

Aviation History comes to life at St. Lucie County International Airport



60 memorable pictures and documents are now on permanent display at the St. Lucie County International Airport depicting the 78-year history of aviation in St. Lucie County. Commissioner-elect Dzadozsky dedicated the “History Wall” on Airport Day Nov. 15.

“In today’s fast-paced information age, we are so busy keeping up with the media that we often fail to reflect on our past,” commentated Airport Director Diana Lewis. “ That’s why these walls are so important. Not because of some dates on a wall, or pictures that hang, but because of the people and places all these things represent.”

The History Wall shows that airports in St. Lucie County had no control towers, some used tomato baskets, bales of hay, or lime rock to mark runways. These early airfields were used mainly for crop dusting. One was a combination airfield, dairy farm and junk yard.

And their names were also noteworthy....like Angle Road Airfield, Hogwild International, Hickman Airfield, Sunrise Airport, White Sands Prairie Airfield. During the early years of the present airport, fuel-fed lanterns were used for night practice until their storage shed burned down.

The land we now call our airport was purchased in 1930. It remained a quiet airport even though economic indicators showed that there was a need for an airport, and that it could become a major industrial attraction.

History Wall documents show that during World War II, the US Navy leased the airport from the county and used it to train aircraft for carrier landings.

Documentation show that after the war it was transferred back to the county. Again there was little activity for the next ten years. During this dormant period the airport was overgrown by all types of unwanted vegetation. Cows had the run of the place.

During the 60s and 70s improvements took off with the construction of a

terminal, hangars, airfield lighting, navigational aids and fuel facilities.

Curtis King, who became the first full time director in 1967, played an instrumental role in the development of the county's airport for 31 years.

The airport continues to grow with new opportunities including the Airport West Commerce Park and a brand new training runway and taxiway.

As we celebrate our airport's 78-year history, these walls become a treasure chest. Walk through and you'll feel the airport's legacy:

“...to Celebrate the past...to look towards the future.”

The History Wall is sponsored by the St. Lucie County International Airport, the St. Lucie County Historical Museum and the St. Lucie County Cultural Affairs Council. It can be viewed daily in the Airport Administration Building at 3000 Curtis King Blvd. in Ft. Pierce.