

## Gateway Transformation Project Phase One Celebration

On September 27, 2017, the West Michigan community celebrated the completion of construction on the first phase of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport's Gateway Transformation Project. The first phase of the Gateway Transformation Project includes a consolidated passenger security checkpoint which centralizes and combines security screening to one main checkpoint in the airport, eliminating separate screening for passengers traveling through either Concourse A or B.



New finishes include terrazzo flooring, lighting fixtures, restrooms & nursing rooms, family restrooms, pre- and post-security kids play areas, pre- and post-security business centers, meet and greet space, and much more.

“For four straight years we have seen record passenger growth, and we are on pace to make it a fifth. We saw a need to make improvements for the passengers, and to continue to deliver top-notch customer service and amenities,” said GFIA Board Chair Roger Morgan. “We are committed to being West Michigan’s gateway to the world. We want people to step off the plane and know they’re in West Michigan.”

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## 1,200+ Participants Put the “Run” in Runway During the 5K

The day started out cold, windy, and rainy, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the GFIA Runway 5K participants as more than 1,200 runners and walkers laced up their sneakers for this special event. The race loop began (and ended) near the cargo facilities, continuing through the tunnel under the north/south runway, looping around by the airport fire station, and wrapping around on Runway 8L/26R – GFIA's general aviation runway. The Airport's two other commercial aviation runways were operational, giving participants a chance to soak in an up-close-and-personal sight.

“This was a tremendous opportunity for runners, walkers, and families who wanted to experience a fun event on one of our runways that is normally only being used for aircraft,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill. “It was exciting to see West Michigan come out and experience our facility like never before, plus support a wonderful charity at the same time.”



**5k** Runners coming out of the tunnel that goes under Runway 17/35 toward the finish line.  
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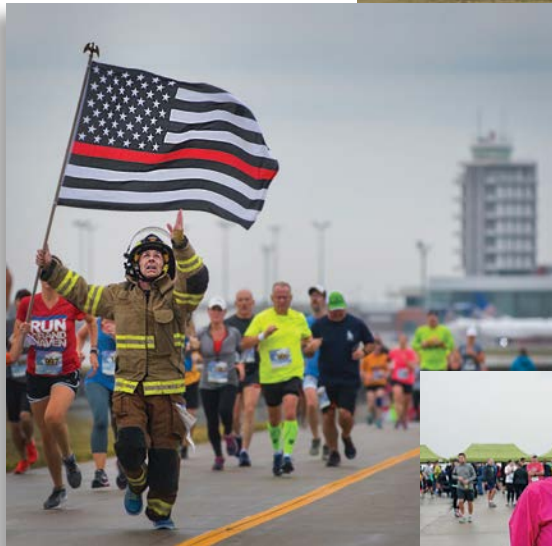
GFIA selected Make-A-Wish Michigan as its charity of choice to donate the race proceeds.

“We’re delighted that the Gerald R. Ford International Airport hosted an event to benefit Make-A-Wish Michigan.” said Karen Davis, president & CEO of Make-A-Wish Michigan. “It’s through the generous support of our Michigan community, like our friends at GFIA, that we are able to grant life-changing wishes to Michigan children and bring hope, strength and joy at a time when they need it most.”

“Make-A-Wish Michigan does tremendous work in our community, and we are thrilled to be able to donate proceeds from our Runway 5K to this organization,” said Gill. “We see Make-A-Wish kids in our airport on a regular basis, and although we wish that was less frequent; we are happy to help grant more wishes in West Michigan through this donation.”



Runway 5K winner Andy Roersma soared across the finish line in true aviation style.



As an added bonus, our diamond level sponsor, Frontier Airlines, registered people for a drawing in which ten winners received \$500 travel vouchers. (See blue box on page 5 for the complete list of winners.)

Our thanks go out to all of our sponsors including Frontier Airlines, United Airlines, Northern Jet Management, Gun Lake Casino, SpartanNash, Steven Baldwin Associates, FastSigns, Sabo PR, Lighthouse Group, Standard Parking, and Western Michigan University College of Aviation. Special thanks to our race partner, Trivium Racing for coordinating and certifying the race.

For more great race day photos visit Facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport.

## Engineering Change

On September 30, GFIA said farewell to Engineering & Facilities Director Tom Ecklund. Having served in this role since 2003, Tom was a key player in many construction projects during his tenure.

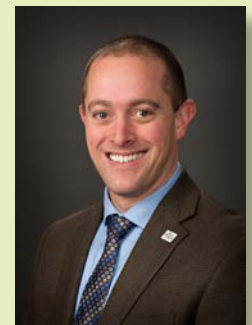


Throughout his 14 years, Tom oversaw more than 20 projects encompassing pavement reconstruction and expansion both airside and landside, the addition of new jet bridges at

all gates, the Terminal Area and Parking Improvement Project which included the parking garage, roadway canopy and much more, the Stormwater project, most recently, phase one of our Gateway Transformation Project, and many more.

In all, the projects completed under his watchful eye totalled roughly \$286.7 million. That’s quite a legacy to leave behind, and we are grateful to Tom for leaving GFIA a better place than when he came.

Taking the reins of leadership as our newest Engineering & Facilities Director is Casey Ries. He originally joined our staff in 2014 as our Engineering Manager. Casey brings 14 years of combined engineering and aviation experience to the position. He is a Licensed Professional Engineer, Certified Industrial Storm Water Operator and FAA Licensed Private Pilot. He is also the Coordinator of the Capital Area MATHCOUNTS program, and the President of the Grand Ledge Robotics Club.



In his former position, Casey played a critical role in phase one of the Gateway Transformation Project; he will continue by overseeing the design and construction activities of phase two, which are scheduled to begin in late 2018.

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New retail space includes “A Touch of Grand Rapids” store, a partnership with Hudson News, and new food & beverage space includes a Starbucks post-security, and Prospect Hill Brewhouse, a collaboration with HMSHost.

“HMSHost is thrilled to be a part of Gerald R. Ford International Airport’s Gateway Transformation Project. With the recent openings of Prospect Hill and Starbucks, HMSHost has brought both local and national favorites to Grand Rapids travelers,” said HMSHost Vice President of Business Development Bryan Loden. “We’re honored to continue our partnership with the airport, and our partner Steve Jenkins of Diversified Installations, to elevate the traveler experience with even more great food and drink options to kick off their journey.”



Of the \$45 million project, over \$17 million was raised through sponsorships, with the remainder of the support coming from airport funds and passenger facility charges. Sponsorships included an \$8 million donation from Amway as the title sponsor of the Gateway Transformation Project. eSpring drinking fountains and other Amway branding can be seen throughout the airport space.

Other sponsorships of \$1 million and up include Meijer, SpartanNash, Spectrum Health, Steelcase, and Wolverine Worldwide. SpartanNash has partnered with the airport to add a Military Welcome Center (see page 4). Spectrum Health Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital has redesigned and added new Kids Play Areas, family restrooms and nursing rooms for new mothers; and Steelcase has outfitted four business lounges pre-and-post security with its collection of office furniture.

The airport has also worked with the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation to incorporate an exhibit dedicated to the 38th President, which is located pre-security in the Grand Hall (see page 4).



A reconstructed indoor observation area on the mezzanine of the Grand Hall where passengers may see friends and loved ones depart for their flight is also a part of the newly designed space.

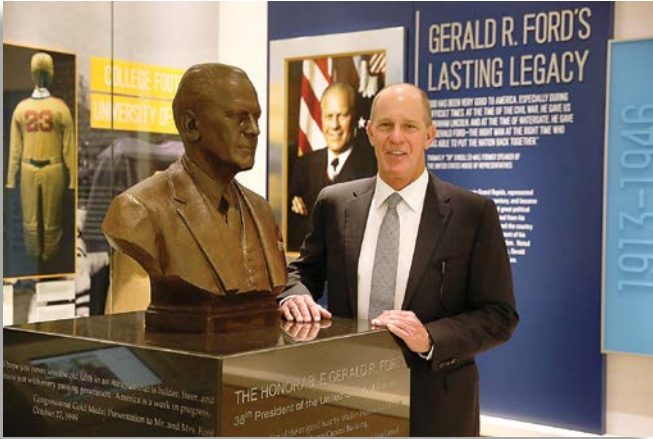
Construction spanned 21 months, is estimated to have utilized 223,200 man hours, and expanded the Airport building by over 59,000 square feet.

A second phase, which will include improvements to the airline ticketing, baggage screening, and baggage claim areas, is currently in the design phase. Construction is slated to begin in 2018.

## Airport Dedicates Ford Tribute Room

As part of the Gateway Transformation Project, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport worked with the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation to incorporate a permanent exhibit space dedicated to the 38th President. The exhibit space, located pre-security, includes photos, an aircraft carrier model, displays, and rotating historical pieces.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Tribute Room, President Ford's son, Steve Ford, said, "Dad would be extremely proud to know that the foundation and the airport that bear his



name came together to honor him with this tribute room. He loved growing up in Grand Rapids, and it is humbling to know that he will always have a place to be remembered. This tribute room at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport is a terrific place for generations that knew my father to spend time reflecting on the past, but also for future generations to learn about what he meant to our country and to West Michigan."

The Tribute Room is open to visitors and airport patrons 24 hours a day.

## New Military Welcome Center

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) welcomes thousands of military members and veterans each year, and now there is a special place at the airport for them to call their own. GFIA and SpartanNash have partnered to present the Military Welcome Center, a private space located pre-security near the Concourse A exit.

"At SpartanNash, we are deeply committed to serving our military heroes and their families, both at home and abroad," said Dave Staples, SpartanNash President and Chief Executive Officer. "We are honored to present the Military Welcome Center, because it allows us to be a part of the journey of those who served and continue to serve."

The Military Welcome Center is open to military members, veterans, and their families 24 hours a day. The center offers snacks, refreshments, magazines, and lounging spaces. There are also interactive maps and murals where military personnel and veterans can pin where they have been stationed or deployed.



## ArtPrize Nine Comes to GFIA



*Totem of a Michigan Woman*  
by Sharron Ansell

GFIA has been a welcoming point for artists and visitors since ArtPrize began, and a sponsor for several years, so the natural next step was to become a venue for the annual art competition. For its inaugural year, the airport featured the works of seven artists displayed both inside in the east ticketing wing and the newly completed observation deck and outside under the iconic roadway canopy and welcome wall.

"We were thrilled to be a part of ArtPrize. We enjoyed welcoming both local and international artists and visitors, appreciated seeing their talents on display in our beautiful facility," said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill.

ArtPrize 10 is scheduled for September 19 to October 7, 2018.



*Fly Away With Me* by Mariia Rykhlovskia



*We Are Fruitport Building on a Legacy* by the Fruitport High School Visual Arts Team

# Airport Authority Welcomes New COO

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority is excited to introduce Alex Peric, A.A.E. as the new Vice President & Chief Operating Officer.

Peric, who comes to Gerald R. Ford International Airport from Allegheny County Airport Authority in Pittsburgh, will start at the Airport Authority on November 6.

“Alex is a perfect addition to our airport team,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill. “He is well known and well respected among his peers in the aviation industry, and he has experience in all of the areas where we are looking to grow – economic and business development, air service, and operations.”

Peric has more than 15 years of aviation experience. The Cleveland native started his career with Continental Airlines in Cleveland in 2000; he had stops working for the City of Phoenix (Arizona) Aviation Department in Management Development Program, and then returned to the Cleveland Airport System as Properties Officer, Business Development & Properties from 2008-2010.

In his tenure at the Allegheny County Airport Authority, Peric most recently served as Vice President of Business Development and Properties. Under the general direction of the CEO, he led negotiations of business transactions and managed a staff of professionals to implement the organization’s strategy regarding all business development and properties activities as well as aid air service development in the retention and recruitment of airlines. He also had roles as a Business Manager and Business Analyst in his time in Pittsburgh.



“Grand Rapids is a hidden gem, and that includes the airport.”

~Alex Peric,  
GFIAA VP & COO

“I am thrilled to join the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority team,” said Peric. “I grew up in the Midwest and am excited to live in such a thriving community with an incredible airport. Grand Rapids is a hidden gem, and that includes the airport. I am looking forward to working with the GRR team to help the airport grow even more, and create additional business opportunities in West Michigan.”

Peric is an Accredited Airport Executive with the American Association of Airport Executives, and serves on Airport Council International’s Commercial Management Steering Group.

Among the Airport’s future plans is the current Gateway Transformation Project, which is set to begin Phase Two construction in 2018. Additionally, the Airport is on pace to break another passenger record for 2017, and airport leadership are underway in updating the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Master Plan.

“The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is going to be a great place to work because of all of the exciting things happening there,” said Peric. “It is evident among the aviation industry that Grand Rapids is an airport to keep an eye on as we continue to flourish, expand, and plan for an exciting future.”

Peric replaces Phil Johnson, who retired in June after more than 20 years at the Airport.

## Signature Flight Support Receives Construction Excellence Award

Signature Flight Support, a full service Fixed Base Operator (FBO) tenant at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport was recognized by the Associated Builders and Contractors Western Michigan with the 2017 Excellence in Construction Award New Construction \$1–5 Million for their new FBO Terminal Facility.



## Runway 5K Drawing Winners

Thanks to the generous donation of our diamond level sponsor, Frontier Airlines, the following ten individuals each won a \$500 Frontier travel voucher:

- » Joe Doyle of Muskegon
- » Craig Eby, Sr. of Cadillac
- » Scott Hudson of Hudsonville
- » Brent Johnson of Saugatuck
- » Brian Laumeyer of Kentwood
- » Tracy Nykamp of Byron Center
- » Kip Odell of Grand Rapids
- » William Pirkola of Grandville
- » Jodie Stamm of Marne
- » Melinda Talbot of Ionia

Congratulations and happy travels to each of our winners!

**Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority**  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49512-4055

*Getting there is better here.*

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Facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport

## News In Brief

- » The next two meetings of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority Board are currently scheduled to occur on November 29, and December 20. Board meetings begin at 8:30 AM and are held in the International Room in the passenger terminal building. All meetings are open to the public.
- » Join us for the 23rd annual Airport Holiday Music Festival December 4—8, 2017. Throughout the week the airport hosts a variety of local middle and high school choral groups who come and perform the music of the holidays in the Grand Hall. Check out our Facebook page for the complete schedule of performances.

## Airport Employee Information Corner

Safe wintertime air travel operations depend upon aircraft and airfield pavement deicing activities, which are strictly regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The GFIA Deicing Management Program controls and manages spent deicing materials at the airport through the use of best management practices, recycling, and other mechanisms designed to help protect the environment. GFIA's program requires organization, teamwork, and implementation of specific structural controls, practices, and procedures to manage deicing materials.

To facilitate the recycling of deicing chemicals, GFIA restricts airport users to employ only propylene glycol-based aircraft deicing products. GFIA has also banned the use of nitrogen-based deicing products (e.g., urea) and tenants are reminded that materials containing urea are not allowed for use anywhere at the airport.

Through constant refinement to its Deicing Management Program, the cooperation of airport tenants, and the hard work of its employees, GFIA strives to help ensure the safety of the traveling public while also taking necessary steps to protect the local environment. Any tenant needing information on approved deicing products should contact Roy Hawkins, Planning Engineer at (616) 233-6022 or via email at RHawkins@grr.org.

GFIA also reminds everyone that the active participation of staff and tenants is a critical part of the overall stormwater management program at the airport. If you observe any practices or situations that appear to have the potential to impact the quality of stormwater at the airport, call Airport Communications at 233-6055 and report your observation(s).

**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 Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority office:

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