

HIGHLANDS TODAY

AN EDITION OF
THE TAMPA TRIBUNE
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INFORMING TODAY, SHAPING TOMORROW

SUNDAY, April 26, 2015

READY FOR TAKE OFF

Airport continues to grow, add jobs



BY JAY MEISEL
Highlands Today

SEBRING — When it comes to new jobs in Highlands County, lately the Sebring Regional Airport has been the hot bed of activity.

During the last two years, new tenants, such as Paradise Aviation, Flight Logistics Group, Tecnam, CitraPac and Gulf Coast Supply and Manufacturing have established or announced plans to establish facilities at the airport.

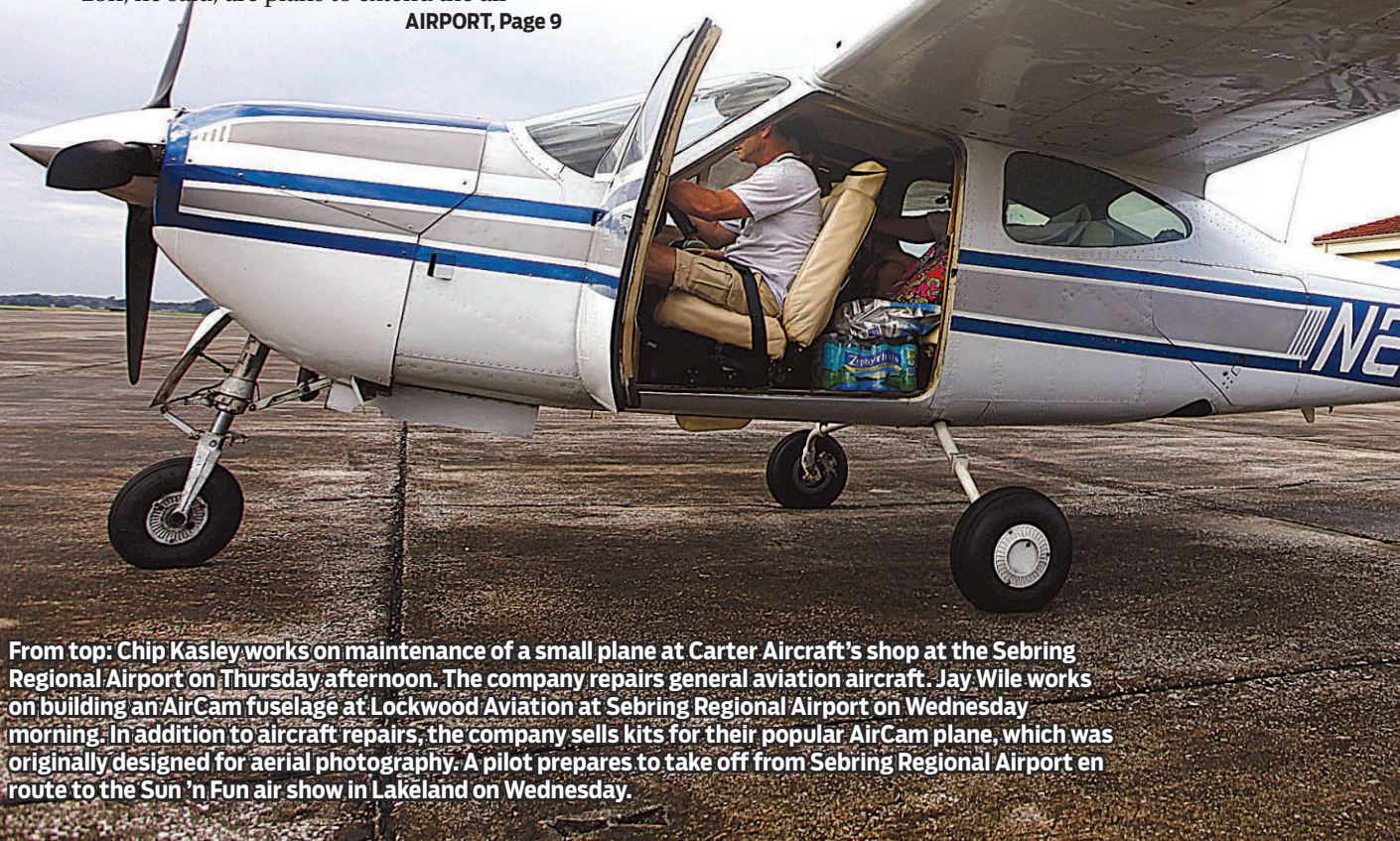
"We're in a very good position for the future," said Mike Willingham, executive director.

Willingham said he believes that spurt of growth is only the beginning. On the horizon, he said, are plans to extend the air-

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RYAN PELHAM/STAFF



From top: Chip Kasley works on maintenance of a small plane at Carter Aircraft's shop at the Sebring Regional Airport on Thursday afternoon. The company repairs general aviation aircraft. Jay Wile works on building an AirCam fuselage at Lockwood Aviation at Sebring Regional Airport on Wednesday morning. In addition to aircraft repairs, the company sells kits for their popular AirCam plane, which was originally designed for aerial photography. A pilot prepares to take off from Sebring Regional Airport en route to the Sun 'n Fun air show in Lakeland on Wednesday.

Grow house smoke still drifting in court

Former deputy, wife awaiting trial

BY GARY PINNELL
Highlands Today

SEBRING — When the Highlands County Sheriff's Office was contracted to police the city of Avon Park, Sheriff Susan Benton hired almost the entire police force, including Hiram Obregon.

Ten months later, his job went up in smoke. Deputy Hiram Obregon, 44, and his wife, Lissette, 42, were arrested in October 2013, and they became what was then the last marijuana grow house bust in Highlands County. At least four more houses have been busted since.

More than a year later, however, prosecutors are still gathering evidence.

On July 17, 2013, the Leisure Lakes Volunteer Fire Department was called to an early morning structure fire at 3335 Northern Blvd., outside Lake Placid. Unluckily, a black Nike gym bag found outside the house contained a black wallet with Obregon's ID card.

Two days later, Obregon suffered another misfortune: People's Trust Insurance Co. hired Joseph Schwartz, a former lieutenant with the Florida Fire Marshal's Office, to investigate the fire. Suspecting ar-

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'Growlers' going to the governor

BY JIM TURNER
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Half-gallon "growlers" are closer to going under brewery taps across Florida.

The House on Friday joined the Senate in supporting the end of the state's prohibition on brewers being able to fill 64-ounce containers known as "growlers" for off-site consumption. Currently, brewers can only fill containers of other sizes.

"Let's all just push the button and free the growler here in the state of Florida," Majority Leader Rep. Dana Young, R-Tampa, said before the House voted unanimously to approve the bill.

A heavily lobbied issue in the Capitol, the measure (SB 186) now will go to Gov. Rick Scott. A spokeswoman said Friday the governor will review the bill once it reaches his desk.

Rep. Chris Sprowls, a Palm Harbor Republican who sponsored the bill in the House, said the legislation allows "entrepreneurs, artists, GROWLERS, Page 2

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Weather

HIGH 87, LOW 72
Partly sunny, a t-storm; breezy
Winds WSW 12-25 mph
UV INDEX: 10
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