The Penny for Pinellas is a one-cent sales tax that funds new capital projects all across Pinellas County. Ever since voters first approved the Penny in 1989, it has added value to our county with projects like the Bayside Bridge, McMullen Booth, Bryan Dairy Road, 118th Ave., and the Pinellas Trail. On March 13, voters will be asked to renew the Penny for another ten years. It’s important to remember that this is not a new tax – it’s a renewal of a one-cent sales tax paid by all who spend money in the County, including tourists and other visitors who contribute approximately one third of the Penny revenue. The Penny for Pinellas funds these projects without relying on higher property taxes to make Pinellas County a better place to live, work and visit. A renewal of the Penny would provide funding for some exciting future projects like a new expressway linking US 19 to I-275 without any stops, land for affordable housing, a coordinated emergency radio system, more hurricane shelter space and increased public access to our beaches.

The Airport will not receive funding from Penny proceeds for Airport capital projects. Our capital projects are primarily funded by grants from the Federal Aviation Administration and Florida Department of Transportation. However, airline service is directly tied to Pinellas’ tourism industry. In support of tourism, the Penny funds capital programs associated with our beautiful beaches, parks, cultural arts, and sports facilities as well as improvements to our transportation systems and emergency programs used by tourists and the community at large.

Please visit www.PinellasCounty.org/penny to find out more information about past and future projects and see what our citizens have to say about the Penny. And don’t forget to vote on March 13, 2007.

Noah Lagos, A.A.E., Airport Director

PIE finished the year with an 85 percent increase in domestic passengers this December over December 2005. Although the airport served 389,997 passengers overall in 2006, a 35 percent decline from 2005, the past months are a strong indicator of future trends.

The airport got a major boost beginning in November when Las Vegas-based Allegiant Air began nonstop service to 12 destinations. Also, the airport added new service to St. Paul/Minneapolis with Sun Country, Gary, IN on SkyValue and Toronto, Canada on Sunwing. Transat Holidays began new service to Halifax, Canada on February 3rd and Moncton, Canada on February 8th. For information, contact 1-866-322-6649 or www.transatholidays.com

Allegiant Air’s business plan is to link small markets such as Allentown, Peoria, and Toledo with tourism destinations such as the Tampa Bay area, avoiding competition with major carriers. Allegiant Air parent Allegiant Travel Co. carved out a profitable financial standing as a private company before raising $94.9 million in becoming a publicly traded company in December. Allegiant Air’s 6.4 percent operating margin in 2005 was higher than most other airlines. The early acceptance of Allegiant’s routes is notable. In addition to generating visiting leisure traffic, Tampa Bay residents are using Allegiant to fly nonstop to destinations otherwise available only through connecting flights. Allegiant Air announced plans to begin new service to Greenville-Spartanburg, SC.
Runway Extension Project
The north end safety area was completed this fall and now provides an emergency landing area beyond the runway end for aircraft. The work included placing and compacting earth fill in the low lying areas and installing armor rock along the shoreline to prevent erosion from wave action of the bay.

There have been many inquiries about the very large pile of earth located on north Fairchild drive. This spring the material will be transported by barge to fill in an old dredge hole located in Tampa Bay. This action will create new shallows so that seagrass can grow and provide a habitat for marine life.

Terminal Improvements
The Airport has initiated a roofing project that is expected to be completed in late April 2007. Most of the new roofing work will be over the restaurant, Gates 2 through 6, Ticketing B and the west end of the old Wick Wing.

In the next issue of our newsletter, we will present our plans for the renovation of Ticketing B and the expansion of Gates 2 through 6 with new jet loading bridges.

INTERIOR RENOVATIONS & ENHANCEMENTS

Over the past several months, the airport has worked closely with several other county departments to enhance the convenience and appeal of the terminal. We would like to extend special thanks to Pinellas County’s Cabinet Shop for their construction of new ticketing counters and the refurbishment of our General Howard exhibit cabinet. The General Howard exhibit is a tribute to the last commander of the Pinellas Army Airfield, the original airport property which was given to the county after WWII for use as a commercial airport. The exhibit underwent a complete renovation under the direction of Curator Alison Giesen of Pinellas County’s Heritage Village.

Another department that has been instrumental in assisting the airport is the Pinellas County Cultural Affairs Department. Expanding the airport’s display of public art has given the terminal, especially the Ticketing area, a new look and the public a great taste for the talents of Florida artists. We are very appreciative of the Cultural Affairs staff commitment to the airport as a gateway for tourists to showcase Pinellas County as an arts and culture destination.

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners approved an airport ground lease with PODS for development of their International Corporate Headquarters and Call Center. PODS Enterprises, Inc. (PODS) has revolutionized the moving and storing industry with their on-demand storage system. PODS, currently located in Pinellas County, has outgrown their existing office facilities.

Their new location will consist of 10 acres on airport property that is adjacent to the Cracker Barrel Restaurant on Ulmerton Road. PODS is seeking to develop a Class A, multi-story office building that will serve as its international headquarters and call center. At some future date, POD’S may construct an aircraft hangar facility in support of their company owned aircraft. Construction of POD’s headquarters is scheduled to begin this summer.
Noise Study Completed— To support the ongoing work of the Noise Abatement Task Force (NATF), Wyle Laboratories (Wyle) conducted a two-phased Noise Study. The primary goal was to identify current and future aircraft-generated noise levels in the vicinity of the Airport. Wyle is scheduled to present the second phase of their study to the NATF on February 21st. The presentation will focus on the future (2010) aircraft-generated noise levels and impacts new potential arrival procedures to Runway 17L may have on communities north of the Airport. Wyle, in collaboration with Jeppesen and Airport staff, will also be presenting their findings to the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on March 20th. The noise exposure data developed by Wyle will be used by the NATF and BCC to aid in the decision making process regarding new arrival procedures.

PIE Gets New Instrument Landing System—The FAA recently completed installation of a new Instrument Landing System (ILS) for Runway 35R. The new ILS, scheduled to be operational on March 15, 2007, will permit aircraft to land from the south during inclement weather conditions.

With 2006 ending with the lowest passenger traffic in over 15 years, it is important to note that the airport serves many aviation activities. Totals over the past 15 years has remained very consistent with slightly over 200,000 aircraft operations per year. In 2006, there were 204,474 aircraft operations on PIE’s runways. Less than 3% were passenger airlines, 2% cargo, and 8% military operations. Over 87% were general aviation, comprised of corporate and private aircraft.
PIE’s Featured Tenant - Hallmark Development

The Airport Business Center is a partnership between Hallmark Development of Fl, Inc. and Continental Business Housing. The Airport Business Center was created in 1987 to serve the business community with centrally located office space and services. Its quality construction, attractive buildings, support services and on-site management, are attributes that facilitate the needs of growing businesses. With nearly 350,000 sq. ft. of office and warehouse space, over 110 satisfied customers call the Airport Business Center home. Offices customized to your needs and special conditions are delivered in weeks.

The airport is currently in the process of finalizing a ground lease for their expansion that will conclude the development of the Airport Business Center.

As the managing partner, Hallmark is an experienced On-Site Property Manager.

For more information, visit www.AirportBusinessCenter.net or contact 727-539-7002.

Airport Community Relations

PIE welcomes schools, community and youth groups for airport tours. Airport volunteers are needed to assist with passengers and school tours. Contact: Michele Routh at 727-453-7879 or email info@fly2pie.com for more information.

Sutherland Elementary School Visits the Airport

Third Graders visited the airport and were thrilled to be invited by USA3000 to walk through an airplane. For some of the students it was the first time seeing the inside of a plane. The airport received dozens of thank you letters from students who visited with airport firefighters, USA3000 and toured the terminal. Students wrote, “The walk though the plane was cool! I’ve never been on one before.”, “It has been the best field trip ever!”, and “I think it is the best airport in the whole entire century!”

Thanks Sutherland Elementary!

Midtown through our Eyes

The airport is very pleased to present a student photography exhibition by summer journalism camp students from John Hopkins Middle and Melrose Elementary magnet schools. The 3rd Annual Camp trains young journalists to visit the Midtown neighborhood and record their vision in words and images. The airport is proud to display a portion of the photography exhibit. The exhibit is located directly across from the gift shop between Ticketing A and B.