

Mahoney Vows to Continue to Fight for Charlotte County Airport

Congressman Working to Bring New Jobs to Charlotte County

(April 7, 2008)

(Port Charlotte, FL) - Today, Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) hosted a roundtable discussion at the Charlotte County Airport with the Charlotte County Airport Authority, Charlotte County Commission, Punta Gorda City Council, Charlotte Economic Development Council, Punta Gorda Chamber, Charlotte County Chamber and Charlotte Tourist Development Board, to discuss the recent discontinuation of operations of Skybus Airlines and the moving forward with much needed infrastructural improvements to serve the Charlotte County Airport.

"The failure of Skybus Airlines wasn't only a loss to Charlotte County, but it was a national loss as well. With oil prices at over \$100 per barrel, the American airline industry is in jeopardy," said Congressman Mahoney. "Charlotte County demonstrated that it was a successful destination. As oil prices come down due to the energy legislation passed last year, I will continue my efforts in Washington to get the funding we need to upgrade our airport, so we will be ready to attract future airlines, create jobs and grow the local economy."

"We are already making plans and looking for other airlines," said Gary Quill, Executive Director of the Charlotte County Airport Authority. "Charlotte County Airport has proven itself to be cost efficient, with operations at one-third the Florida average. We will continue to work with Congressman Mahoney and the FAA to make the improvements necessary to upgrading the airport."

With Skybus Airlines for the last four months, Charlotte County Airport (PGD) has gone from a general aviation airport with no commercial service to 1,800 airline seats per day, which is five years ahead of the previously proposed schedule. In February, Skybus Airlines had more than 31,000 passengers at PGD, which had a significant impact on the region.

Congressman Mahoney is working with the FAA to secure funding to make long-overdue infrastructural improvements to the airport. These improvements include

- Rehabilitation of the Apron
- Construction of an Air Traffic Control Tower

- Implementation of an Instrument Landing System (ILS)
- Widening of the Taxiway

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