

SPRUCE CREEK A Fly-In Community

Daytona Beach, Florida

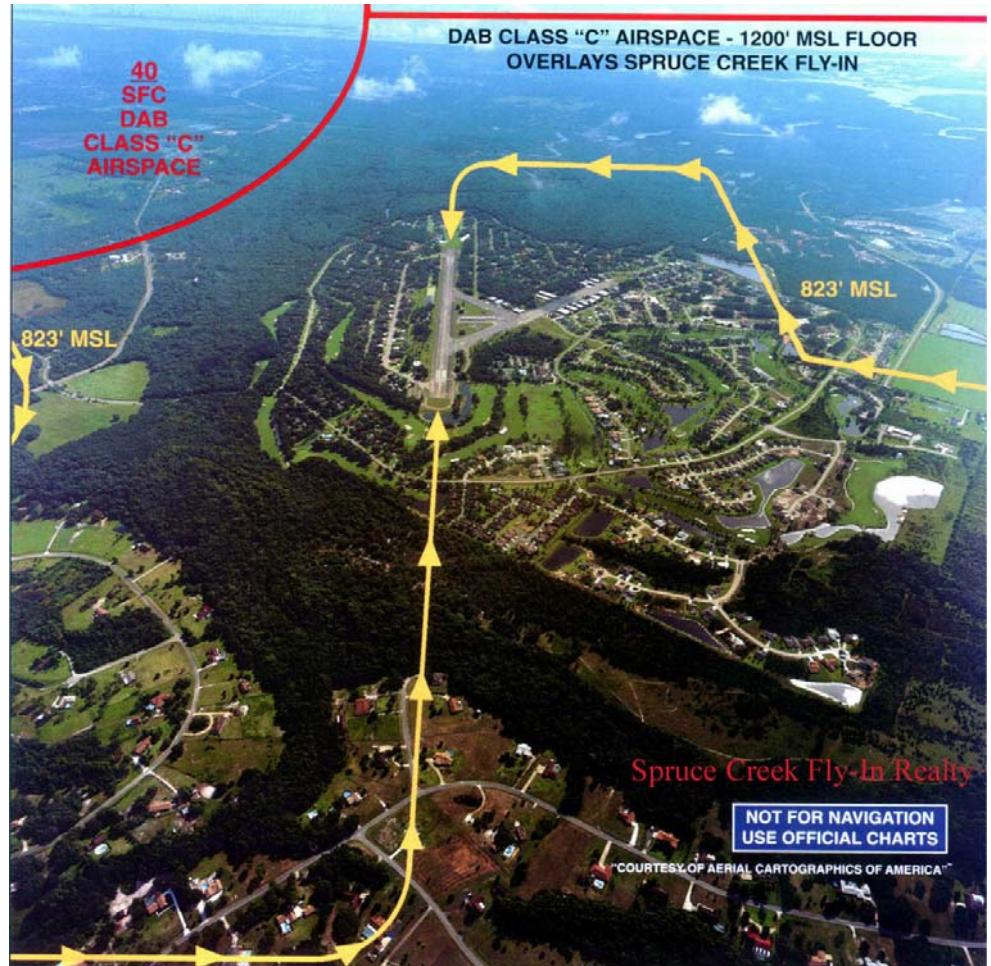
A Twin & Turbine staff report

Humans are tribal creatures, seeking out those others with whom they have things in common -- not the least of which are interests and lifestyles. That's what makes Spruce Creek, a fly-in community just outside Daytona Beach, Florida, unique but also eminently logical -- that is, if your tribe happens to love golf, private aviation or both.

Spruce Creek was one of the first of several hundred and growing fly-in communities around the world. In the 1960s, a visionary named McKinley Conway saw a way to make use of Armed Forces airfields abandoned after World War II. His plan was to develop residential communities where the family airplane sat alongside the family car, and where commuting to and from work could mean an hour in a twin-engine Baron rather than an hour stuck in auto traffic somewhere.

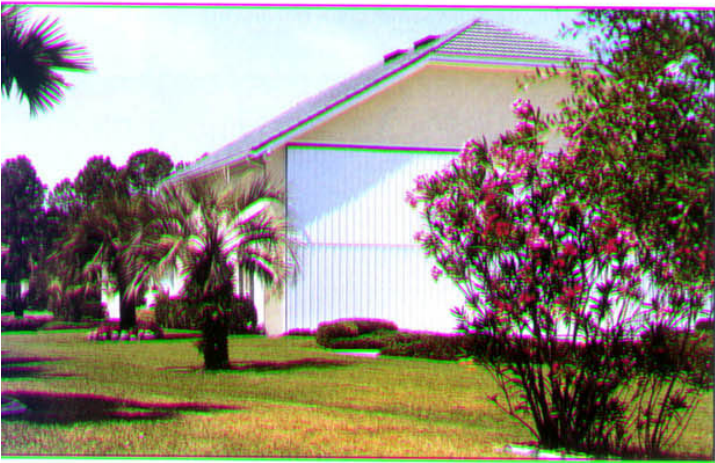
Officially launched in 1970, Spruce Creek today is the largest fly-in community -- and one of the largest private airports -- in the world, boasting a near-capacity 1200 homes, some with attached hangars, others in which owners house their planes in community hangars. Celebrities such as John Travolta (Gulfstream II) and NASCAR driver Mark Martin (CitationJet and Lear) call the 1200-acre Spruce Creek Fly-In development home because of the ease with which they can commute to and from work, wherever that work may take them. They are joined by commercial airline pilots

who fly their private planes to public airports, and then climb into the cockpits of 747s and the like for international flights. In turn are joined by resident entrepreneurs who telecommute using today's computer and Internet technology to work at home,





A typical home in the GlenEagles neighborhood, elevated from the street ...and from the taxiway.



which consequently can be anywhere they chose. All told at the height of the winter season, between 300 and 400 resident-owned airplanes use Spruce Creek's 4,000-by-180-foot runway and 13 miles of paved taxiways. Some of the residents make world-class commutes to be able to live at least part of the year at Spruce Creek, coming from as far away as Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany, and Austria, for example. And they love to talk airplanes with one another -- it's that tribal thing.

But there are other attractions besides the ease of flying in and out of Spruce Creek. The community boasts an 18-hole golf course, the Spruce Creek Country Club, a privately operated golf club with the sort of challenge that won't cause a duffer to bite through his or her putter, even though some of the back nine's holes test even the most skilled golfer. The courses have been expertly integrated into the landscape as though they have always been there.

Still other residents have chosen Spruce Creek simply because of the beauty of the surroundings. The development is loosely divided

into 12 distinct "neighborhoods," each with its own look and identity, like so many small villages. And just as there is every type of airplane from single-engine Cessnas to the most modern private jets, there's something in almost every price range in housing, too, from \$80,000 golf-course condos, to \$5 million palatial homes lining Spruce Creek's 40-plus miles of streets. And, of course, the entire gated development rests right in the center of the famed Daytona Beach vacation area with such noted attractions as Walt Disney World and Universal Studios only 45 minutes away in Orlando.

Even though half of the residents are retired, Spruce Creek is not a retirement community. According to race-car drive Mark Martin, "We've got school buses coming in here." Martin chose Spruce Creek for the safety and security it offers his family -- four children -- as well as the combination of fly-in convenience, and get-away-from-it-all relaxation.

Aside from the fact that there is no debt service on the property, Spruce Creek works because of the community spirit that prevails. The development is managed by a five-member elected board of residents assisted by standing committees of volunteers. The committees include security, finance and budget, children's committee, public relations, update committee, architectural review committee (to make sure proposed homes meet the neighborhood standards), airport committee, legal and bylaw committee, public works, and long range planning committee.

There is also a Spruce Creek Community Support Service Network to assist residents in time of personal crisis, illness, bereavement or simple inconvenience. Volunteers assist those in need with flying and driving services, shopping, meal preparation and by lending such equipment as crutches, wheelchairs, walkers, cribs, playpens, rollaway beds, booster seats, tricycles -- even a portable PA system should the need arise. The network's supplies and operating expenses are financed by an annual flea market and bake sale.

Spruce Creek is a modern, forward-looking fly-in community, but it's also a good old-fashioned neighborhood, where everybody looks out for everyone else. And as municipal airports across the county close at an alarming rate because of budgetary constraints, it's the sort of community whose time has come and a model for all those yet to be. ◆

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