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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Tampa to Havana Reconnected**

*First Cuba flight in fifty years*

TAMPA, FL (September 8, 2011) – Tampa International Airport is making history today by launching its first nonstop flight to Havana, Cuba, after nearly 50 years. The sold out flight is operated by Xael Charters and partner, Sky King Inc.

Members of the Tampa Bay community have continuously petitioned the Airport to focus on bringing more nonstop connections and increase international flights to the community.

“As the Gateway to the West Coast of Florida and a primary economic engine for the Tampa Bay region, we have a tremendous responsibility and a great opportunity to grow our region. Today is the first new international route for the community in a long time. There will be more. Let’s celebrate today,” stated Joe Lopano, CEO, Tampa International Airport.

In June, the Airport’s five-member board of directors adopted a financial incentive program for airlines which could bring more international service to Tampa. One new international flight can translate to an estimated \$150 million in economic impact to the Airport and the regional economy bringing approximately 1200 well-paying jobs and business development.

Tampa International Airport becomes the next U.S. gateway to Cuba following Los Angeles, New York and Miami. Even though 12 other U.S. airports have been granted rights, Tampa International Airport is the first to resume regularly scheduled flights to Havana.

On Saturday, September 10, 2011, ABC Charters along with American Airlines will launch its inaugural flight from Tampa to Havana, with a third weekly flight in October by Island Travel and Tours, Ltd.

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