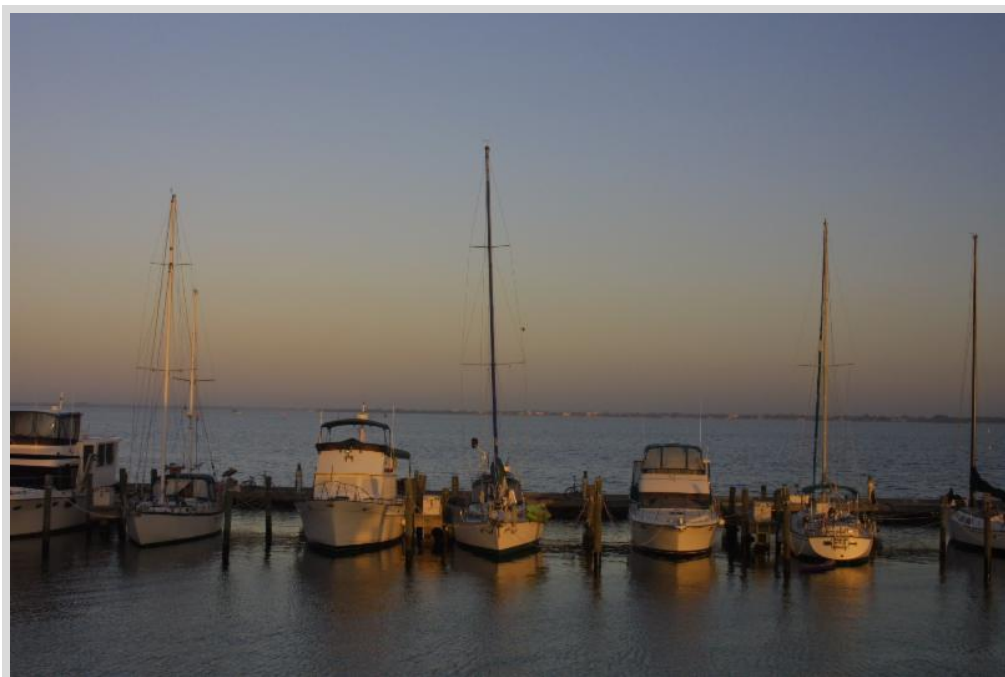




CHARLOTTE COUNTY
Economic Development

WEEKEND WAVE

10-28-16



Friday Economic Roundup

Frontier Airlines flights start Sunday

By ANNE EASKER Staff writer Charlotte Sun

Southwest Floridians will soar to Philadelphia this Sunday as Frontier Airlines begins services at the Punta Gorda Airport. Flights to Trenton, New Jersey, will follow on Monday, and flights to Chicago start on Nov. 8. Seats are still available on each flight, with one-way fares as low as \$15.

"It's perfect timing," said Airport Authority Commissioner Pam Seay. "People from down here want to go see their families for the holidays, and certainly, people that live up there will want to come down to Florida where it's nice and warm and they're not going to be shoveling

snow."

Flights to Philadelphia and Chicago have 180 seats each, while flights to Trenton have 150. Airport officials said they expect Frontier to bring about 8,500 passengers in and out of the airport each month. Commissioner Paul Andrews, chairman of the Airport Authority, said the board is excited about the positive economic impact on the community. While it is difficult to estimate what the specific economic impact of travel and tourism will be, so far the airport has expanded with 20 new jobs and four additional ticket counters at the arrivals area.

"The Punta Gorda Airport is excited about the new opportunities in travel that are going to be available to the Southwest Florida market and for the new visitors to our area," said Executive Director James Parish, who took over the airport operations after Gary Quill's retirement last month.

Seay said she thinks there will be a balance of northerners visiting Southwest Florida, and Southwest Floridians traveling north and beyond. The new flights to larger airports like Chicago O'Hare (ORD) and Philadelphia (PHL) will give Floridians more options for destinations, with easier access to international flights.

"What I see is the opportunity for people to go to new and different destinations," Seay said. "If you're going to Chicago O'Hare, all the sudden the world is open to you."

Frontier's flights to Philadelphia and Chicago will leave Punta Gorda on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, while flights to Trenton, New Jersey, will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Frontier spokesman Jim Faulkner said the airline has typically flown from cold destinations to cold destinations, but decided to add services to Punta Gorda so northern customers would have a welcome alternative for the winter months.

"Instead of Denver to Bismarck, we'll move flights to destinations with warmer weather like Punta Gorda," Faulkner said.

The airline will have between 45 and 50 flights out of Punta Gorda each month. The service is seasonal, but the airline has not announced any end date yet. Faulkner said it will be monitoring the response and market scale to determine how long to continue.

Punta Gorda Airport Celebrates Frontier Airlines' Inaugural Flights

Monday, October 31, 2016, Punta Gorda Airport will welcome Frontier Airlines' inaugural flight (#1981) from Trenton, New Jersey at 9:06am.

Approximately 150 Frontier Airlines Flight passengers will receive a "Welcome to Punta Gorda" care package that includes gifts from several local business. Donations include sunscreen from the Charlotte County Visitors & Convention Bureau, chapstick from Air Trek, a travel pack of band-aids from Amberg Insurance, neck wallets from Seminole Casino Hotel, a travel brush/compact from Bayfront Health Center, a baking spatula from Key Insurance, area guides from the local Chamber of Commerces, and assortment of discounts cards/coupons, etc.

There will also be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the departing flight #1980 to Trenton-Mercer Airport at 10:15am. The ribbon cutting will be attended by Punta Gorda Airport Executive Director, James Parish and Frontier Airlines Corporate Communications Director, Richard Oliver.

Frontier Airlines flights at the Punta Gorda Airport will also be servicing Chicago O'Hare and Philadelphia International Airport. The first flight (#1970) from Chicago O'Hare will arrive on November 8th at 11:49am and depart 1:10pm.

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