

What role should the Airport Authority play in economic/industrial development?

First, the airport should be a critical driver of tourism in Charlotte County. By providing low-cost airfare to cities across the US, a successful airport will dramatically impact restaurants, hotels, and other tourist focus sectors within the county. Second, the commercial/industrial area around the airport can become a magnet for high paying jobs and high growth companies. A successful airport park can also bring in much needed commercial tax revenue to balance out a reliance on personal property taxes. Third, a thriving airport can clearly improve the quality of life for people living in Charlotte County, thereby improving property values in the area. This affects all sectors of the economy within our county.

What are your ideas to encourage growth at the airport?

First, the airport must attract additional full-time airlines. Additional airlines will first drive down ticket prices and increase destination cities. In addition, they will ensure that the airport is not dependent on a single airline for its existence. Second, the airport should focus on attracting new high growth businesses to the commercial/industrial park. This area around the airport can be a significant driver of high paying jobs and tax revenue for the county. Lastly, Charlotte County must remain in control of the airport to ensure that all citizens of Charlotte County can enjoy the benefit of the airport into the future. This means not privatizing the airport or issuing massive debt where big financial companies have control over airport finances.

Why are you the right choice for Airport Authority?

My education, experience, and platform make me the clear choice for Airport Authority. I have an undergraduate degree in finance from the University of Virginia and an MBA from Wharton. I then spent 15 years working in Corporate and Municipal Finance where I worked with many of the largest and fastest growing airport across the county. Most recently, I have started an estate jewelry business from scratch and have grown it to one of the largest of its kind in SW Florida. I am also very active in the community. I am on the board of directors of the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Charlotte County and Englewood Chamber of Commerce. I am the Vice-Chair of the Charlotte County School referendum oversight committee and have held various leadership positions in the local Boy Scouts troop.

I am running on a platform of attracting additional airlines to the airport to bring down ticket costs and add destination cities. I also believe that the airport should retain its low-fee revenue model. Federal grants along with parking, rental car fees, and commercial lease payments should be the primary revenue drivers of the airport. I also believe that the commercial/industrial park at the airport can be a driver of jobs and tax revenue for Charlotte County. A better working relationship with Punta Gorda and Charlotte County will benefit both the airport and the county as a whole. Finally, I believe the board needs to hold itself to a higher ethical standard. With two members of the board under investigation for election fraud (including my opponent), I aim to restore integrity to the Airport Authority.