HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Oh Canada! We are looking forward to a stellar year in increased air service to Canada with an over 45% growth in flights and seats. Sunwing will be starting service to Toronto November 5th, over a month earlier than last year. Transat Holidays continues service to Halifax and begins new seasonal service to Toronto. Both destinations will be served by a larger aircraft (249 seat Airbus A310) for the entire season. Our newest destination, recently announced by Allegiant, is Niagara Falls/Buffalo beginning December 15th with two flights weekly. According to Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (2011), approximately 70 percent of the Niagara Falls Airport passengers come from Southern Ontario. You might recall that just a few years ago, Allegiant added Plattsburgh, New York flights, which draw from the Montreal/Quebec region. Allegiant now has 23 non-stop destinations from PIE.

Tourism and travel from Canada and our U.S. gateways continue to grow. Both Sunwing and Allegiant are achieving great success. Sunwing Travel Group just made the Profit 200 list again (the only airline and tour operator) for the 7th consecutive year with its focus on quality and value to their customers. Allegiant was recently named one of Fortune’s “100 fastest growing companies” for the second year and number one in the transportation category. Fortune mentions a key to Allegiant’s success is the value to the customer by offering great fares and vacation options. This is particularly true in the Tampa Bay market.

The airport was busy this summer and in new and exciting ways. PIE was honored to host two Allegiant chartered WWII Veterans Honor flights. The flights on June 28th and September 20th, carried close to 150 veterans plus guardians to Washington D.C. to visit the monuments and memorials, particularly those honoring the soldiers who fought in WWII. Their send-off and return home were celebrations of the veterans’ service to our country. The airport staff was proud to work with the Honor Flight volunteers, Allegiant and TSA employees, and the many other individuals and groups that came to welcome these vets home.

We are looking forward to a great fall and winter season. Hope to see you in the terminal real soon. More to come….Noah Lagos

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REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT - The latest on projects at the airport and surrounding airport-owned real estate. For more information, contact Properties Director Bob Humberstone at (727)453-7820 or bhumber@pinellascounty.org.

Renovations underway at Samuel Adams Grille and Pub

The Samuel Adams Grille and Pub on the 2nd floor began renovations September 6th and is expected to be completed October 24th. It will offer a first-class, full-service dining experience with its newly designed dining room and kitchen.

During the construction period, the Samuel Adams Grille and Pub, owned and operated by First Class Concessions, will offer a limited menu at the lounge. The Tampa Bay Café, located post the security checkpoint in Gates 2-6, is fully operational for departing passengers.

FLYSmart at the airport

FLYSmart has arrived at PIE. An LCD information board was installed in Baggage Claim in September by Clear Channel Airports. FLYSmart helps travelers arriving at PIE to locate accommodations, restaurants, and amenities in the area via touch screen and then, pick up the attached page phone to call a local hotel for reservations, request airport-hotel shuttle service, or to make other transportation arrangements, such as taxi service or car rental.

For travelers with an iPhone, iPod touch, iPad and Android devices, a free application of Fly Smart can be downloaded (www.flysmartapp.com). FLYSmart works by mapping and quickly displaying all the immediate information air travelers need about ATM’s, newsstands, gift shops, restaurants, terminal information, restrooms, and more. The App also offers live feeds of flight arrival and departure information, in addition to local hotels, services and attractions in destination cities.

Runway 4-22 Rehabilitation Project

Runway 4-22 is the airport’s secondary runway at 5,903 feet in length. Construction of its resurfacing begins on October 13th. In addition to the resurfacing of 4-22, the project includes the reconstruction of several taxiways, runway lighting, and signage.

Ajax Paving is the general contractor for this project with a bid award of $5,093,278. All work should be fully completed by May 29, 2012.
AIRPORT OPERATIONS & NOISE AFFAIRS UPDATE - For questions about PIE’s Noise Abatement and Mitigation Program, contact the Noise Affairs Office at (727) 453-7880 or airportnoise@pinellascounty.org. If you have concerns or complaints about aircraft noise, please contact the Noise Hotline at (727) 453-7877 or visit our website at www.fly2pie.com/noise. The website features a flight tracking option, frequently asked questions about aircraft noise, and an automated complaint form for reporting noise incidents to the airport.

Noise Abatement Task Force (NATF) - Community, airport, and aviation tenant representatives meet to discuss noise affairs at PIE. All meetings are held quarterly in the Airport Conference Room 234 and are open to the public; minutes are posted on the website. The next meeting is October 19th at 3:00 pm.

Airport Operations - PIE, in coordination with TSA, conducted an explosives response exercise with responding agencies in case an explosive device is found at the airport. The simulation exercise held in September included Pinellas County and Hillsborough County Emergency responders, and several Federal agencies.

Allegiant to Move Ticket Counter Operations at PIE

After completion of a new automated Inline Checked Baggage System (scheduled for November/December 2011), Allegiant will relocate their ticketing and passenger check-in operations from Ticketing A to Ticketing B. The new baggage system will process up to 450 bags an hour, compared to 125 bags with the existing stand-alone baggage screening equipment. The new system will accommodate Allegiant’s current and future peak hourly demand. The $1.1 million construction project is fully funded by grants from the Transportation Security Administration (95%) and Florida Department of Transportation (5%).

Educational Tours - The airport welcomed 2 chapters of the Southeastern Guide Dogs Association in September. The organization raises and trains dogs to assist the visually impaired. Training at the airport includes introducing the dogs to moving bag belts, security screening, and airplane boarding and seating. The airport, Allegiant, and the TSA worked together with the 16 puppies and their puppy raisers/trainers to give them a full airport experience.
The airport’s new fiscal year began October 1st. The budget reflects our commitment to operate the airport as efficiently and effectively as possible for our passengers, airlines, tenants, and local community. The overall annual operating expense budget for FY2012 is $8.96 million (excluding Airco Golf which closed May 2011), a decrease of (1.1%) from the prior year. The airport is funded with revenue generated from fees and rents. No Pinellas County ad valorem (property) tax dollars are used to support its operation. The airport is audited annually to monitor fiscal procedures and policies. An audit of FY2010 operating revenues and expenses, federal and state grant revenues, and passenger facility charge collections was conducted by Ernst & Young with no findings or recommendations issued.