



NORTHWEST FLORIDA BEACHES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF SOUTHERN SKY AVIATION AT ECP

PANAMA CITY AIRPORT WELCOMES NEW FBO

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (April 24, 2024) – Southern Sky Aviation held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the grand opening of a new fixed base operator (FBO) at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP). More than 50 area leaders, ECP board members, partners, stakeholders, and staff attended the event, complete with formal program remarks delivered by ECP Executive Director Parker W. McClellan, Jr., A.A.E., Chair of the Airport Authority at ECP Holly Melzer, and President of Southern Sky Aviation Donald Howell.

Southern Sky Aviation invested over \$25 million to develop the new FBO, encompassing over 11 acres of new ramp with an 11,000 square foot FBO Terminal and over 64,000 square feet of hangar space.

“It’s always a great day when we get to welcome a new business to our Region, especially to our ECP family,” said Holly Melzer, Chair of the Airport Authority at ECP. “Not only does the opening of a new FBO enhance our Airport’s appeal as a premier destination for travelers, but it also continues to signal a promising era of economic growth and opportunity. With each new business relocating or opening a new facility at ECP, we are not just expanding our aviation infrastructure, we are creating jobs, fostering business partnerships, and propelling our Region towards a brighter future.”

Based on the growth of ECP and the Region, the full-service, first-class facility will serve the rise in private aviation traffic coming into the area and the growing tourism demand.

Southern Sky Aviation provides charters and maintenance services, fuel for arriving and departing aircraft, and the development of the new facility created over 20 jobs.

“We appreciate the opportunity to partner with Panama City-Bay County Airport and Industrial District to provide a state-of-the-art FBO for the aviation community here at ECP,” said Donald Howell, President of Southern Sky Aviation. “An FBO is often the gateway for economic development in a community, and we look forward to working with the Bay EDA team and the Airport Authority to continue the momentum and further growth of the industry’s success in this Region.”

Howell says it is a ‘dream come true’ to open a new FBO in beautiful Panama City, FL. As a child, Howell started visiting Panama City Beach when he was 8-years old, so to own and lead a business in a region primed for major economic growth is something he says is extremely exciting.

“We are delighted for the impact that the opening of a new FBO will have on our Region,” said Parker W. McClellan Jr., A.A.E., ECP Executive Director. “The addition of Southern Sky Aviation not only provides more options to general aviation users, but it also further underscores the commitment this Airport and partners like the Bay EDA have to further economic development in our Region.”

Features, services, and amenities of the new Southern Sky Aviation facility at ECP include:

- 11,000 square foot terminal
- 64,000 square feet of hangar space
- Hangar doors up to 28 feet
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Superior line and customer service
- Catering
- Coffee & ice
- Complimentary refreshments
- Luggage cart
- Executive conference room with audio/visual/digital capabilities
- Offices available to customers
- Showers
- State-of-the-art snooze room
- Pilot lounge
- Pilot offices
- Weather & flight planning
- Wi-Fi
- Crew cars

- Ground power units
- Lavatory and water carts
- On-site GoRental vehicles

Southern Sky Aviation is located at 5215 Jonny Reaver Rd, Panama City, FL 32409.

For more information, visit southernskyaviation.com.

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About Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport

Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) offers some of the region's lowest average airfares and is located less than 30 minutes from Panama City Beach, Panama City, and the beaches of South Walton. Today, with service from American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines, ECP's airline partners provide daily flights to worldwide destinations, including year-round and seasonal nonstop flights between ECP and Atlanta (ATL), Austin (AUS) Baltimore (BWI), Charlotte (CLT), Chicago (MDW/ORD), Dallas (DAL/DFW), Denver (DEN), Houston (HOU/IAH), Indianapolis (IND), Kansas City (MCI), Nashville (BNA), St. Louis (STL), Washington DC (DCA), and more. ECP provides Northwest Florida with first-class facilities and was strategically developed for major economic development opportunities. ECP is the gateway to visitors seeking Northwest Florida's famous beaches.

About Southern Sky Aviation

Southern Sky Aviation, LLC is a full-service private aviation company offering Aircraft Charter, FBO, Management, Maintenance, and Sales. Southern Sky Aviation is Headquartered at a private terminal at the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport. For more information on Southern Sky Aviation, please contact (205) 703-9737 or visit www.southernskyaviation.com.