

## Master Plan projects lift airport budget

By LIZ HARDAWAY

STAFF WRITER

The Charlotte County **Airport** Authority recently approved its new budget that's \$17.16 million more than last year's budget.

The total budget, \$42.5 million, isn't just a

spending spree, though. Most of this increase comes from capital expenditures, which increased from \$5.3 million last year to \$26.2 million. These are going to be used to fund the upcoming projects scheduled in the **airport's** Master Plan.

The Punta Gorda **Airport**, however, can't start construction on any of these projects until their environmental assessment is complete. **Airport** Executive Director Jim Parish expects the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Commission to give the go-ahead by January to begin construction. Design plans for the projects have started.

"We're moving forward with design, so when the environmental assessment is complete we can go," Parish said.

Projects anticipated to start early 2019 include the second phase of wetland mitigation, phase three of T-Hangar door replacement and constructing access from Challenger Road to the new general

aviation facilities. The total estimated cost is \$3.4 million, according to the Master Plan's facilities implementation plan.

In the second half of 2019, the **airport** plans to implement four projects, including constructing new general aviation taxiways, an apron, terminal, parking and a new Western Michigan University flight school building with parking. The **airport** also plans to relocate

its self-serve fuel facility. The costs are estimated to be \$13 million.

Though 2018's yearend forecast came out \$169,000 over in expenses, the **airport** generated a million dollars more in revenue than anticipated. Seventy percent of this extra revenue was generated from airlinerelated revenues.

"We try to be very conservative with expenses every year and with income," Parish said regarding how much more profit the **airport** made than anticipated. As for the overages in expenses, "a lot of it has to do with fuel costs," he said. The costs of fuel "fluctuate drastically throughout the year," so when making the budget, PGD tries to give its best estimate, Parish said.

Regardless of the extreme budget changes, the budget does not reflect the \$11.4 million the **airport** has in reserves. Meaning, if the **airport** for some reason stopped making money altogether, it could still operate business as usual for 15 months.

"We're in the black," Parish said. "We have a very successful model and it tends to make more

money than most models do."

**Email:** [lhardaway@sun-herald.com](mailto:lhardaway@sun-herald.com)

## PG Airport: Budget increase not at taxpayer expense

By **LIZ HARDAWAY**

STAFF WRITER

In an **airport** budget that's increased by \$17.2 million since last year, one has to wonder exactly where this money is coming from.

The answer? Not tax dollars.

"No Charlotte County taxpayer dollars are paid to us," said Kaley Miller, spokesperson for the Punta Gorda **Airport** (PGD).

A majority of this increase can be attributed to the many projects the **airport** has planned under its Master Plan, which are classified under capital expenditures. Capital expenditures increased from \$10.1 million last year to \$26.2 this year.

With 15 capital improvements planned for the next fiscal year, including building a brand-new General Aviation terminal facility and extending the runway,

PGD anticipates receiving 67.5 percent of the funding for these projects from entities outside the **airport** — such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

These capital improvements are estimated to cost \$34 million, with almost \$23 million coming from FAA entitlements, FDOT, the FDOT Strategic Intermodal System fund and additional FAA grants.

The FAA grants will take up a majority of the financing pie, funding 38 percent of the total funds for the projects.

"We're very confident we'll receive grant funding for the new General Aviation apron, taxiway and taxiway as we've been working closely with the FAA for over two years on it," said PGD CEO James Parish.

According to budget documents,

FAA grant applications for the new general aviation terminal facility will be submitted June 19. Pre-applications will be submitted Nov. 18.

The **airport** is already entitled to roughly \$6.1 million from the FAA this next year. They anticipate securing this funding by August 2019. Funding from FDOT, which will be \$3.8 million, will be secured in October or November of 2018, according to the budget documents.

The remaining \$11 million is coming from Charlotte County **Airport** Authority funds and money accrued from passenger facility charges (PFC).

The Charlotte County **Airport** Authority itself provides \$4.5 million. The authority has \$11.4 million in reserves from past revenues.

Passenger facility charges are paid by passengers to Allegiant when each ticket is booked, Miller said. Allegiant then reimburses the **airport**

. PGD anticipates receiving \$3.2 million from passenger facility charges this fiscal year and spending \$6.5 million on improvement projects for the **airport**.

Passenger facility charges were increased in the Sept. 20 **Airport** Authority meeting, from \$2 per passenger to \$4.50.

E-mail: [lhardaway@sun-herald.com](mailto:lhardaway@sun-herald.com)

**Allegiant planes at the Punta Gorda Airport.**

PHOTO PROVIDED BY PGD



[https://www.yoursun.com/northport/airport-sends-residents-on-treasure-hunt/article\\_c8f8f200-c64f-11e8-9580-83d56bdef304.html](https://www.yoursun.com/northport/airport-sends-residents-on-treasure-hunt/article_c8f8f200-c64f-11e8-9580-83d56bdef304.html)

TOPICAL FEATURED

## Airport sends residents on treasure hunt

By LIZ HARDAWAY Staff Writer Oct 6, 2018



Look for this coin at various community locations for a chance to win PGD prizes.

Sun photo by Liz Hardaway

**PUNTA GORDA** — Through Wednesday, area residents can search high and low for a blue coin with an airplane on it. Oh, and possibly win a free getaway to Key West.

In celebration of Punta Gorda Airport's 75th anniversary, the airport is hosting a coin treasure hunt contest.

And no, no one gets a treasure map leading to the bright red “X.” Residents actually don’t even have to find a coin to get a chance to win, as the contest is also being held online where participants can submit entries to win. Participants can only submit their name once throughout the contest. The coin does multiply the chance to win by 10, though.

“Keeping your eyes out for a commemorative PGD coin is a fun way for our community to celebrate PGD’s 75th Anniversary with us,” said Marketing & Communications Manager Kaley Miller. “We’re asking successful coin hunters to snap a photo so we can share it online and promote local businesses and destinations.”

PGD is hiding 25 of these bad boys all around the county, from Englewood to Punta Gorda. Coins will be hidden one of two places: well-trafficked or public areas, and a limited number of local businesses and organizations. Participating host locations so far include the Isles Yacht Club, the Punta Gorda Library, the Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens and the Centennial Bank Punta Gorda Branch.

The Isles Yacht Club in Punta Gorda will be welcoming treasure hunters during their regular office hours to ask them a trivia question. Once answered, the participant will be entered to win the PGD coin assigned to the club. The Isles Yacht Club is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

PGD started as the Punta Gorda Army Airfield in 1943, “which was key to training pilots for overseas duty and contributed to the victory in World War II,” PGD said in a press release.

As of Tuesday morning, the contest has received 15 entries and no coins have been found yet.

The winners will be selected via a random number generator and contacted on or about Oct. 15. Winners must be physically present with verifiable identification to pick up the prize at PGD, Miller said.

---

Email: [lhardaway@sun-herald.com](mailto:lhardaway@sun-herald.com)

## Prizes

One grand prize winner will receive a one-day Key West Getaway for five guests; an Air Trek air charter valued at \$2,000. The Key West Getaway includes continental breakfast, one-hour flight in Air Trek's pressurized Cessna 414 for up to five passengers, a tour of Key West, and champagne served on a sunset flight home later the same day.

Three additional winners will each receive a \$250 Travel Voucher from Allegiant Air.

Four additional winners will each receive a Family 4-Pack to the Florida International Air Show.

Various other winners will win PGD-branded stainless-steel canteens, hats, shirts and more merchandise.

*Source: PGD.*



  **Don Gasgarth's**  
**Charlotte County Ford**  
(941) 625-6141 • 3156 TAMiami TRAIL • PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33952

[CLICK TO VIEW INVENTORY & SPECIALS](#)

## Air Show continues through today in Punta Gorda

### FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL AIR SHOW

By **LIZ HARDAWAY**

STAFF WRITER

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Little jumps 13,000 feet from a helicopter with the Special Operations Command Para-Commandos.

A fear of heights hasn't stopped him after 15 years of falling from the sky.

"There's a cap. You can only be so afraid of heights," Little said.

"Humans aren't meant to be that high," said U.S. Air Force Technical Sgt. Miguel Sarria. "At a certain point your brain just doesn't compute it."

"It's just like looking out an airplane, and the rest of the way, it's like floating," Sarria said.

Little, Sarria and Master Sgt. Red Smith with the U.S. Marines all represent various branches of the military.

Once Smith got more into view from the ground during the Florida International Air Show at Punta Gorda **Airport** Saturday, he started spiraling, getting up to 60 miles per hour, announcer Rob Reider said. He then wielded the MIA flag to celebrate the losses of those who served.

"The view is absolutely incredible," Smith said. "The way the waterway comes into the bay, it's just beautiful."

"There's nothing like it in the world," he said.

The Para-Commandos were just one of the many attractions that were present at the show Saturday, which continues through today.

With the help of 600-700 volunteers, the three-day event had its largest Friday night turnout it'd ever had, said Steve Lineberry, spokesperson for the event.

"This is fun, people ought to get out on the beautiful day and enjoy their family," said spectator Janet Carmac.

"We were very excited about the crowd," Lineberry said. "There were some

bumps along the way with parking, we're working diligently with that. We appreciate everyone's patience."

The Air Show took a while to actually get to. For visitors standing in a chaotic snake of a line waiting to be shuttled from

**The moon peeks through a formation of three planes performing Friday at the Florida International Air Show in Punta Gorda.**

SUN PHOTO BY CAPT. JOSH OLIVE

a parking lot a mile away via school bus, tension seemed to subside once they arrived. Port Charlotte resident Barb Knowlton reported waiting an hour and a half just to get to the parking lot.

So, attendees are advised to arrive before noon today.

coming out here, I have a great time," Newton said.

"The weather is beautiful, couldn't be better," he added.

"The best part about it, it's a community event," Sander said. "The charities help run it," and in

got into Air Shows through the one hosted at the Punta Gorda **Airport** each year.

"The originators were the first ones that gave me an opportunity at the Air Show," McCart said. "They've turned into family."

**A parachutist lands with the American Flag Saturday at the Florida International Air Show in Punta Gorda.**

SUN PHOTO BY JERRY BEARD

Fig Newton and Sam Sander have frequently visited the show. Newton dressed up as a hot-air pilot, because he's "full of hot air," he said.

Sander was dressed as Uncle Sam and enjoyed the festivities of the Air Show for the 30th year in a row.

From the tents, to handing out bitesize fig newtons to passersby, "I love getting dressed up and

return the Air Show has raised over \$3 million for these charities since its inception.

Other performances spectators can witness are the Dash Aerosports Racing Team, Precision Exotics, Randy Ball's Fighter Jets, Mohawk Air Shows, Don Stamps War Bird Review, the Vampire Airshows de Havilland DH115, Jerry McCart's Homewrecker Jet Truck, the CAF Red Tail Squadron and Chef Pitts.

Now doing 20 shows a year, McCart actually

See McCart's Ford F650 "Homewrecker" truck blasts away at up to 375 miles per hour today, along with myriad other performances.

Gates open at 9 a.m. and performances go from noon to 3:30 p.m.

**Email: [lhardaway@sun-herald.com](mailto:lhardaway@sun-herald.com)**

**A plane flies upside-down while performing Friday at the Florida International Air Show in Punta Gorda.**

SUN PHOTO BY CAPT. JOSH OLIVE



## **Allegiant Air's third quarter: Revenue and passengers went up, profits down**

**By MALENA CAROLLO**

TAMPA BAY TIMES

The parent of Allegiant Air saw revenues and its passenger count rise from a year ago, but its profits shrank. Las Vegas-based Allegiant Travel Co., which operates the sole carrier at the Punta Gorda **Airport** and the dominant carrier at St. Pete Clearwater International **Airport**, on Wednesday reported \$393 million in revenue in its third quarter, up just over 12 percent from the year-ago quarter. Its net income was about \$15 million, down 35 percent compared to the year-ago period.

Its passenger count also increased from just over 3 million in the third quarter of 2017 to 3.5 million in the same quarter for 2018 — up 15 percent. The company also added 43 Airbus planes and retired 47 MD planes, which are generally older and prone to more maintenance issues.

“Our transition to an all-Airbus fleet is nearly complete,” said Maurice Gallagher Jr., CEO of Allegiant Travel, in a release. “Our decision to move the transition up by a year from 2019 to 2018 has proven to be an excellent one given the higher fuel cost environment.”