

BUSINESS

WEEK OF MARCH 13-19, 2008

A GUIDE TO THE GREATER FORT MYERS BUSINESS INDUSTRY



Small airline offers big convenience

ACI charters private flights out of Page Field

FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTOS EVAN WILLIAMS

Stefanie Ink, director of charter sales and new business development for ACI Charters, exits a nine-passenger Pilatus PC-12 turbro-prop aircraft that is one of nine aircraft in the charter company's fleet. ACI also has a jet and other smaller single-engine aircraft for charter.



ACI Charters flies to more than 5,000 General Aviation airports in the U.S. as well as Mexico, South America and the Caribbean.

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
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"I'm talking rich enough to own your own jet," Gordon Gecko (Michael Douglas) said to Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen) in the '80s Oliver Stone film, "Wall Street." It was Gecko's ultimate example of the freedoms of the super-rich.

But if you can't afford to buy one, chartering is probably the next best option. Aeronautical Charters Inc., operating out of Page Field in Fort Myers, provides that convenience: a plane, pilot and the chance to avoid long lines, delays, occasionally irate infants, security checkpoints and other staples of major airline travel.

"It's a jet powered limo, basically," said vice-president and pilot Glenn Frith, standing in ACI's hangar. "You can park right over there, walk 500 feet and get on a plane. Try doing that at (Southwest Florida International Airport)."

The company flies to over 5,000 General Aviation airports nationwide plus Mexico, South America and the Caribbean, out of Page Field.

It manages a fleet of six privately owned aircrafts and charters them out (the owners get a portion of the charter price). The planes and pilots are subject to strenuous standards, enforced by the FAA. That's not so when you "rent" an airplane, Frith said, which is something any happy-go-lucky Joe Stunt-Devil with a pilot's license may do.

"A lot of people rent airplanes and think they're chartering them," he said. "But they're really not."

Frith and partner Todd Carroll purchased the business in 2000, and moved it from Port Charlotte, where it had only one plane, to Page Field. Frith used to watch big jets soar in over U.S. 41 onto Page Field's runway, when he grew up in Fort Myers. They were operated by companies like Eastern and National. Frith knew he wanted to fly them, too, but dreams of working for a big company were diminished by the changing nature of the industry.

"Now, it's more like flying a Greyhound bus," Frith said.

At least on a small scale, Frith

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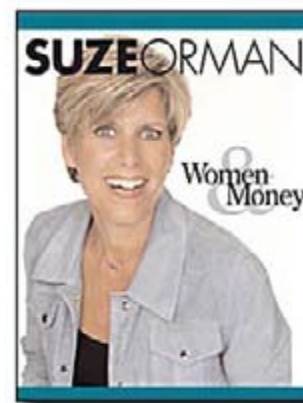
WEEK at-a-glance



Uncommon Friends golf And other networking social events in Greater Fort Myers. B10&11 ►



Play ball Meet Todd Stephenson, he runs the show for the Boston Red Sox while they're in Fort Myers. B2 ►



Women & Money Financial advisor, and TV personality Suze Orman takes you to home buying school. B9 ►

NOISE cleans up at 2007 SWF Addy Awards Sanibel firm wins 42 awards plus a 'Best in Show'

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

NOISE, a 21-year-old multi-media branding communications agency, dominated the 2007 Southwest Florida Addy Competition, sponsored by the American Advertising Association, by winning 19 Gold awards, 23 Silver awards and Best of Show (print). The awards were presented at a ceremony last Saturday in Fort Myers. The competition was open to all advertising agencies, public relations firms, communications firms and industry suppli-

■ **Inside:** Florida Weekly wins Addy. B3

ers with offices, or representing clients, in Southwest Florida.

NOISE's 42 awards plus Best of Show more than tripled the total of the second-highest awarded firm (12). NOISE's total represented approximately 40 percent of all awards presented. The 42 awards are also twice the total of the highest-

winning firm the previous year. Servicing clients throughout the country from offices in Sani-



Milissa Sprecher

COURTESY PHOTO



John Sprecher

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bel Island, Florida and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, NOISE has been the recipient of significant media attention over the past year for outstanding creative performance and branding/marketing results, including: "Portfolio" feature coverage in Adweek; two feature stories on web marketing success in "Content

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