

2010 Florida Aviation Awards

Stephanie Kopelousos, FDOT Secretary, and Aaron Smith, State Aviation Manager, announced the winners of the 2010 Florida Aviation Awards at the Florida Airports Council Conference in August.

Below is the presentation speech by State Aviation Manager Aaron Smith:

Aviation Professional

Larry Dale

Larry Dale has been the President and CEO of Orlando Sanford International Airport since June 2001. For the past eight-and-a-half years, he has worked diligently and successfully to bring growth and development to the airport. In 2009, in the aftermath of the water crash landing of US Airways Flight 1549, Mr. Dale recognized the need for legislation to provide immunity from prosecution for airport managers in the lawful execution of wildlife mitigation on airport property.

As he stated at the time, "Airport personnel should not be fearful of prosecution in doing what is necessary to keep people safe." From the initial concept to the final approval of both the House and Senate, to the Governor's signing on June 11, 2009, Mr. Dale was instrumental in the successful passage of this important legislation.

More recently and related to that effort, Mr. Dale worked closely with Florida Fish and Wildlife staff to draft the associated promulgated rule, and on June 23, 2010, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) voted unanimously to adopt new provisions of FWC administrative code for the Take of Wildlife on Airport Property. Mr. Dale is now pursuing similar legislation at the federal level.

That dedication and can-do spirit was sorely put to the test in January and February of 2010 when Orlando Sanford International Airport became one of the primary receiver airports for evacuees



Stephanie Kopelousos, FDOT Secretary (right, in above photos), and Aaron Smith, State Aviation Manager (left), present the 2010 Florida Aviation Awards. Clockwise from top left: **Aviation Professional**, Larry Dale; **Distinguished Service**, Ana Sotorrio; **GA Airport Project**, Roy Sieger, Flagler County Airport; **Commercial Service Airport Project**, Ernestine Moody-Robinson, Jacksonville International Airport; **GA Airport**, Clara Bennett, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport; **Commercial Service Airport**, Noah Lagos, St. Petersburg–Clearwater International Airport.

from Haiti in the wake of a devastating earthquake. In a three-week period, Orlando-Sanford received more than 9,500 evacuees on 126 military flights. As Incident Commander during Operation Haiti Relief, Larry Dale was able to bring together emergency personnel and resources from throughout the community to provide an efficient and effective around-the-clock response for these incoming passengers. Throughout the three weeks, Mr. Dale was a reassuring and a constant presence, from personally greeting incoming flights, providing assistance to elderly passengers and carrying children, to working through our legislators and the military forces in Haiti to locate and retrieve misplaced orphans. Again, a tireless leader, an exemplary airport professional!

Nominated by: Diana Crews

Let us all congratulate: The President and CEO of Orlando Sanford International Airport, Mr. Larry Dale, our 2010 Aviation Professional of the Year.

Distinguished Service

Ana Sotorrio

Ana Sotorrio joined the Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD) in 1988 as an Aviation Special Assistant. Over the years, she rose through the ranks to her position as Associate Director of Governmental Affairs. She retired July 31, 2010, after 35 years of service to Miami-Dade County.

Ms. Sotorrio had been a key voice in the formulation of policies on local, state, national, and international aviation

issues and strategic planning for the improvement and expansion of the Miami-Dade County airports. She served as the county's representative to industry organizations including the Florida Airports Council (FAC), the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and the Airport Council International – North America (ACI-NA).

Ms. Sotorrio is known throughout MDAD, the county, the state, and Washington, D.C., for her knowledge of aviation issues, integrity, and as a champion of causes advancing the interests of Miami and Florida aviation.

During her 22 years amongst the MDAD family, Ms. Sotorrio served six different aviation directors, witnessed the demise of MIA's bedrock airlines, Eastern and Pan American, and the rise of American Airlines to the dominant MIA carrier. Surviving those tumultuous years required adaptation, through which Ms. Sotorrio helped shepherd the MDAD family.

Nominated by: Tony Quintero

Let us all congratulate: Ms. Ana Sotorrio, recipient of our 2010 Distinguished Aviation Service Award.

General Aviation Airport Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport

Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport is city owned and operated, serving as a public, non-commercial, general aviation facility. The airport is designated by the FAA as a "reliever airport" for nearby Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport and has for many years ranked as one of the busiest general aviation airports in the country. It was recently ranked third busiest general aviation airport in the country for itinerant operations.

FXE is home to about 700 aircraft, six fixed base operators, a 24-hour FAA Air Traffic Control Tower, U.S. Customs Service (2nd busiest in the nation), 24-hour Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting services, 24-hour security, and a police substation. These operating characteristics in combination make FXE similar

to many commercial service airports and FXE management strives to adhere to most of the requirements and advisories applicable for a Part 139 airport accordingly, though not required to do so.

The airport features a 200-acre Industrial Airpark with nearly two million square feet of office, warehouse and manufacturing space. The airport also operates and maintains the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Heliport. In addition, Executive Airport administers and promotes the City of Fort Lauderdale Foreign Trade Zone #241, which affords economic incentives to companies doing business internationally.

The recently completed FDOT study estimated the total annual economic impacts of FXE at over \$800 million, including 5,000 jobs with a total payroll of \$176 million.

Nominated by: Clara Bennett

Let us all congratulate: Airport Manager Clara Bennett, the staff of Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, and the city of Fort Lauderdale for the 2010 General Aviation Airport of the Year Award.

Commercial Service Airport St. Petersburg–Clearwater International Airport

St. Petersburg–Clearwater International Airport (PIE) has had a stellar year in providing excellent customer service; the airport has completely transformed and modernized the terminal facility utilizing responsible and resourceful financial management, and continues to have an exceptional safety record.

PIE has received zero discrepancies for the past five consecutive years during the annual Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Part 139 inspection, and has improved airfield safety by installing redundant vehicle gate systems to prevent potential vehicle and pedestrian incursions.

The terminal building has been completely transformed and the project's interior designer Kelly Taaffe Noto described it best, "Our goal was to create a total tropical 'distraction' from the otherwise stressful environment. This

was accomplished through the predominant design influence being the natural beauty of local beaches and sea life as well as classically tasteful beach cottage architecture."

The airport's recently completed \$20.9 million terminal renovation project incorporated innovative "pay-as-you-go" funding with minimal impact to the airport's reserves, and without issuance of bonds or incurring any debt.

According to FDOT's economic impact study, PIE generates an estimated \$925 million in economic impact to the community, which reflects on the airport's management, the efficiency of the small staff, along with tenant, county, and community collaboration.

Nominated by: Noah Lagos

Let us all congratulate: Airport Director Noah Lagos, the staff of St. Petersburg–Clearwater International, and Pinellas County for the 2010 Commercial Service Airport of the Year Award.

General Aviation Airport Project Flagler County Airport Air Traffic Control Tower

Flagler County recognizes corporate jet business is currently the fastest growing and most economically viable segments of the aviation industry.

In order to attract corporate traffic to Flagler County Airport it was necessary to meet two major airfield conditions: one, a runway at least 5,000 feet long; and two, an air traffic control tower.

With the construction and commissioning of the new ATCT, Flagler County now meets these requirements. Since the opening, the door for increased business jet traffic at the airport is beginning to be realized.

With the new ATCT in place, Flagler County Airport has positioned itself to assist the overflow of corporate and business traffic experienced by Daytona Beach International and, of course, the associated aircraft fuel sales which accompany those events.

Nominated by: Roy Sieger

Let us all congratulate: Flagler County Airport Director Roy Sieger, the staff of Flagler County Airport; Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant; and D.J. Haycook, contractor.

Commercial Service Airport Project

Jacksonville International Airport New Concourses A and C

Like any showcase public facility, an airport terminal should reflect the community it serves, creating an environment in tune with its surrounding cities, population, and natural landscape. The Jacksonville Aviation Authority embarked on a multi-year, multi-project program to update the 40-year old concourses to reflect the economic, cultural, and community life of northeast Florida.

The new concourse project started off on the right foot through careful planning and getting all stakeholders on board; this involved raising their comfort level so that the short-term disruption to operations would be minimal.

The new passenger level interior has approximately 24,000 square feet of concession space (a 500 percent increase), 55,000 square feet of hold room space (30 percent more) and 60,000 square feet of general circulation space (36 percent more).

The new passenger terminal concourses welcome visitors to the gateway city of Jacksonville. Residents and returning visitors are welcomed back in a comfortable atmosphere that reflects the northeast Florida lifestyle. Departing visitors are given one last reason to look back and remember Jacksonville as an economically and culturally vibrant metropolitan area.

Nominated by: Chip Seymour

Let us all congratulate: Airport Manager Ismael Bonilla, the staff of Jacksonville International Airport; Steve Grossman, Jacksonville Airport Authority; Reynolds, Smith & Hills, Inc., consultant; Balfour Beatty/ACI, contractor. ♦