



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, July 26, 2021**

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## Near Airport Parking Industry Trade Association Hosts Rep. Rutherford for Shuttle Ride-Along at JAX

*House Appropriations Transportation, Housing, & Urban Development Subcommittee  
Member Rides with NAPITA to Jacksonville International, Learns about Curb Access  
Firsthand*

**JACKSONVILLE, FL**, July 26, 2021 – Today, U.S. Representative John Rutherford (R-FL-4) joined the Near Airport Parking Industry Trade Association (NAPITA) for a Member Ride-Along aboard a WallyPark shuttle to Jacksonville International Airport (JAX).

NAPITA, an association of national parking operators dedicated to providing dependable and affordable travel options that improve the guest experience at major American airports, welcomed Representative Rutherford at WallyPark Jacksonville. Aboard the shuttle, Rep. Rutherford heard firsthand about the issues facing the air-travel-dependent industry, which was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and remains unable to access federal aid. NAPITA's members are an important part of and voice within the aviation ecosystem as a growing number of stakeholders seeking access to limited curb space at America's airports.

**Jeff Foland, CEO of The Parking Spot and Chairman of the NAPITA Board**, said, "As the travel industry begins its return to some sense of normalcy, we believe it's important to renew our focus on continued improvement to the air travel experience in its entirety—that starts at the

curb. Ground transportation operators, and especially near-airport parking providers, play an essential role in the aviation ecosystem and conversations around it. Rather than handing down directives and decisions without input, airports should welcome a productive relationship with private industry improving the airport experience. NAPITA and our members, committed to providing a high-customer service product, are always willing to do what's right for our customers, our employees, and our business. We just need the opportunity to have receptive listeners."



Ground transportation operators are vital partners to the aviation industry. Upwards of 10,000,000 Americans choose to park with a NAPITA member. However, airports unilaterally control access to their curbs for all types of ground transportation, including taxis, limos, ride-share services, rental cars, etc.

The curb space at our nation's airports is not only important for the safety and security of the airport, but it is also a scarce resource for an increasing number of travelers and the ground transportation industry and becomes more congested by the day. Just as delays on the tarmac harm economic productivity, issues at the curb lead to missed flights, lost time, and unhappy travelers.

Of these ground transportation operators, near-airport parking industry operators are the only ones that complement and directly compete with the airport for ground transportation services. On airport parking is available, leveraged by federal dollars, and most often prioritized by airports and their focus on revenue when crafting access policy.

In Jacksonville, near-airport parking operators pay eight percent of gross revenue to drop their customers at the airport curb. Other ground transportation operators pay a flat fee per passenger pick up. The airport shuttles servicing on airport parking bolstered by COVID relief funds and tax dollars obviously pay nothing.

**Charles Bassett, President of Operations at WallyPark**, said, “Near airport parking operators compete with but also complement an airport’s parking assets. Simply put, without private industry like WallyPark, there would not be enough parking spaces at Jacksonville Airport to serve all fliers. We are not, nor have we ever been, looking for a free ride from our airport partners; we merely want to be treated with the respect and courtesy our customers deserve on fair terms. We appreciated the opportunity to share our message and highlight our high-quality offering with Rep. Rutherford today.”

Ground transportation is a fundamental part of air travel. You quite literally cannot get on an airplane without getting to the airport first. That is why it is vitally important for federal policy makers to recognize all forms of airport ground transportation, via car, shuttle or train, when crafting budgets and legislation related to the aviation ecosystem. The ground transportation industry has for too long been left to grapple with issues of national importance on its own, always facing a fierce challenger in the form of airports with federal funding on their side. The time is ripe to equalize this conversation and to ensure that the ground transportation industry’s many employees and consumers get the benefit of non-discriminatory and reasonable airport access policy.

NAPITA is not one company looking out for merely its best economic interests—it is an industry of near-airport parking operators representing more than 12,000 employees and millions of customers who depend on ground transportation and world-class airport facilities to work, travel, and live. NAPITA’s mission is to partner with airports and other stakeholders in the aviation industry to ensure safe, efficient, affordable, and equitable access to their airport curb for off-airport parking operators and to increase the role ground transportation plays in the broader air travel industry and the overall experience for air travelers.

As the national organization for near-airport parking operators, NAPITA will continue to advocate for the industry and the vital role it plays within the broader aviation ecosystem. Visit [www.napita.org](http://www.napita.org) for more information.