

# WEEKEND WAVE

12-12-14



## Friday Economic Roundup

### AREA NEWS

#### Sarasota-Bradenton airport looking forward to progress

By Justine Griffin Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Air Canada, which announced this week that it will begin offering year-round service to Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, is the first of many air carriers that might be interested in expanding service in Southwest Florida, airport officials predict.

Airport officials met Wednesday with local tourism boosters to discuss the growth of the region's airport, which included this week's announcement that nonstop flights to and from Toronto will be offered year-round instead of just during season.

The airport is seeing a steady uptick in passengers, thanks in part to longer seasonal flight schedules and a boost in winter flights.

"We're seeing incremental but steady growth over the years with our carriers and their interest in expanding seasonal flights," airport CEO Frederick "Rick" Piccolo said. "Air Canada's commitment to serving the market year-round is a true testament to that. It means that they see enough business to have flights here through the summer months, too."

Air Canada has been offering daily nonstop seasonal service from the Ontario area to

Sarasota-Bradenton from November to April since 2006. The year-round service will begin May 2, with weekly nonstop flights on Thursdays and Saturdays.

In 2015, the airport will have eight seasonal flights, which includes a new, second daily flight to and from Chicago's O'Hare International and new weekend flights to New York. The additional United Airlines flight to Chicago means the airline will offer daily flights here 110 days of the year, compared with 73 in 2014.

Delta Air Lines also is offering two new flights this winter season, including Saturday flights to and from both of New York's international airports. The carrier also has brought back its seasonal service to Detroit and has expanded the service to fly to and from Sarasota-Bradenton on three additional days.

The airport is still recovering from the loss of AirTran, a discount airliner that left in 2012, when the company merged with Southwest.

But the influx of new flights can be seen in the growth of passenger traffic at the airport. Passenger counts were up by 3 percent in September from the same month a year ago.

Traffic was up by 4.84 percent in October and is expected to be up by nearly 5 percent in November, said Mark Stuckey, the airport's vice president of special projects and development.

"We're able to offer our passengers access to international flight connections we just didn't have last year," Stuckey said.

The addition of a year-round Canadian flight will open the door for worldwide travelers, including those from Europe, to reach Southwest Florida. The new flights are timed for international connections in Toronto through Air Canada's global network.

Airport officials say they hope the 2013 merger of American Airlines and U.S. Airways will eventually open the door for flight service to western U.S. destinations, such as Texas. But there are no signs of that happening yet.

In March, airport officials were weighing incentives to draw air service options to and from the Baltimore area for the baseball spring training season of the Baltimore Orioles in Sarasota.

Packages could include up to \$500,000 for advertising new flight routes and waiving landing fees.

Delta is now the only carrier that offers limited service to Sarasota-Bradenton from Baltimore, through a connection in Atlanta. AirTran had direct daily flights to Sarasota from Baltimore-Washington International.

#### **Customs center work**

A U.S. Customs & Border Protection Federal Inspection center under construction at the airport is expected to be open in May.

Renovations began in April and are expected to cost \$2.3 million. The work will be funded with part of \$9 million in grants from the Federal Aviation Administration. That money also is being used for a variety of improvements at the airport, including construction of a new air traffic control tower.

Airport and local tourism officials said they hope that expanded customs operation will be the next step in attracting international air carriers.

It is unclear if the airport will be able to secure the additional staff needed to process the required number of passengers to attract international carriers. It is equipped to process 150 passengers a day but will need to be able to handle 300.

U.S. Customs agents have been able to process foreign travelers at the airport since 1992. That is despite Sarasota-Bradenton not having international flights other than service to Canada and occasional Caribbean connections through some smaller carriers.

#### **A parking garage plan**

Local airport officials may consider building a parking garage in place of the open-air parking lot at the airport in coming years.

Piccolo said the airport, which became debt free in August, would not need to borrow money for regular operations for 10 to 15 years.

The airport has enough money to consider a parking garage project, Piccolo said, but it is unlikely that staff and Sarasota-Manatee Airport Authority board will discuss the idea until current renovation work, which include an overhaul of the terminal and plans for the new air traffic control tower, are completed next year.

Some passengers have complained about having to leave their cars outside during trips.

## **Charlotte County investor makes \$165,000 on warehouse flip**

By Michael Braga Sarasota Herald-Tribune

A Cape Coral company managed by Sherrie R. Douglas sold a 10,200- square-foot

warehouse at 15040 Tamiami Trail in Charlotte County to Craig's Property Management Corp. for \$625,000,

Douglas' company paid \$460,000 in June.

It previously sold for \$1.2 million in August 2006.

Craig's Property Management is a Fort Myers company managed by Eric Craig.

## Sarasota County hires Punta Gorda growth planner

By Michael Braga Sarasota Herald-Tribune

**SARASOTA COUNTY** - Sarasota County has tapped a Punta Gorda growth planner as its next development services manager, the county's third managerial hire in as many weeks.

Dennis Murphy will take over a department that operates the county's land development, building inspections and code enforcement services. He begins the new role Dec. 15.

Murphy was most recently Punta Gorda's director of growth management. At the county, he will be involved in the unlicensed/unpermitted enforcement program, update of the Land Information System, continued implementation of the Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan, and regularly review the land development regulations.

Murphy will report to Planning and Development Services director Tom Polk.

"We look forward to bringing Dennis' talents into the Planning and Development Services organization," Polk said in a statement. "His background and experience make him well suited for furthering the county's goal of planning for positive development and redevelopment."

Murphy has more than two decades of experience, including 13 years working for neighboring Charlotte County and another nine with Punta Gorda.

He earned a bachelor's degrees from the University of South Florida and the University of Florida's College of Engineering, where he studied surveying and mapping.

Murphy joins two other managerial hires in the past month alone, including a new SCAT director and budget manager.

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## FLORIDA ECONOMIC NEWS

- Third hiring blitz in recent months aims to fill 80 construction jobs ([Orlando Sentinel](#))
- Florida and Arizona: Baby Boomer Magnets ([Tampa Bay Times](#))

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## US ECONOMIC NEWS

- Promising jobs report suggests Americans' earnings are rising again ([Orlando Sentinel](#))
- What happens when you decide to leave China? ([Supply&Demand Chain Executive](#))
- U.S. employers looking to hire more in Q1 2015 ([Manpower Employment Outlook](#))
- Economists forecast fast growth in 2015 ([AP](#))
- Business inventories rise in October, sales slip ([Reuters](#))
- 2014 financial year in review ([North Central Florida Business Report](#))

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## ENTREPRENEUR NEWS

- Trends that will impact small businesses in 2015 ([Miami Herald](#))
- Seeing your organization from your staff's perspective ([Jerry Osteryoung](#))
- Why first generation students find it tougher To earn a college degree ([StateImpact Florida](#))
- Florida among most entrepreneur-friendly states ([Orlando Business Journal](#))

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