recognized by pilots as one of the top fixed-base operators in the Americas through Aviation International News’ annual FBO Survey, in which pilots rank FBOs based on their facilities, pilot and passenger amenities, customer service and line service experiences. In 2021, Base Operations was honored as the 7th best FBO overall by Aviation International News, as well as the 6th best independent FBO in Professional Pilot magazine’s PRASE Survey.



Photo Courtesy: Page Field

Both Runways 05/23 and 13/31 were recently rehabilitated in an extensive airfield improvement project completed in 2018. Taxiways A, C, and E were realigned to simplify airport navigation, pavement was brought up to current design standards, and a hot spot was eliminated. Other upgrades included LED PAPIs, REILS, LED edge lighting, pilot-controlled lighting, and a new airfield electrical vault.

Page Field also takes pride in being a good neighbor, maintaining a “Fly Friendly” pilot education program to mitigate noise concerns. Each year, the airport hosts children’s tour

groups and an immersive high school STEM day to promote the aviation industry and its career opportunities. Its signature community event, Aviation Day, brings an average of 5,000 guests inside the airport gates to view static displays, participate in demonstrations, enjoy food, children’s activities, and aviation exhibits, as well as the opportunity to take a plane or helicopter ride - all while helping the local food bank.

Page Field is proud to be a staple in Fort Myers for nearly 100 years, and is dedicated to continuing its history of serving the general aviation community in Southwest Florida for many years to come.



# Urban Air Mobility in Florida

by Andy Keith

One of the major challenges facing the aviation industry in the next five to ten years will be the integration of new technologies into the transportation system of Florida. Of the many different types of new technologies on the horizon, one of the more challenging is autonomous aircraft. Autonomous aircraft, better known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or UAV are defined as follows: An Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) (or non-manned aerial vehicle, commonly known as a drone) is an aircraft without a human pilot on board. UAVs are a component of an unmanned aircraft system (UAS); which include a UAV, a ground-based controller, and a system of communications between the two. The flight of UAVs may operate with various degrees of autonomy: either under remote control by a human operator or autonomously by onboard computers.

The Deloitte Insights website provides some very good discussion on the issues. An article on the Deloitte Insights website under “Topics/Future of Mobility on “Infrastructure barriers to the elevated future of mobility: Are cities ready with the infrastructure needed for urban air transportation?” states that “Viable electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft alone won’t elevate the new mobility ecosystem. Cities and suburbs will need infrastructure on the ground and over the airwaves: landing sites, aircraft traffic management systems, and more.” The article goes on to focus on three areas: ground infrastructure, the unmanned air traffic management (UTM) system and communications, and a seamless mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) platform.

The area that the State of Florida has statutory responsibility for is ground infrastructure such as airports and heliports. Section 330.30, Florida Statutes details the requirements for approval of airport sites, and licensure and registration of airports. The Aviation Office does the site visits for new airports and heliports, the annual inspections and licenses for existing public airports and heliports, and the registrations for private airports and heliports.

About two years ago, FDOT staff met with a representative of a new startup air taxi company that is implementing their newly-manufactured autonomous vertical takeoff and landing, fully-electric air taxi. Their interest in talking to FDOT is ground infrastructure and what processes are already in place to begin developing more heliports/vertiports in Florida cities from which their aircraft can operate. Because of the robust aviation system we have in Florida, even more start-up air taxi companies will approach the transportation industry in Florida to help develop the infrastructure needed to support their planned operations.

The Florida aviation industry needs to include in future planning an emphasis on autonomous aircraft and develop strategies for the type of infrastructure that this new industry will need. This will require getting all stakeholders (i.e., airport managers and staff, aviation association representatives, airport consultants, and others) together to discuss ideas on how to approach this new and exciting issue. In June 2020, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) developed and shared the “UAM Concept of Operations (ConOps) version 1.0” on the FAA website.

The “Viable electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft alone won’t elevate the new mobility ecosystem” article in the Deloitte Insights website says that “given both limited urban space and sky-high real estate prices, acquiring spaces large enough to build multiple landing areas is often not feasible. Hence, it’s important to consider different landing-pad configurations, depending on pre-existing availability, space utilization, functionality requirements, and location.” Current heliports/helipads may not provide enough infrastructure initially. New designs are emerging that will be tailored to the location within the city, suburb, or rural area. As this new industry grows, Florida aviation will need to grow as well, not only in infrastructure, but also in expertise in new technologies and other advances of this industry. Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unmanned\\_aerial\\_vehicle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unmanned_aerial_vehicle)

<https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en.html>

<https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/future-of-mobility/infrastructure-barriers-to-urban-air-mobility-with-VTOL.html> <https://lilium.com/>



Photo Courtesy: Lilium Image

## North Palm Beach County Airport: “Rising Upward”

by Gary Sypek

**N**orth Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport (F45), owned and operated by Palm Beach County through its Department of Airports, is located about 12 miles northwest of West Palm Beach along the Bee Line Highway in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Designated as a "Reliever Airport" by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), F45 relieves congestion at Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) by providing an alternate venue for general aviation traffic in Palm Beach County. The general aviation facilities consists of one full-service Fixed Based Operator (FBO) hosting 300,000 sq. ft. of ramp, and approximately 200 hangars, including a variety of hangar sizes for small general aviation aircraft up to larger jets. In addition to individual hangars, the airport also has shared-space conventional hangars. Tie-down areas are also provided, along with a number of helicopter facilities, two aircraft maintenance shops, an avionics shop, and the presence of multiple fixed-wing flight schools. The types of general aviation aircraft operating and based at F45 include a majority of single-engine piston aircraft, helicopters, multi-engine piston and turboprop aircraft, and a small but growing number of small to mid-sized jet business aircraft.

The Department of Airports has begun working on a number of projects in attempt to further enhance security, safety, and operations of the airport. Improvements to the existing perimeter fence have been completed to prevent the spread of vegetation. These activities were undertaken in an effort to restrict unauthorized access to the AOA, along with the installation of new fencing in certain

areas of the airfield in order to mitigate wildlife on the runways and taxiways. Additionally, the Department of Airports recently completed a project to relocate a culvert and open drainage swale, thereby freeing up additional land for future aviation development north of the terminal area. Design efforts are also underway for the rehabilitation of Runway 9R/27L; this project will provide for the pavement rehabilitation of the entire runway, as well as several taxiways connectors. Modifications to the existing geometry of the connecting taxiways will also be performed, along with signage and marking enhancements, electrical modifications, and safety area grading improvements to meet design standards.

In December 2019, the Department of Airports initiated Phase 2 of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed expansion of the crosswind runway, Runway 14/32, at the airport. The extension of Runway 14/32 will increase its length from 4,000 feet to a maximum of 6,000 feet, allowing for a slightly different mix of business jet aircraft to operate into and out of the airport. This will open the facility to more customers as the longer runway will enable aircraft to fly further than they are able to do today. Furthermore, this will also provide users north of PBI with greater convenience, by offering a second alternative to many executive aircraft that otherwise currently use PBI exclusively. Additionally, the county has applied for inclusion in the Federal Contract Tower Program, for the construction and operation of an Air Traffic Control Tower on the airport, the environmental impacts of which will be assessed as part of the on-going EA currently slated for completion in Summer 2021.



**Photo Courtesy: Palm Beach County Department of**

## Dates to Remember...

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE	TIME
CFASPP Meeting (Central)	Bartow Executive Airport	June 9, 2021	10:30am (EST)
CFASPP Meeting (Southeast)	Boca Raton Airport	June 15, 2021	10:30am(EST)
CFASPP Meeting (Treasure Coast)	Vero Beach Regional Airport	June 16, 2021	11:00am(EST)
CFASPP Meeting (East Central)	Space Coast Regional Airport	June 17, 2021	11:00am (EST)
CFASPP Meeting (Northeast)	Jacksonville International Airport	June 22, 2021	10:30am (EST)
CFASPP Meeting (North Central)	Ocala International Airport	June 23, 2021	10:30am (EST)
CFASPP Meeting (Northwest)	Tallahassee International Airport	June 24, 2021	11:00am (EST)
Pensacola Beach Air Show	Pensacola Beach	July 10-11, 2021	All Day
CFASPP Meeting (Statewide)	Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront	July 17, 2021	1:00pm (EST)
52nd Annual FAC Conference	Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront	July 18-21 2021	All Day



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# DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

## DISTRICT 1

- Punta Gorda Airport—General aviation terminal building, ramp, taxiway is under construction with an anticipated completion date of February 2022. (General aviation ramp and taxiway-September 2021).
- Marco Island Executive Airport—The terminal building is under construction (anticipated completion May 31st).
- Immokalee Regional Airport—Runway 18/36 at Immokalee Regional Airport is under construction with an anticipated completion date of September 2021. Taxiway Charlie is also under construction with an anticipated completion date of August 2021.
- Justin Lobb joined the Naples Municipal Airport as Deputy Airport Director of Aviation. He was previously Director of Airports for Collier County.

## DISTRICT 2

- Lake City Gateway Airport Manager, Mr. Roland Luster, retired in January 2021. Florence Straugh became the new Airport Manager in April. Ms. Straugh came to Lake City from Ft. Lauderdale Executive Airport.
- Lake City Municipal Airport recently completed a lighting project for Runway 5/23 that consisted of installing all new LED lights on the runway & adding lighting to Taxiway A1.
- Palatka Municipal-Lt Kay Larkin Field recently completed Phase 2 of their Runway 17/35 threshold relocation project which also included work on adjacent taxiways. The project was jointly funded by FAA, FDOT, and the City of Palatka and was completed on time and within budget.

## DISTRICT 3

- Calhoun County Airport opens new airport terminal in May.

## DISTRICT 4

- Vero Beach Regional Airport is completing an airport security project. This project includes fencing on the air carrier apron, installation of PIN/KEYPAD two-factor authorization access control device, a magnetic door lock installed in the TSA screening checkpoint area, a new access panel with wiring for the power and image feed from several exterior camera installation, and a new server for the security badging system.
- Palm Beach County Park Airport (Lantana) is completing the construction of a new fuel farm and wash rack. The new location of the fuel farm provides better aircraft flow to and from the facility.
- Pompano Beach Airpark and North Perry Airport are in initial planning stages for air traffic control tower replacement. This includes studies, design, and construction.

- Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport continues with a gate expansion project. This includes a new terminal - T5. Anticipated completion of the new terminal is FY 2024.

## DISTRICT 5

- Orlando International Airport continues construction on the South Terminal Complex. The first portion of gates will open in 2022.
- Daytona Beach International Airport has completed construction of Taxiway November.
- Umatilla Municipal Airport recently completed a hangar infrastructure development project.

## DISTRICT 6

- Southwest Airlines expands northwest from Miami International Airport for springtime.
- Eastern Airlines heads further south with Montevideo-Miami route.
- Jet Blue to launch daily Miami-Hartford service in June .
- Allegiant adds several new flights to Orlando Sanford International Airport and Key West International Airport from the Midwest.
- FAA issues FONSI/ROD for the key West International Airport's environmental assessment for taxiway extension, apron expansion and security fencing improvements.

## DISTRICT 7

- Tampa International Airport is constructing a new, state-of-the-art utility plant that will be bigger, more efficient, and more sustainable than the previous version built in the 1990's. The performance will be significantly improved compared to the older model:
  - \* 30 percent more efficient, removing the equivalent of about 620 vehicles off the road each year in carbon dioxide emissions.
  - \* Saves 25 million gallons of water per year through the use of reclaimed water.
  - \* Increased overall capacity by about 33 percent
  - \* New heat recovery chiller that reduces demand on the boilers and overall natural gas consumption.
- St Pete-Clearwater International Airport's partner, Allegiant Airlines recently announced new service to Portsmouth, NH. Bringing the total non-stop destinations from St Pete-Clearwater International Airport to 50+.

# UNITED WE STAND SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE

by Aviation Office

**A**s you drive around Florida you will notice a variety of Florida license plate designs. In addition to the most common standard state license plate, Florida allows drivers to select from more than 120 unique license plates. Florida has license plates for a variety of family, environmental, charitable, and other causes. If you work in the aviation industry, enjoy recreational flying, or are concerned about our national security, you may want to consider purchasing the United We Stand specialty plate. (Created by an Act of the Florida Legislature in 2002 to support Secure Airports for Florida's Economy.) Revenue goes to FDOT to fund security-related aviation projects pursuant to Chapter 332, Florida Statutes and to provide training related to airport security and management. In 2018, security assessments were conducted at 84 airports and specific projects were funded at 25 airports as a result.



<b>License Plate</b>	United We Stand
<b>Statutory Authority</b>	320.08058
<b>Date Enacted</b>	July 1, 2002
<b>Special Fee</b>	\$25.00 annual fee (plus registration fees)
<b>Distribution of Specialty Fee</b>	Secure Airports for Florida's Economy

For more information about how you can purchase this specialty license plate, please visit [www.flhsmv.gov/](http://www.flhsmv.gov/)

## ***Airports Awarded SAFE Funding—\$4,150,577 Total to Date***

Apalachicola Regional Airport-Cleve Randolph Field	\$67,270	Northeast Florida Regional Airport	\$125,000
Boca Raton Airport	\$305,780	Palm Beach County Park Airport	\$1,709
Carrabelle—Thompson Airport	\$17,000	Pensacola International Airport	\$104,500
Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport	\$108,000	Perry-Foley Airport	\$22,451
Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport	\$150,000	Pompano Beach Airpark	\$135,200
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport	\$122,800	Punta Gorda Airport	\$100,000
Gainesville Regional Airport	\$58,591	Quincy Municipal Airport	\$65,000
Key West International Airport	\$415,240	Sebastian Municipal Airport	\$6,084
Keystone Heights Airport	\$401,735	Suwannee County Airport	\$325,190
Lakeland Linder International Airport	\$288,000	The Florida Keys Marathon International Airport	\$52,896
Marianna Municipal Airport	\$402,332	Treasure Coast International Airport	\$80,204
Miami Executive Airport	\$48,000	Williston Municipal Airport	\$559,628
Miami Homestead General Aviation Airport	\$187,967		



The Florida Flyer is a quarterly newsletter published quarterly by the Aviation Office of the Florida Department of Transportation. To subscribe to the Florida Flyer, contact Michael McDougall, Editor, at FDOT Aviation Office, 605 Suwannee Street, MS-46, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450, phone (850) 414-4512, fax (850) 414-4508, email [Michael.McDougall@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Michael.McDougall@dot.state.fl.us). Visit our website at [www.fdot.gov/aviation](http://www.fdot.gov/aviation)