



Alfred S. Austin *Chairman*  
Steven G. Burton *Vice Chairman*  
Joseph F. Diaco, M.D. *Secretary*  
Hillsborough County Commissioner Victor D. Crist *Treasurer*  
City of Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn *Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer*

*for information*  
Brenda S. Geoghagan *Director of Public Affairs*  
813-870-8707

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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Aviation Authority Welcomes New Board Member and Announces Reorganization**

**TAMPA, FL (September 1, 2011)** – State of Florida Governor Rick Scott has appointed Robert I. Watkins to the Aviation Authority to serve on the five-member board at Tampa International Airport. He succeeds chairman Alfred S. Austin, Austin Companies who has been on the Airport board for 12 years.

“We are honored to have Mr. Watkins appointed to the Airport’s board of directors. His experience and ties in the Tampa Bay community will be a tremendous asset for us all,” stated Joe Lopano, CEO, Tampa International Airport.

Watkins will serve for a term beginning August 19, 2011, and ending June 30, 2015. Watkins, 60, is the owner of Robert Watkins & Company PA. He is a Certified Public Accountant who provides professional accounting, tax management, and consulting services to a diverse range of closely held businesses and individuals. Beginning his career in 1973, he formed Robert Watkins & Company in 1980 and has built the firm into a multifaceted, highly respected professional accounting and consulting firm.

He attended Auburn University and the University of South Florida. He passed the Uniform CPA Exam and received certification in 1975. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Additionally, he is audit committee chair for the Republican National Convention 2012 host committee. Watkins is married to Nancy Hemmingway Watkins and they have two sons. His interests include boating, fishing, golf and politics.

Gubernatorial appointments occur at two-year intervals, and at these times the board reorganizes itself, electing officers for the ensuing two years.

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The revised five-member board elected new officers:

Chairman – Steven Burton  
Vice Chairman – Robert Watkins  
Secretary – Dr. Joseph Diaco  
Treasurer – City of Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn  
Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer – Hillsborough County Commissioner  
Victor Crist

**-TPA-**

**Joseph W. Lopano**, *Chief Executive Officer*

