



From the desk of Commissioner Robert S. Weinroth

Palm Beach International Airport

Update from behind the scenes

My staff and I recently visited with the executive team at Palm Beach County International Airport (PBIA) that includes Homeland Security and Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) deputies. It was an educational behind-the-scenes tour of our award-winning airport.

PBIA operates as an enterprise fund (no taxpayer dollars) and has a \$7 billion impact on our local economy. Operations are funded by user fees generated by the airlines, businesses and passengers. Major improvement and construction projects are funded by a combination of grants, passenger facility charges, revenue bonds and airport revenue. In 2018, over 6 million passengers travelled through the airport, a 4% increase from the previous year.

PBIA has nonstop service to 30 markets and at peak season, operates over 100 daily nonstop departures. It's no surprise that the New York metropolitan area offers the greatest number of flights to and from PBIA with 42 flights daily during the winter and 25 flights daily in the summer.

The airport has earned many awards over the last 30 years, including being named among the top ten Best Domestic Airports in 2017 by *Travel + Leisure Magazine*! The 2017 awards included ranking fifth Best Medium Airport in the 2017 J.D. Power North American Airport Satisfaction Study and best U.S. airport for overall wait times at TSA checkpoints.

If you have traveled through PBIA lately, you probably have noticed the terminals are in the process of being modernized to make them more user friendly and convenient. The majority of the public restrooms were recently renovated. The baggage claim level has new flooring, lighting and ceilings. The ticketing level is currently under construction and is being updated. Additionally, new seating with integrated charging stations on Concourse B were recently installed, and Concourse C will be undergoing the same improvements this summer.

Over the years, the airport has purchased surrounding properties providing opportunities for increased revenue from leases with new businesses such as the travel plaza/cell phone waiting lot which includes a convenience store, gas station and car wash, Drive Shack (due to open late 2019), a Toyota dealership, and Home2 Suites by Hilton. Revenues from non-airline development help to ensure low airline costs

and contribute to the on-going revenue stream for the operation and maintenance of the County's airports including Lantana, North County and Glades.

One of the highlights of our tour included a demonstration with PBSO K-9 Baro who is trained to detect drugs and explosives in luggage, cargo and mail travelling through the airport.

PBIA cell phone waiting lot

Just a reminder that we have a cell phone waiting lot in the plaza at the corner of Florida Mango and Belvedere Road. The plaza features 85 parking spaces, free wireless internet service, free electric charge stations, and a flight information display screen inside the 7-Eleven. There is also a Dunkin Donuts, car wash and a Mobil gas station.

Combating Criminal Robo and Spoof Calls

In response to the growing number of complaints from residents, I recently initiated a resolution which was unanimously passed by the Board of County Commissioners urging the United States Congress to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act (TRACED). Our residents are being inundated by these illegal calls which are not only a nuisance but are often dangerous scams by telemarketers using tactics designed to defraud and deceive.

The TRACED Act will enable the telecom industry, federal regulators and the Attorney General's office to abate illegal and unwanted robocalls. The legislation will reduce the number of illegal robocalls and fight spoofing (the practice of using technology to disguise the caller's phone number).

In 2017, consumers reported losses in excess of \$240 million as a result of frauds perpetrated by telemarketers. In 2018, the estimated number of illegal robocalls increased by 40 percent and reached over 48 billion people.

The bill passed in the Senate in May and will go to the House of Representatives for consideration. Please feel free to contact your local member of Congress urging support of the TRACED Act.

Camino Real Bridge Due to Open

The \$9 million structural restoration work on the Camino Real Bridge in Boca Raton is scheduled to be completed by mid-July. Work began in April 2018, after the historic bridge was one of 14 in South Florida identified as structurally deficient by the state.

Due to its historic designation, there was a limit on the type of aesthetic changes permitted. The most noticeable change was the relocation of the bridge tender's house on the north side. Also, the sidewalks have been widened providing extra room for cyclists and pedestrians.

Changes Expected in Nonpartisan Elections

A recent Florida Supreme Court opinion found that county constitutional officers' elections cannot be nonpartisan. Even though the ruling stemmed from an Orange County case, Palm Beach County is impacted as its charter calls for nonpartisan elections for the office of sheriff, property appraiser and supervisor of elections.

In light of the Supreme Court's action, the county attorney issued an opinion stating that the Palm Beach County charter's provisions providing for such elections are unenforceable as a matter of law. In other words, starting with the 2020 elections, the offices identified above will be partisan. All other offices continue to be held as set forth in the Florida Election Code.

The practical result of this change is the likely need for primary elections for these offices in August 2020.

BCC Briefs

At the June 18, 2019, Board of County Commissioners meeting, the board took the following action:

Homeless Resource Center 2 – agreed to build the county's second homeless resource center on a five-acre parcel located at 3680 Lake Worth Road in unincorporated Lake Worth. The county-owned property is adjacent to the Mid-County Senior Center. Site approval included a public ownership zoning district deviation from a requirement that the structure be at least 250 feet from the nearest residentially zoned lots. The 74-bed facility will be at least 90 feet from residential properties to the west and east.

Vacation rentals – amended the Tourist Development Ordinance pertaining to vacation rentals to clarify the county's regulation of short-term rental units due to current litigation with hosting platform/booking service companies.

Needle exchange program – approved on first reading and to advertise for public hearing on July 2 an ordinance establishing the Infectious Disease Elimination Program as authorized by the Florida Legislature. Implementation will include a sterile needle and syringe exchange program with the goal of eliminating infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C. No county funds are involved.

Waste collection – approved a new garbage and yard waste collection ordinance that provides for improved methods of collection through automation; new, larger garbage carts provided to the public; and limits the amount of time garbage and yard waste can remain at the collection point in public view.

Water Utilities – approved six chief water/wastewater plant operator positions for the Water Utilities Department to improve safety, and operational reliability and water quality integrity.

Property values – received a very positive report from Property Appraiser Dorothy Jacks on property values in Palm Beach County and the proposed FY-2020 budget.

Roads – approved a series of mid-year amendments to the county's Five-Year Road Program and the hiring of professionals to design, appraise and assist in the acquisition of land, rights of way, and easements needed to undertake the projects identified in the program.

Right of ways – continued to the August 20 meeting two public hearings to repeal and replace existing ordinances governing the permitting of facilities placed within county right of ways and the requirements for telecommunications companies to register with the county prior to applying.

Conveyance – adopted a resolution conveying six parcels of county-owned land totaling 3.79 acres to the Westgate/Belvedere Homes Community Redevelopment Agency.

Abandonments – approved the abandonment of a 30-foot-wide right of way in the Palm Beach Farms Company plat and a 25-foot-wide right of way in the Delray Dunes First Section plat. Both are surplus parcels that are in conflict with future redevelopment plans and serve no current or future public purpose.

Lake Park Marina – approved an amendment to an interlocal agreement with the town of Lake Park authorizing the town to proceed with an RFP for redevelopment of the Lake Park Marina.

Village of Valor – approved \$2 million in NSP2 funding toward construction of the Village of Valor rental housing project on 2nd Avenue North in Lake Worth/Palm Springs. The \$31.4 million project includes 130 new apartments and 18 townhomes for rent to very low, low, and moderate-income persons, with priority given to veterans and their families, including the disabled, homeless and at-risk of homelessness. NSP2 program funds require no local match.

Palm Tran – adopted a resolution approving the Title VI fare equity analysis required by the FTA indicating that fares charged for Go Glades, a pilot flex route and Dial-A-Ride service in the Glades area, has no disparate impact to either minority or low-income populations.

Golf – agreed to disband the Boynton Beach Municipal Golf Course Advisory Committee.

Youth Services – conceptually approved funding allocations totaling \$583,552 for six community-based agencies to provide delinquency prevention services for the Ensure Safety and Justice Action Area.

Johns Hopkins – approved a one-year agency affiliation agreement with Johns Hopkins University for student interns to complete planned and supervised clinical experiences for their master's or doctoral degrees with the Youth Services Department at no cost to the county.

Administration – acknowledged and thanked Assistant County Administrator Faye Johnson who is leaving the county to work for the city of West Palm Beach.

Service Awards – honored a total of 236 county employees who have worked at least 20 years serving the citizens of Palm Beach County. Richard Conner with Engineering & Public Works and Diane Peterson with Community Services received special awards for 40 years of service.

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