

Money

▲ Dow 17,733.10 (+92.93) ▲ S&P500 2,077.99 (+6.49) ▲ NASDAQ 4,844.92 (+9.99) ▼ OIL \$46.21/bbl. (-3.75%) ▲ 10-YR. NOTE 1.58% (+0.01)

Magic Leap and Lucasfilm team up

Joint research lab to use mixed reality

By **MARCIA HEROUX POUNDS**
Staff writer

Plantation-based Magic Leap is partnering with Lucasfilm to open a joint research lab at Lucasfilm's San Francisco campus, the virtual reality company announced Thursday. Lucasfilm is the force behind the "Star Wars" movie series. "The future of mixed reality and immersive entertainment

holds incredible promise," said Kathleen Kennedy, president of Lucasfilm, in making the partnership announcement.

The companies said Lucasfilm's ILMxLAB will collaborate with Magic Leap to pioneer storytelling using mixed reality. The plan is for the lab to open this month.

Magic Leap founder and CEO Rony Abovitz said collaboration between the two companies is a "perfect fit."

"Lucasfilm has created some of the most iconic characters of our time," he said. "Magic Leap is creating a whole new medium."

The company describes its

work as "a new mixed reality computing platform that will enable people to interact with the world in ways never before possible." Magic Leap has applied for nearly 100 patents. Entertainment is just one of many applications planned for the technology, the company has said.

Magic Leap has raised \$1.4 billion in funding in investment rounds led by Chinese e-com-



Abovitz

merce company Alibaba Group and Google. The company employs more than 200 people in Dania Beach and Plantation, where it is renovating a former Motorola building as its headquarters.

Last year, state and local governments approved a \$9 million incentive package for Magic Leap, which has promised to create 725 jobs with an average salary of \$100,000 by 2020.

At the Wired Business Conference in New York on Thursday, a "Star Wars" scene produced by Lucasfilm and its ILMxLAB was shown through Magic Leap's

"mixed reality" technology, local company spokesman Andy Fouché said. The video can be seen at: SunSentinel.com/lucasfilm.

Lucasfilm was founded by filmmaker George Lucas in 1971 and acquired in December 2012 by The Walt Disney Co. ILMxLAB, which was launched last year, produces real-time graphics and virtual production, combining the talents of Lucasfilm, Industrial Light & Magic and Skywalker Sound.

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JetBlue adds San Diego route



SUSAN STOCKER/STAFF FILE PHOTO

Jet Blue Airways began its Fort Lauderdale-to-San Diego route on Thursday.

Airport has nonstop service to its top 50 US markets

By **ARLENE SATCHELL**
Staff writer

Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport marked another milestone Thursday when JetBlue Airways began long-awaited nonstop service to San Diego.

The addition of JetBlue's San Diego route means the airport now has nonstop service to all of its top 50 U.S. markets.

This nonstop California route had been on the airport's wish list for many years, given the popularity of the destination with South Floridians, airport officials have said.

On average, 54,000 people visit San Diego annually from the Fort Lauderdale-Miami, West Palm Beach and Fort Myers-Naples areas, data from the past five years show, according to tourism bureau Visit California.

Mark Gale, aviation director for the Broward County Aviation Department, the airport's operator, addressed JetBlue fliers Thursday as they waited to board the inaugural San Diego flight from Gate F9 in Terminal 3.

"We've been doing quite a few of these," Gale said, of the new route launches he's attended since assuming the role in March. "It's not getting old folks, I love this. This is phenomenal."

Ribbon-cutting festivities included snacks and refreshments for passengers to enjoy.

The flight will depart daily at 5:25 p.m. to arrive in San Diego at 7:32 p.m. California time, according to JetBlue.com. Returning, it is scheduled to leave San Diego at 10:15 p.m. for arrival in Fort Lauderdale at 6:19 a.m. the next day.

Tourism officials expect the new service to boost tourism between the two destinations.

"As much as you all want to go to California, when you get there, you tell everyone you've got to come back to Greater Fort Lauderdale because this is the season to be here," said Stacy Ritter, Broward's new tourism chief, to travelers.

"It's inexpensive [and] it may be hot, but it's hot in good ways, too," said Ritter, noting the many special promotions and discounts for hotels, restaurants, spas and attraction tickets avail-

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Mark Gale,
Broward County Aviation Department

able during this value season.

San Diego is the latest of several new routes the New York-based carrier is adding at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood in 2016, as part of efforts to increase operations here to up to 140 daily flights within a few years. It currently operates about 100 flights daily in peak periods.

"We'll get there," said Gale, noting JetBlue's strong commitment to growing at the airport. "We're going to continue to provide Broward County with so many different choices of destinations to fly to."

Next on tap for JetBlue will be nonstop New Orleans service, which is scheduled for takeoff on Sept. 29.

JetBlue launched service from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood to Nashville, Tenn., and Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, in May and to Bridgetown, Barbados, in April. On Feb. 25, it also began flying to Quito, Ecuador.

Since JetBlue began service from New York to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood in 2001, the airline has carried more than 48 million passengers out of the airport on more than 400,000 flights, according to airport officials. It's poised to reach 50 million passengers in 2016.

Today, JetBlue is the busiest airline at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood, with 23 percent of passenger traffic this year through April, the latest airport data show.

Southwest and Spirit airlines follow with 17.9 percent and 17.7 percent, respectively.

For more information, go to JetBlue.com.

Tourism increases in first quarter despite challenges

By **ARLENE SATCHELL**
Staff writer

Palm Beach County welcomed a record 2.16 million tourists during the first three months of 2016, in spite of economic and currency challenges in some of its key overseas markets such as Brazil and Canada.

That's an increase of 800,000 more visitors from last year's quarter tally of 2.08 million tourists, Discover The Palm Beaches, the county's official tourism marketing corporation announced recently.

During the quarter, Palm Beach County saw increased visitation of 3 percent and 4 percent, respectively, from its two top source markets of New York and the Fort Lauderdale-Miami area, the tourism marketer said.

A record number of room nights — 1.25 million — were also sold in hotels across the county between January and March, up from 1.24 million in 2015, according to Discover The Palm Beaches.

"With such a strong showing in our first quarter, we're confident that tourism will continue to be a powerful economic driver for The Palm Beaches," said Jorge Pesquera, the tourism bureau's president and CEO.

Pesquera said several new marketing initiatives, including a new Discover Pass program that offers savings at family attractions, craft breweries and golf

courses, are expected to position the destination to capture more visitors this summer.

"These efforts, along with a robust and diverse marketing strategy, will serve to solidify our tourism brand and advance the goal to broaden our appeal by reaching new audiences on a national and international scale," Pesquera said.

The strong first-quarter visitation numbers for Palm Beach County follow earlier reports from Broward and Miami-Dade counties, which also posted increases in tourist arrivals over the same period.

Broward County greeted a record 4.2 million visitors during the period, up 2.5 percent from the same period in 2015, according to the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Meanwhile, Miami-Dade County welcomed 4.48 million overnight visitors, an increase of 5 percent from the previous year, the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau said.

Statewide, tourism was also on a tear.

Florida had another record first quarter with 29.8 million tourists, an increase of 4.8 percent over the same period in 2015, according to preliminary data recently released by Visit Florida, the state's official tourism marketing corporation.

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SUN SENTINEL » GAS WATCH

Broward County's lowest regular gas prices

Costco	1800 W Sample Road, Pompano Beach	\$2.16
CITGO	599 N. Federal Highway, Pompano Beach	\$2.16
Sunoco	329 N. Federal Highway, Pompano Beach	\$2.19
Murphy USA	2320 W. Atlantic Blvd., Pompano Beach	\$2.19
Shell	2840 S FL-7 & Miramar Parkway, Miramar	\$2.19

Palm Beach County's lowest regular gas prices

Costco	1873 W. Lantana Road, Lantana	\$2.16
J & A	703 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth	\$2.16
7-Eleven	4774 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth	\$2.19
Exxon	252 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach	\$2.19
BP	2269 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach	\$2.24

Source: miamigaspriest.com
NOTE TO READERS: Prices do not include all gas stations in each county and are updated frequently. Prices shown may only apply to cash purchases. For the most up-to-date gas prices, visit SunSentinel.com/gasprices.

— Cindy Kent

DOREEN'S DEALS

Freebies for Dad

Happy Freebie Friday! This weekend, show Big Daddy he's No. 1 and celebrate Father's Day in South Florida style.

At Flamingo Gardens in Davie, dads get in free, and everyone else gets half-price admission on Saturday and Sunday, at 750 S. Flamingo Road.

Or, enjoy free family fun at Mizner Park's annual Downtown Drive Car Show, which will feature more than 100 autos, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at 327 Plaza Real, Boca Raton.

Go to SunSentinel.com/FreebieFriday for these deals and many more.

— Doreen Christensen



AP/FILE

Each JetBlue plane has distinctive tail art.