

Airport expanding baggage handling

System needed to support 12 million passengers a year

BY PETE SKIBA
Florida Weekly Correspondent

Plans to serve more than 12-million passengers traveling through Southwest Florida International Airport by 2018 also include handling more baggage than ever before.

In the complex world of airline baggage handling, experience with post 9/11 rules, regulations and complex equipment ranked high with the airport's Special Management Committee's decision to recommend one management company.

Of the three well-represented companies that presented their capabilities and experience to the committee, Parsons Corporation was chosen above PB Americas and URS.

"Probably the biggest factor in my vote (for Parsons) was the large experience they have with post 9/11 design and work on baggage handling systems," said Bob Taylor, committee chairman. "We also have a unique position in that our airport was being constructed and then had to adjust to new regulations just after 9/11."

Parsons is one of the largest employee-owned management, engineering, and construction companies in the U.S., with revenues exceeding \$3.3 billion in 2006. It is currently planning and overseeing construction

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SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY
Plans are being made now to handle the baggage of an expected 12 million passengers flying through Southwest Florida.

Inside:
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disciplined dreamer

Dave Balza's Division One vision for FGCU

BY ROGER WILLIAMS
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When Dave Balza dreams, which is rarely, he starts by citing a few names, his mantra of the miraculous. He pulls his mouth into a shallow ascent of a smile, allows the cool, calculating blue of his eyes to unfocus, and slows his speech just enough to make clear his reverence: "Valparaiso, George Mason, Gonzaga."

But as men's head coach for Florida Gulf Coast University's newly minted Division I basketball team — FGCU's first foray into big-time college athletics — Balza cannot afford merely to dream of those Cinderella teams from tiny Division I schools.

Each of them once made it as an unknown, not only into the NCAA finals, known as March Madness, but

even into the "sweet 16" or beyond, coming within a dribble or two of winning a national championship.

Nor is he willing to spend much time comparing his own situation to theirs.

Instead, he works and plans and works some more, in an exacting process of future-building that he shared with Florida-Weekly through a typically long day.

What a Division I coach must do, Balza demonstrated last week, involves a great deal more than merely driving talented young players up and down the basketball court, after designing signature offenses and defenses they can execute well.

"The first thing that comes to mind about him is passion, passion for the game. And the second thing is that he is highly intelligent," said Leo Miller, a team volunteer and retired high school coach whose teams won 600 games in Massachusetts.

SEE BALZA, A8 ►

FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO
FGCU basketball coach Dave Balza has a busy day everyday leading the Division I Eagles.

INSIDE



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