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## Start Spreading The News: Northwest Airlines Flies Nonstop To New York

Beginning Wednesday, November 1, 2006, Northwest Airlines will be flying nonstop from Grand Rapids (GRR) to New York – LaGuardia Airport (LGA). This daily service will depart GRR at 8:00 a.m., landing in LGA at 10:00 a.m. Return flights depart LGA at 5:35 p.m., arriving in GRR at 7:42 p.m.

These new flights will be operated by Northwest Airlink partner Pinnacle Airlines with a 50-seat Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ). The new route to LaGuardia increases Northwest's all-jet service schedule to 18 daily departures from GRR to eight nonstop destinations.

As an added bonus, Northwest is offering 1,000 bonus miles through its WorldPerks frequent flyer program for travel on the airline's new service between GRR and LGA, awarded for each of up to three-round trip flights on a paid ticket between November 1, 2006, and February 14, 2007 (visit [nwa.com](http://nwa.com) for more details).

Northwest is one of eight airlines operating at Gerald R. Ford International. Nonstop destinations include Atlanta, Chicago – O'Hare, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Las Vegas\*, Memphis, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York – LaGuardia, New York – Newark, Orlando\*, Tampa\*, and Washington, D.C. - Reagan National.



\* indicates seasonal service

## Making Connections

When the war in Iraq began, thousands of civilian employers once again found themselves losing a portion of their workforce as the National Guard and Reserve forces were called into active duty. This situation can be stressful for all involved. The employer has to make arrangements to get the work done without a valued employee. The employee worries about whether he/she will have a job at the end of the tour of duty. The employee's family must figure out how to manage the household without a breadwinner, caretaker, and sometimes sole provider.

The good news is, there are people available to help. The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense organization that operates through a network of hundreds of volunteers throughout the nation and beyond with a mission to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve.

ESGR was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. One of the ways that they accomplish this with area employers is by hosting Boss Lift events. On a recent September day, Alticor, Inc., hosted one such event. Representatives from 60 area employers came out to GFIA and spent a day



A KC-135 Stratotanker shown performing a mid-air refueling of an F-16 Fighter jet.

## Tenant Profile: Grand Rapids Building Services

### What Does It Take To Keep The Airport Clean?

On an average day, the GFIA passenger terminal building has nearly 275 workers and 17,000 guests passing through. That's 34,550 shoes walking on the carpet and other flooring – come rain or shine, dust or snow. Add to that the occasional spilled latte, tipped-over pizza, and cookie crumbs, and you can see how keeping the airport clean can be a real challenge.

But, at GFIA, the staff of Grand Rapids Building Services (GRBS) is up to the test. Working a three-shift schedule of 620 hours per week, these men and women are dedicated to keeping the terminal clean. Hour by hour they clean toilets (there are 96 of them), empty trash cans (all 187), and keep the tables and chairs clean and orderly in the Grand Hall. They also handle the dusting, window washing, and floor care. In fact, they vacuum enough carpet to equal an average household hallway (3.5 feet wide) that is just over 4.6 miles long!

Much of their work is done behind the scenes and during off-peak hours, in an effort to disrupt as few visitors as possible. For instance, carpets are cleaned on the third shift and large fans are put out to dry them quickly so that morning travelers have clear paths throughout the facility. However, some tasks – such as cleaning the restrooms – must be done throughout the day regardless of traffic levels. Even then, the GRBS staff works quickly and efficiently to get the job done.



Once each week, GRBS account manager Diane VanHyfte and terminal maintenance supervisor Fred Fischer walk through the facility and perform a joint quality control check. “Our goal is to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness without disrupting patrons or inconveniencing them in any way,” says VanHyfte.

Well, Diane, we'd love to give your staff a gold medal for their efforts, but it would just be one more thing for them to clean!

## Airport Business Operators Welcome New Managers

On October 9, HMS Host, GFIA's food and beverage concessionaire, welcomed a new general manager to the Grand Rapids team.

Brian Camp, CMBE, comes to HMS Host from Roanoke, VA. As general manager, Brian will rely on his 15-years experience as he oversees the day-to-day operations of the food and beverage business at GFIA, which includes brand names such as Pizza Hut, Cinnabon, TCBY, Pizzeria Uno, and Starbucks.

A native of Michigan, Brian brings his wife and one-year-old daughter with him to Grand Rapids.

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The Express Shuttle and Valet Parking services, operated by Standard Parking, also has a new face at the helm. On July 19, former supervisor Judy Faber was promoted to the position of facility manager.

Judy has been with Standard Parking Services for 4 ½ years, since the Express Shuttle lot opened at GFIA.

Judy and her husband are Grand Rapids natives with two grown children and four grandchildren.

## Gray Skies Can't Dampen Their Spirits

On Saturday, September 9, nearly 50 families arrived at the Northern Jet Management, Inc., hangar at GFIA with spirits flying high. It was the ninth annual Fly Day event for Dreams and Wings for Kids (formerly Challenge Air) and the gray skies and cloudy weather were no match for the sunny smiles as children, young people, and their families awaited their turns to take an airplane ride. Their excitement wasn't even dampened by weather that delayed morning takeoffs by nearly two hours.

Family members and volunteers provided assistance for entering and exiting the airplanes, but once in the air, these young people were treated to a seldom-experienced freedom like no other. Each participant flew “right seat” in the aircraft, with two or three family members and/or friends riding in the back. “Our goal is to provide each participant with an opportunity to see the world from a different view. We want to inspire these kids to achieve great things,” says Capt. Jack Lewis, president of Dreams and Wings for Kids.

This year's event, coordinated by Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, had five pilots taking 150 participants on rides throughout the day. Fly Day events provide physically, mentally, or emotionally challenged and seriously ill children and young adults the opportunity to fly in small airplanes piloted by both wheelchair and non-wheelchair aviators.



Jordan Katterjohn (left) invited his little brother, Beau, and friend Ryan Coverston with him on his flight. Wheelchair aviator Capt. Jack Lewis (seated in plane) was their pilot.

## Airport Divisions Receive Recognition



In April, Eric Vander Stel and Ralph Bowden from **Airfield Maintenance** took top honors at the American Association of Airport Executives (A.A.A.E.) Snow Symposium, in Buffalo, NY. Their winning “Idea Corner” entry – for modifying the sander wetting system used for snow control operations – included remounting the spray nozzles on the P Series vehicles to prevent the sand from clogging.

In August, the airport underwent its annual FAR Part 139 Airport Certification Inspection. This extensive inspection, performed by the Federal Aviation Administration, is a requirement for all commercial airport operators, and focuses heavily on **Airport Operations, Maintenance, and Fire Rescue**. The inspectors examine everything from airfield conditions to training, response times of the fire rescue team to maintenance standards. For the fourth consecutive year, GFIA received “zero discrepancies” – that is, there were no issues that required corrective action.



In September, **Marketing & Communications** learned that two of its publications won awards in the Airports Council International – North America Marketing & Communications Contest. In the category of “Press Kits,” its innovative, electronic-format press kit took third place. In the category of “Newsletters—External,” *Airport Connections* – the very publication you are reading – garnered a third place award as well. Entries were judged by an independent panel comprising representatives from advertising, graphic design, journalism, public relations, and related disciplines.

## Sounds Of The Season

During the week of December 4 - 8, the Grand Hall of the passenger terminal building will once again be filled with music, laughter, and plenty of talented youth from around the area.

At various times throughout the days, many area middle and high school music groups will be performing for airport passengers, visitors, and employees. These local groups, ranging in size from 12 to 150+, come out each year to entertain and delight airport patrons. You can hear everything from classical Latin arias, to classic carols, to fun modern holiday songs.

Regardless of who is performing or what type of music they sing, you're sure to get into the holiday spirit watching their smiling faces and hearing their joyful renderings of some of your holiday favorites.

For a complete performance schedule, visit the airport's website at [www.flygrandrapids.org/WhatsNew.php](http://www.flygrandrapids.org/WhatsNew.php) and click on the “Music Festival” link.

## Sharing The Wealth Of Knowledge

For the fifth consecutive year, GFIA Field Maintenance Supervisor Eric Vander Stel and his staff opened their doors to maintenance teams from other airports. What did they offer their invited guests? Knowledge and experience – and lots of both.



New to the GFIA fleet is this Oshkosh 6X6 P-series plow truck equipped with a 24-ft. Wausau gull wing plow.

They kicked off the day with a tour of the airfield maintenance facility – a well-equipped 52,000-sq. ft. facility used to house and maintain the airport's

sizeable fleet. The tour was followed by a presentation by Larry Baareman of Fleet Compliance Group. Baareman spoke on changes to CDL (commercial driver's license) laws and vehicle maintenance files. After the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to get a close-up look at some of the newest equipment available, including a brand-new Terex TXL 400-2 front-end loader – the largest loader Terex sells in the United States.

equipment, snow removal equipment, ice control techniques, and airfield lighting repairs.



“It was an excellent day. The GFIA Team does a great job putting this together.”

— Survey Comment

After lunch, GFIA's maintenance team offered demonstrations of crack sealing, groundhog trapping, perimeter fence repairs, paint line stripping, mowing

This year's event was attended by 35 individuals representing nine airports from as far away as Columbus, Ohio. So how do Vander Stel and his staff feel about the time invested into planning such an event? “We hope to continue to offer this workshop for a long time. It's a great opportunity for us to share our experience with smaller airports.”

## News In Brief

- » The GFIA Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting unit will once again be collecting donations for the Toys for Tots campaign. Donations will be collected through Friday, December 8. For more information about the Toys for Tots program, call the Holiday Hotline at (616) 459-2625.
- » The next two meetings of the Kent County Aeronautics Board will be held on November 29 and December 20, 2006, at 8:30 a.m. All meetings take place in the International Room in the passenger terminal building and are open to the public.
- » GFIA will be partnering with Michigan Community Blood Centers to host a community blood drive on Friday, May 18, 2007, in the International Room in the passenger terminal building. You may pre-register for a time on our website at [www.flygrandrapids.org/BloodDrive.php](http://www.flygrandrapids.org/BloodDrive.php) or by contacting Donna Thomas, Office Administrator, at (616) 233-6046. Walk-ins are also welcome.

### Airport Employees: Is GreenRide Right For You?

Employees across the airport may have a new option for getting to work and saving a bit of "green" in the process. The Rapid's GreenRide is a web-based application that helps you find carpool partners by searching for other employees who live near you and have similar schedules and lifestyle preferences. For more information, check out the website at [therapid.greenride.ene.com](http://therapid.greenride.ene.com).



### Giving From The Heart

Twice each year, GFIA partners with Michigan Community Blood Centers (MCBC) to host a blood drive at the airport. The most recent drive was held Friday, September 29. Employees, passengers, and visitors turned out to support this important cause.

Previous Total	637 pints
Given at 9/29/06 drive	21 pints
Total donated at airport drives	658 pints

GFIA and MCBC would like to thank all who participated in the blood drive.

esgr

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with the crew of a KC-135 Stratotanker from Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Steve Kenyon provided an overview of what this Reserve unit does, and why it is important for the Reservists to attend their weekend and once-a-year training sessions. Attendees rode in the KC-135 from GFIA to Selfridge ANGB. While en route, against the picturesque backdrop of Grand Traverse Bay, they were able to witness firsthand (peering through the glassed underbelly) the refueling of A-10 Warriors from the 110th Fighter Wing. Once at Selfridge ANGB, they toured the facility and saw a variety of other activities.

The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, instituted in 1996, publicly recognizes employers for exceptional support beyond the requirements of federal law. Previous recipients of the award with ties to GFIA include Alticor, Inc., and Enterprise Rent-a-Car (2005), United Parcel Service Airlines (2002), Midwest Express Airlines (2000), and American Airlines (1998).

For more information on ESGR and the Employer Support Freedom Award, check out their national website at [www.esgr.org](http://www.esgr.org), or the Michigan Chapter website at [www.mi-esgr.org](http://www.mi-esgr.org).

*Airport Connections* is the quarterly newsletter of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. We encourage our readers to contact us with comments, suggestions, and submissions. If you wish to be added to the mailing list for *Airport Connections*, please contact the Kent County Department of Aeronautics:

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