

FLAGLER EXECUTIVE AIRPORT WHERE SERVICE SOARS!

by Roy Sieger, Airport Director, Flagler Executive Airport

Like many airports in Florida, the Flagler Executive Airport (FIN) was constructed shortly after America was thrust into war as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. When the airport was originally constructed, it was called the Bulow Outlying Field (X47) and was utilized as a flight training base for NAS Jacksonville. Following WWII, in 1947 the airport was deeded to the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) by the War Assets Administration, through the Surplus Property Act of 1944. Since that time, the airport has been a public use general aviation (GA) airport that is operated and maintained under the Flagler County BOCC.



Photo courtesy: Flagler Executive Airport

The Flagler Executive Airport is one of the nation's busiest GA airports. The award-winning airport fulfills a vital role for business/corporate activity and flight training, as well as for recreational and sport aviation activities and transient military operations, as it was originally intended. The airport is located on the east side of Flagler County, just minutes away from natural attractions, magnificent golf courses and miles of pristine beaches. Located just south of State Road 100, the airport covers over 1,435 acres within unincorporated Flagler County, but directly borders the City of Palm Coast. The airfield is comprised of two intersecting runways, Runway 11-29 (5,500' x 100') and Runway 6-24 (5,000' x 100'), and a water runway on Gore Lake, Runway 18W-36W (3,000' x 500'), which is located entirely on airport property.

The Flagler Executive Airport has undergone a complete facelift in the past ten years with the completion of over \$38 million dollars of infrastructure projects. The project that began the transformation of the airport was the construction of the Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) in 2009. When the ATCT was constructed, the airport was one of the busiest non-towered airports in the nation. In 2010, the ATCT had 170,902 operations, making it the busiest of 252 Federal Contract Towers in the nation. In 2019, the tower had recorded 187,282 operations, ranking 5th among contract towers, 71st when compared with all FAA towers in the nation.

An essential project that most significantly changed the appearance of the airfield, as well as alleviating significant safety issues and operational restrictions was the relocation and extension of Runway

11-29. This was the largest project ever at the airport since the original construction in 1942. The project encompassed 183 acres in order to relocate the runway 400' south, shift it 800' east, and extend it 501' east.

The airport is currently in the design phase of a new 15,000 square foot GA Terminal facility. The terminal will accommodate airport administrative offices, a fixed base operator (FBO), public space, meeting space, and room for additional tenants. The GA Terminal facility is the next step in the evolution of the airport.

In 2016, a new airport logo was created that incorporated both the new airport name (Flagler Executive Airport) and the identifier (FIN). The rebranding reflects the transition to serve more corporate tenants and visitors, as well as the expansion of the airfield and services provided by the county-operated FBO.

For the past nine years, the Flagler Executive Airport has hosted two annual events: Freedom Fest and Race of the Runways. These events enable the airport to showcase, promote and elevate the airport's visibility to the entire community, which includes many taxpayers that are not affiliated with aviation. Freedom Fest salutes veterans, both past and present, by celebrating the freedoms we have. This event gives the community the opportunity to get up close to living history, modern military aircraft and inspire our next generation of aviators. The event features concerts, modern and vintage static military aircraft and vehicles, warbird flyby's and plenty of food and beverage vendors. Race of Runways is a unique 5K that takes the participants over the entire airport. If being on the airfield isn't unique enough, the event is also done at night! This gives the runners/walkers a truly unique experience. "Run, Walk or Crawl You Can Do It All".

The County's full-service FBO offers all the amenities expected of a first-class corporate and GA center. The best attribute of the Flagler Executive Airport is the magnificent airport team, whose objective is to exceed your expectations by assisting in all aspects of your trip. As our tag line states, "Where Service Soars!"



Photo courtesy: Flagler Executive Airport

HIGHJACKERS RESTAURANT

by Roy Sieger, Airport Director, Flagler Executive Airport

Highjackers! A word associated primarily with both airports and aircraft, but not necessarily a business on an airport. Nonetheless, nearly 20 years ago, Gail and Ted wanted to create an airport restaurant with South Pacific décor, a splash of aviation history, and an atmosphere of laughter among family and friends. All focused on creating the feeling that one has had a change in latitude and of course attitude upon arriving. These were the images that they had in mind when the concept of “Highjackers” came into being on August 17, 2001. Who knew the devastation that would soon transpire the following month, known forever as 9/11.

In the weeks following the September 11th tragedy, Gail and Ted anguished over whether the name of the restaurant should be changed. The lease had been approved, signs made, and menus printed. What should we do? Drawing on the advice of President Bush to a nation in mourning, urging us all to continue our daily lives and enjoy freedoms as Americans, lest these terrorists win, the staff and owners ultimately chose to let the name remain the same.

Since that time, Highjackers Restaurant has been one of the longest and most successful tenants at Flagler Executive Airport. A portion of the restaurant has some history too, as it was the original military administration office constructed back in 1942, which adds to the ambience. Situated steps away from the flightline, many pilots and

locals alike gravitate here to enjoy friendly service, great food, and an atmosphere that entices you to sit back, relax, and enjoy. Highjackers Restaurant offers something for everyone, from wraps and burgers to complete entrees, and features a full bar. The restaurant has seating both inside and outside available for patrons to watch planes arrive and take-off into the vast blue skies and is topped off with a playground for our future aviators. Open for lunch and dinner, 7 days a week from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The next time you are looking for a great place to go for a \$10 burger, set course to the Flagler Executive Airport (FIN) and visit Highjackers Restaurant, “Where Flavor Takes Flight!” For more information, go to www.highjackers.com.

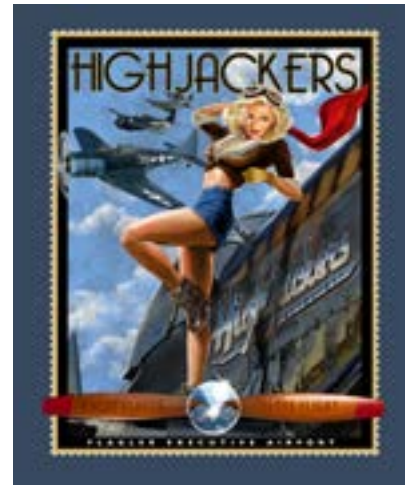


Photo courtesy: Flagler Executive Airport

RYAN AVIATION, INC.

SPLASH IN AT THE FLAGLER EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

by Roy Sieger, Airport Director, Flagler Executive Airport

Gore Lake is undoubtedly one of the most unique features at the Flagler Executive Airport. The lake encompasses approximately 83 acres and is located entirely on the airport property. No other airport in Florida has its own water runway on airport property. However, there was a time when only half of the lake belonged to the airport and other activities took place on the lake, such as fishing, boat racing, and water ski practice for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University students. In the mid-1980s, the FAA designated Gore Lake as a seaplane landing area, Runway 18W-36W (3,000' X 500').

There have been a few seaplane operators on the Flagler Executive Airport; by far the longest tenured is Alfred G (Tripp) Wacker III. He started at the airport in 1989 after moving his business, Spirit Aviation, from the Ormond Beach Municipal Airport. At the time, Tripp provided multi-engine training with two Piper Apaches while flying charters on the side, until 1992 when he decided to try his hand with the airlines. Tripp sold Spirit Aviation to a former student and took a job flying with American Eagle. However, he always kept a presence at the airport providing tail wheel instruction in a Piper PA-12. In late 1994, Tripp left the airlines to come back to his passion, general aviation. He started Ryan Aviation Inc., providing seaplane training and ratings in a Piper J-3 on straight floats. (On a side note, Tripp named his son after Ryan Aircraft Co., the company that built Charles Lindbergh's aircraft, the Spirit of St. Louis, now known as Northrop Grumman.) In 1995, Tripp expanded his business by providing consulting, acquiring, managing, and piloting services for King Airs, Citations, and Westwinds. In 1997, he became an FAA Designated Examiner for Private through Airline Transport Pilot and Flight Instructor Applicants. Also



Photo courtesy: Flagler Executive Airport

in 1997, Tripp added a Cessna 180 Amphibian to his seaplane school. In 2006, he sold all of his aircraft and purchased a Husky Amphibian and in 2008 added a DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver Amphibian.

Ryan Aviation continues to offer top-notch seaplane training in the Husky Amphibian and the de Havilland Beaver Amphibian, which are meticulously maintained. Training at Ryan Aviation ranges from an orientation course, checkout course, complete bush pilot training, and private, commercial, and ATP seaplane ratings. Flying is one of Tripp's passions, which is why one of his proudest moments was to watch his son Ryan solo the Husky on his 16th

birthday. So, come fly and get the ultimate experience of landing an aircraft on the water. For more information go to www.ryanseaplanes.com.



Roy Sieger is the Airport Director of the Flagler Executive Airport.

MANAGER'S CORNER

by Aaron Smith, State Aviation Manager

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2020 legislative session is in full swing and with it come numerous new bills, amendments and special appropriations. Examples of some of the items we are tracking include elimination of the aviation fuel tax, airport construction engineering and inspection (CEI) exemption, new regulations for commercial airports, regulation of diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), and special appropriations to the tune of \$16.9 million.

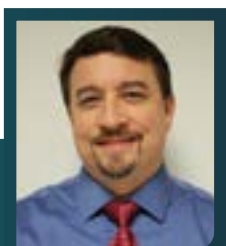
Special appropriations, even with good intentions, can have a much different effect on the program. Unfortunately, the size of the pie remains the same. Therefore, existing projects must make way for those FDOT is required by law to fund. A relatively recent article written by Whit Blanton, Executive Director at Forward Pinellas, discusses earmarks. It's a highly recommended read, so here's the link, <http://forwardpinellas.org/blog/directors-blog/the-problem-with-earmarks/>.

AVIATION FUEL TAX REVENUE

According to the January 10, 2020, Revenue Estimating Conference, the aviation fuel tax revenue for 2018/19 was \$39.9M at 6.9 cents per gallon. Accounting for the decrease in tax to 4.71 cents per gallon the 2019/20 tax revenue forecast is \$23.4 million. The 2020/21 forecast includes another tax decrease to 4.27 cents per gallon and is forecast to be \$15.3 million. You may see a trend. Anyway, the current proposed bill all together eliminates the tax and therefore revenue which supports FDOT's Work Program and associated projects. Food for thought considering the special appropriations noted above. You may view the report concerning the decrease in fuel tax revenue at <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/index.cfm#revenue>.

ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION

It was a relatively brief stint, but a glorious one. Having created the program to what it is today, the Aviation and Spaceports Office is returning to Aviation Office, as the spaceports function transitions to become a separate office. We will continue to work closely, and for the foreseeable future the spaceport budget will remain a part of the Aviation Program. More to come.



Aaron Smith is the State Aviation Manager.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **31st Annual International Women in Aviation Conference**
March 6th - 7th
Orlando International Airport
- **12th Annual Shamrock Fly-in**
Saturday, March 21st
Lake City, Cannon Creek Airpark
- **Ford Tri-Motor Pancake Breakfast**
Saturday, March 28th
Apalachicola Regional Airport
- **MacDill Air Fest**
March 28th - 29th
MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa
- **Wings Over Suwannee**
March 28th
Suwannee County Airport, Live Oak
- **SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo**
March 31st - April 5th
Lakeland Linder International Airport
- **Young Eagles Day**
Saturday, April 18th
Tri County Airport, Bonifay
- **Vero Beach Air Show**
April 25th - 26th
Vero Beach Regional Airport
- **23rd World Aviation Training Summit**
April 28th - 30th
Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando
- **Fort Lauderdale Air Show**
May 2nd - 3rd
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport
- **Aviation Festival Americas**
May 12th - 13th
JW Marriot Marquis, Miami
- **Miami Beach Air & Sea Show**
May 23rd - 24th
Miami Beach

AIRPORT ZONING REGULATIONS MISSING IN ACTION

by Greg Jones, Airspace and Land Use Manager

The title of this article characterizes the state-wide status of filing airport zoning regulations with the department's Aviation Office as required by Chapter 333, Florida Statutes (FS).

Section 333.03, FS requires every political subdivision having an airport hazard area within its territorial limits to adopt, administer, and enforce airport protection zoning regulations and airport land use compatibility zoning regulations. Pursuant to Section 333.07, FS, any person proposing the construction, alteration, or allowance of an airport obstruction must obtain a permit from the zoning authority. Political subdivision become the zoning authority by meeting three conditions contained in Section 333.025(4), FS. Those three conditions are: 1) adopt adequate airport protection zoning regulations; 2) place such regulations on file with the department's Aviation Office; and 3) establish a permitting process.

Chapter 333, FS was amended effective July 1, 2016. Section 333.135, FS provides that any prior airport zoning regulation which conflicted with the new provisions of Chapter 333, FS shall be amended to conform to the new requirements by July 1, 2017, more than two years ago. Although the Aviation Office may provide comments on airport zoning regulations, Chapter 333, FS does not direct the Aviation Office to approve or disapprove submitted regulations.

Political subdivisions may file their airport zoning regulations with:

**Airspace and Land Use Manager
Aviation Office
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 46
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450**

For additional information, please contact Greg Jones at 850-414-4502.

SAFETY AND INSPECTIONS

by David Smith, ACE, Airport Inspection and Safety Manager

In this edition of the Florida Flyer, I would like to highlight an airfield standard that is an important aspect of Florida's airport licensing program. That standard is the Approach Surface requirements set forth in Florida Administrative Code 14-60.007 and how changes in your airport's critical design aircraft can alter the licensing requirements.

The Part 77 Approach Surface is an imaginary surface that surrounds and protects aircraft on approach to the landing area. The approach surface is centered on the extended runway centerline and extends outward and upward at a slope. This imaginary surface begins at the Primary Surface and is trapezoidal in shape. The dimensions, shape, and flair of the trapezoid are determined by the category of runway and types of instrument approaches serving that runway end.

The Approach Surface starts 200 feet before the approach end of a runway, and this is where the Primary Surface ends. This surface extends outward and upward into the approach of the runway. This slope is dictated by the type of instrument approach available for that end of the runway and the category of runway. Runways that have a critical design aircraft with a Max Take-Off Weight (MTOW) of 12,500 pounds or less are considered utility runways. A runway with a design aircraft with a MTOW of greater than 12,500 lbs. is an other than utility runway.

For both runway categories, that have visual approaches only, and utility runways with non-precision instrument approaches, that slope is a 20:1, which means for every 20 feet you go out into the approach you go up vertically in height 1 foot. So basically, you can have a 1-foot tall object 20 feet before the Primary Surface in the Approach Surface area.

For other than utility runways with a non-precision instrument approach that slope lowers to a 34:1. Other than utility runways with a precision instrument approach have a required slope of 50:1 for the first 10,000 feet and then 40:1 for an additional 40,000 feet. As you can see, this slope gets shallower to take into account that flight crews will be flying down to runways when visibility and weather conditions are not ideal for avoiding obstacles. This is designed to promote safe civil aviation and to protect the welfare of persons on the ground and in the air.

As mentioned before, the shape and size of the Approach Surface trapezoid changes with the type of instrument approach and category of runway. I don't want to overwhelm you with all the possible combinations, but generally speaking, runways with no instrument approaches designed for smaller aircraft will have a smaller surface area for the approach slope than runways designed for larger aircraft with instrument approaches. This provides an increased protected area and greater margin of error for larger, faster aircraft flying to runways in lower visibility conditions.

The State of Florida is a very popular location for flight training. Lots of flight training, means lots of student pilots that are still trying to refine their skills. It is very important to keep these Approach Surfaces clear of obstructions to provide that margin of error for when both student pilots and experienced flight crews are "off their game". Remember that an object that penetrates the Approach Surface is considered an obstruction and is a presumed hazard. There are a number of actions that the airport sponsor can take to resolve a penetration by an obstruction. This includes lowering and/or removing the obstruction, displacing the threshold of the runway, canceling/modifying instrument approaches, or changing the category of runway. Be mindful during the master planning process that changing the critical design aircraft for a runway may cause a change to the licensing standards applicable to that landing area and negatively impact the ability to license that runway.

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 and, as always, if corrective measures are undertaken, please ensure they comply. Chapter 14-60 is available on the Florida Aviation website at <https://www.fdot.gov/aviation/flpub.shtm>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding changes at your facility or if you have questions concerning Florida's airport licensure program.

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

LAKELAND LINDER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

by **Gene Conrad III, C.M.**, Airport Director, Lakeland Linder International Airport
and **Amanda Christie**, Airport Operations Specialist



Photo courtesy: Lakeland Linder International Airport

You may have seen Lakeland Linder International Airport (LAL) in the headlines as of late. A simple Google search of the words “Lakeland Airport” will return handfuls of recent news articles covering topics from construction and current events at the airport to future growth and plans. With multiple avionics shops, a paint shop, an interior shop, weight and balance services, A&P services and more than one aircraft import/export company located on the field, Lakeland International caters to pilots and aviation enthusiasts from all walks of life. The airport serves all pilots, from those looking to take to the sky for the first time to those who fly for fun in their spare time. Located on airport property you will find a high school with its curriculum based entirely around aviation and the largest high school flying club in the nation. The Central Florida Aerospace Academy has been fostering students interested in aviation/engineering at the airport for over a decade. It is remarkable when multiple generations can unite over a shared interest, and aviation is the perfect platform. Our business leaders and stakeholders here at LAL work together to help sponsor and develop the next generation of aviation professionals.

In addition to the services airport tenants provide pilots, LAL is most affectionately known for its massive annual fly-in. During the springtime, SUN 'n FUN hosts a week-long aviation extravaganza with daily airshows, static displays, camping areas, and more. While SUN 'n FUN's main event is the annual fly-in, the company operates year-round hosting a myriad of events at the airport. SUN 'n FUN also partners closely with the Central Florida Aerospace Academy (CFAA) to help develop young aviation professionals who are armed with the knowledge and tools necessary to enter the workforce. As of 2018, 93 students received their private pilot license with the help of CFAA.

Aside from the training facilities and schools located at the Lakeland Airport, there are plenty of other companies that help make the airport tick. On the southeastern side of LAL, you will find NOAA's Aircraft Operations Center (AOC). In this 106,000-square foot facility, NOAA houses their nine aircraft which all perform their own specific research and data collection. NOAA's AOC relocated

from Tampa's MacDill Air Force base to Lakeland International under a 10-year lease agreement in the summer of 2017. As of this summer, NOAA was awarded the funding necessary to order two new aircraft bringing the fleet total to eleven. The mission of NOAA's AOC is to gather meteorological and environmental data to provide the public with more accurate weather forecasts, specifically with tropical systems.

Draken International is another unique facility located on the south side of the airport near NOAA. Draken is a contract air services company who works alongside the military to provide tactical aircraft and training. Draken's fleet is a staggering 100 aircraft including L-159 Honey Badgers, A-4 Skyhawks, L-39 Albatrosses, Mirage F1Ms, and Atlas Cheetahs. The military utilizes companies such as Draken to minimize costs while expanding their fleet of aircraft and training crew members. If you hear the roaring in the sky over Lakeland, outside of the annual SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo, chances are high Draken is conducting flight tests on their aircraft after regeneration is complete before sending them to military bases around the world.



Photo courtesy: Lakeland Linder International Airport

The newest development at the Lakeland Airport is the construction of a 223,000-square foot Air Cargo sorting facility along with ramp area to park seven Boeing 767-300 cargo jets for Amazon Air. The airport has leased 47 acres to Amazon Air where the company plans to construct several buildings. The new business venture is expected to have a significant positive impact on the airport and the city in general. The facility will be operational in June 2020 and is expected that 1,000 jobs will be created by Amazon Air coming to Lakeland.

The airport is also in the process of strengthening the primary runway as per the Airport Master Plan Update and the lease agreement with Amazon. Runway 9-27 will be substantially opened for the annual SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo from mid-March through early April. However, the entire runway work is slated for completion by June. In addition to the runway pavement improvements, the airport is also upgrading the ILS for Runway 9-27, soon to be Runway 10-28. The airport will have a new SA CAT II ILS operational by June 2020 when the runway reopens with another upgrade to a full CAT III ILS to be completed and operational by November 2021. Some of the enhancements pilots will notice with the CAT III ILS upgrade include runway guard

lights, runway centerline and touchdown zone lighting and runway lead-on and lead-off centerline lighting.

The Lakeland Linder International Airport is a well-rounded facility as it is. However, there are plans on the horizon which cater to all aviation enthusiasts, pilots and businesses alike.

**Gene Conrad III, C.M. is the Airport Director and
Amanda Christie is an Airport Operations Specialist of
Lakeland Linder International Airport.**

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

DISTRICT 1

- Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) broke ground on a new \$80,000,000 Air Traffic Control Tower and TRACON facility in August 2019. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2021.
- The ribbon was cut on a new 24,000 square foot Multi-Use Hangar at Page Field (FMY) in October 2019. The hangar is equipped with four crew offices, and the project also included 58,000 square feet of paved apron, which will help address the seasonal demand for aircraft ramp parking.
- Construction of a 285,000-square foot Amazon fulfillment center is underway at Lakeland Linder International Airport (LAL). The complex is expected to bring 800 to 1,000 jobs to the area, with approximately \$150 million being invested by Amazon, and State and Local participation in approximately \$18 million of infrastructure. The project is set to be complete, and service is scheduled to begin, in the summer of 2020.
- A new 9,065 square foot ARFF Facility is currently under construction at Naples Municipal Airport (APF).

DISTRICT 2

- The District is beginning to schedule meetings with all the airports in the district during February and March in preparation for the new work program/gaming cycle that will begin on July 1, 2020.
- Kyle Coffman is the new District Freight & Logistics Supervisor, replacing Barbara Cloud in the Jacksonville Urban Office and handling aviation duties. Kyle began his new position in December 2019.
- The District thanks the Tallahassee Aviation Office for providing funding each year for back-up generators for fuel systems. Gainesville Regional Airport and Lake City Gateway Airport have utilized last year's allocations to purchase generators for their airports. This allows airports to continue dispensing fuel during hurricane emergencies when there is no power.

DISTRICT 3

- Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) signed a 20-year lease with the HSU Foundation to establish an A&P school at Bob Sikes Airport.

DISTRICT 4

- Treasure Coast International Airport (FPR) has broken ground on a 45,000-square-foot hangar at to attract an aviation-maintenance company. The new hangar will include 5,000 square feet of office space; 5,000 square feet of shop space for tools and equipment; and 35,000 square feet of hangar space.
- Pompano Beach Airpark (PMP) is completing renovations of its 40-year-old Administration Building. Upgrades included renovations



Photo courtesy: Treasure Coast Airport - Kevin Lindgren

to the office layout and enhancements to the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC. The facility has been modernization to bring it up to existing code for fire/life/safety as well as hurricane resistance.

- Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE) was recently added to The Florida Department of Transportation's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport serves as a General Reliever Airport for the Fort Lauderdale- Hollywood International Airport.



Photo courtesy: Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport - Carlton Harrison

DISTRICT 5

- Shaun Germolus is the new Director for Kissimmee Gateway Airport (ISM). Mr. Germolus has served over 26 years in airport management, including serving in the director role at several airports with commercial passenger service.

DISTRICT 6

- Miami International Airport closed out the decade with another record setting year of reaches nearly 46 million passengers in 2019, an increase of just under a million passenger over its total in 2018.
- Key West International Airport saw a 12% growth in total passengers in 2019.

DISTRICT 7

- Tampa International Airport was named the first bicycle-friendly Airport in the United States by the League of American Bicyclists - a designation that recognizes TPA's support of cycling in the Tampa Bay region. TPA's efforts include the construction of a new bike and pedestrian path that will later connect into a regional trail network, as well as new covered bike parking and repair stations.
 - TPA is debuting the first set of electronic gates at the entrance to the Airside A shuttle lobby. The gates will allow ticketed passengers and cleared guests to gain access to the airside shuttle, replacing the current system that requires manual scanning.
 - For the 5th Consecutive year, PIE set its all-time passenger record. In 2019, 2,288,692 passengers flew to/from 57 non-stop destinations. Overall, 2019 was up 2% over 2018. December 2019 was a 12% increase over December 2018 with 196, 331 passengers and our biggest December in history.

FLORIDA'S AVIATION FUNDING

by **Lisa Waters**, President/CEO, Florida Airports Council

Contributions by William Coulter, FAMA Executive Director (1971-2001)

Florida Airports Managers Association (FAMA) was formed in October 1969. Thirty-four years later, the organization would become the Florida Airports Council (FAC). A fledgling Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) had begun operations just four months earlier. When that agency was formed by the Legislature, there was no proven recipe to follow. They began with the old State Road Department (SRD), folded in the aviation they had on hand and seasoned with a mixture of railroads, local transit systems, buses, trains, and pipelines. FDOT knew roads, bridges, drainage and highway marking. What they didn't know all that much about was airports and aviation, trains and buses, local transit systems and pipelines.

Unfortunately, the Legislature neglected to send along additional money and knowledgeable staff. The only place the transportation department could turn to pay for its new obligations to aviation was the road use gasoline tax monies. Specifically, its only duties to aviation at that point consisted of airport licensing, aviation planning and air transportation development, all transferred from the aviation division of the board of commissioners of state institutions. The state did receive limited tax and fee revenues from airports and aviation; however, the Legislature sent that income to the state's general revenue fund.

FAMA had been advocating for the creation of a state aviation trust fund from the time it was founded. A big stumbling block was that all state revenues from airports and aviation continued to go into the state's general revenue fund. Legislators had begun transferring General Relief (GR) funds for airports and aviation into the state transportation trust fund, but that didn't constitute a pledged revenue source.

During the 1985 Legislative Session, lawmakers went on a search for more funding for transportation needs. A 5% per gallon levy on the price of aviation fuel pumped aboard aircraft in Florida was passed, but the monies continued to go to general revenue for transfer to the state's transportation trust fund. Both domestic and international air carriers filed court challenges. State courts upheld the levies in 1986. International air carriers then filed suit in federal court. While the challenges were in state courts, both domestic and international air carriers had been allowed by the courts to pay the disputed monies into escrow accounts pending outcome of the suits. The state badly needed use of those escrowed dollars to pay for transportation needs. At this juncture, domestic carriers proposed to the state that they would be willing to free up their escrowed funds if the Legislature would rewrite state law retroactively to levy a 5.7¢ tax per gallon to replace the 5% levy on the price paid for Avfuel. The Legislature accepted that offer. Subsequently, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a state couldn't tax an international air carrier.

The Legislature, trying to bring some rhyme and reason to the state's tax structure, amended Florida's tax codes to direct that all state revenues derived from taxes on aviation fuels would be routed to the state transportation trust fund. Now, at last, tax revenues from aviation and airports would be used to support airport projects.

Not only were aviation fuel revenues now going to finance aviation and airport projects, but the 1990 Legislature also increased Florida taxes on aviation fuels sold in the state to 6.9¢ per gallon. The 1990 Session also created a second match-grant type of funding for airport capital projects: Airport Discretionary Capital Improvement Projects for International Airports. Appropriations for these projects would come from sources other than aviation fuel tax revenues. ("...(a) minimum of 14.3 percent of all state revenues deposited into the State Transportation Trust Fund shall be committed annually ... for public transportation projects ...") From that set-aside would come dollars for Airport Discretionary Capacity Enhancement Projects (ADCEP). That act also stipulated that an amount equal to state tax collections on aviation fuel shall be appropriated from the state transportation trust fund each year for Airport Improvement Plan (AIP)-eligible projects. That 14.3% has since increased to 15% annually.

In 1996, the Legislature granted an exemption from payment of the aviation fuel tax, in the form of a refund, to any air carriers that increased service and the number jobs in the State of Florida. This aviation fuel tax refund was originally intended as a short-term incentive to attract new airline carriers to the state. However, after the events of September 11, 2001, the Legislature extended this refund policy with no expiration date.

Then in 2015, Airlines for America and other commercial carriers decided they shouldn't have to pay the aviation fuel tax. They lobbied hard, pressuring the Legislature to eliminate the incentive program and reduce the fuel tax to 5.4¢. This effort failed, but the airlines were back in 2016 and despite airport member outreach and FAC's efforts, legislation passed removing the incentives/refunds and lowering the aviation fuel tax to 4.27¢ per gallon beginning in FY 2019-20. In 2018, the Legislature reduced the impact on air carriers again, by increasing the amount of the rebate by an additional 1.42¢. This act reduced the effective fuel tax paid by air carriers to 2.85¢ - other small and general aviation operators continue to pay the 4.27¢ per gallon tax. At this time the rebate, is funded out of the state's general fund and does not have a direct impact on fuel tax contribution to the aviation work program. The rebate has an estimated \$7.9 million to \$8.8 million impact on the State's budget.



Florida's aviation fuel tax rate is below the national average. The funds collected are mandated to be invested in aviation infrastructure projects, including terminals to improve and expand infrastructure; runways to ensure compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations; and safety and security, which is each airport's top priority

for the traveling public. Aviation infrastructure has one of the best Returns on Investment in the state at \$1.72 per dollar spent. At the same time, it creates jobs - Florida's aviation industry supports 1.4 million jobs, and the industry generates \$175 billion in overall economic impact.

UNITED WE STAND SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE

by Aviation Office

As 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 the Department of Transportation to fund security-related aviation projects pursuant to Chapter 332, Florida Statutes and to provide training related to airport security and management. Last year, security assessments were conducted at 85 airports and specific projects were funded at 10 airports as a result.

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

For more information about how you can purchase this specialty license plate, please visit www.flhsmv.gov/specialtytags/SLP.html



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