



PRESS RELEASE

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ROBERT M. BALL NAMED AIRPORT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

FORT MYERS, Fla. (Sept. 14, 2009) – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) honored Lee County Port Authority (LCPA) Executive Director Robert M. Ball, A.A.E, as the *2009 Aviation Professional of the Year*. This award is given to an active aviation professional who has made a significant and continued contribution to Florida aviation during the year and throughout their career. The award was presented at the recent Florida Airports Council (FAC) annual conference in Miami. Ball was previously given this award in 1998 and is the only airport professional to have received this prestigious honor twice.

“This award recognizes Bob’s work and leadership in expansion, air service and business development efforts in the operation of two award-winning transportation facilities – Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) and Page Field General Aviation Airport (FMY),” said Aaron N. Smith, FDOT state aviation manager. “He is responsible for the unprecedented success of both airports and has been committed to working with community partners to meet commercial and general aviation air transportation needs in Southwest Florida.”

Ball joined the Lee County Port Authority in August 1993 as deputy executive director, and was promoted to executive director in May 1996. During his tenure, passenger traffic at Southwest Florida International Airport has increased from 4.3 million to 7.6 million per year and the economic impact of the airports has grown to more \$3.6 billion annually. He oversaw the planning, funding, construction and opening of the \$438 million terminal at RSW and led the renaissance of FMY with a highly successful revitalization plan. Another notable project was the Runway 6/24 Rehabilitation project at RSW, which was visionary and received recognition from the aviation and transportation industry. Under his direction, FDOT named RSW the *2006 and 2008 Commercial Service Airport of the Year* and FMY the *2002 and 2008 General Aviation Airport of the Year*.

He is accredited by the American Association of Airport Executives. He is a past president of FAC and serves on its board of directors. Ball was honored by the Federal Aviation Administration as the *1998 Airport Manager of the Year for the Southern Region*. He holds a bachelor’s degree in air commerce from the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT) as well as a private pilot certificate.

The Lee County Port Authority operates Southwest Florida International Airport and Page Field General Aviation Airport in Fort Myers, Fla. No ad valorem (property) taxes are used for the operation or improvement of either airport. For more information, please visit www.flylcpa.com.

