

Fifth Consecutive Record-Breaking Year!

In 2017, 2,811,622 passengers flew in and out of GFIA, an increase of 5.95 percent from 2016. March 2017 was the single busiest month in Airport history with 256,880 total passengers traveling through GFIA, breaking an all-time monthly record. The Airport had growth in 11 of 12 months in 2017, and has had 53 months of growth over a 60 month period. The increases in that five-year period range from months of 1.22 percent growth to 14.95 percent.

The progression over the last five years started in 2013 with a passenger total of 2,237,979. In 2014, that number jumped to 2,335,105. In 2015, GFIA broke its own record once again with a passenger total record of 2,550,193 – a 9.21 percent year-over-year increase, and in 2016 the Airport served 2,653,630 passengers. The Airport has recorded the strongest growth in its 54-year history, serving over 12.5 million passengers from 2013-2017. Since opening its doors at its current location on 44th St., GFIA has served over 73 million passengers.

“This is an incredible milestone to accomplish, and we could not have done this without our tremendous staff, our loyal passengers, and all of our airline partners and airport tenants,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill. “We take pride in being a catalyst to the growing West Michigan community, and the investment our airline partners have made at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport has helped fuel this success. The airlines would not be investing here if they did not see an opportunity, and we continue to be successful because they are successful.”



five

continued on page 2



Frontier Airlines Returns to Grand Rapids

Frontier Airlines, headquartered in Denver, landed an Airbus A320 aircraft in Grand Rapids on December 10, bringing with it three weekly nonstop flights to Fort Myers, FL (RSW) and four weekly nonstop flights to Orlando International Airport (MCO). Beginning April 8, 2018 it will offer four weekly nonstop flights to Denver International Airport (DEN) as well.

“We are thrilled to welcome Frontier in the Grand Rapids market,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill. “Having another low cost carrier option to stimulate competition and offer even more nonstop service is a welcome addition for our air service portfolio and our growing community.”

Orlando is the number one market for nonstop service out of Grand Rapids with an average of almost 200 passengers per day each way. Denver is a top-five market for GFIA.

INSIDE THIS EDITION

2 | *Sounds of the Season*

2 | *Let's Get Social!*

3 | *GFIA Hosts Holiday Open House*

3 | *Snow Removal Equipment at its Finest*

3 | *Mark Your Calendars*

4 | *News In Brief*

4 | *Authority Board Elects New Leadership*

Sounds of the Season

The first week of December the airport's Grand Hall was transformed into a holiday concert venue for many area junior and senior high school vocal groups. The Airport Holiday Music Festival is an annual tradition that has become a favorite of airport employees and patrons alike.

From the small ensembles to the 75+ voice choirs, these student groups filled the air with a wide variety of musical stylings from Latin arias to classic carols to some new twists on old seasonal favorites. Airport employees, arriving and departing passengers and our meeters and greeters, everyone found their spirits lifted as the students performed.

Far from their ordinary venue, the directors and students thoroughly enjoy performing at the airport. One senior commented, "This has been my favorite off (school) campus location to perform at. The energy here is different than anywhere else we sing and it's just amazingly fun!"



Wyoming Jr. High School Choir

The Airport Authority would like to thank the following schools for sharing their talented students with us this year:

- Alger Middle School
- City High School
- East Kentwood High School
- Godfrey-Lee High School
- Legacy Christian School
- Martin Luther King Leadership Academy
- Moline Christian School
- Northpointe Christian Middle and High Schools
- The Potter's House Schools
- West Catholic High School *
- Wyoming Jr. High School

**New group this year*

five
continued from page 1

Additionally, the airport has processed almost 2.5 billion pounds of cargo since 1967. Cargo totals for 2017 hit 88.2 million pounds – a 2.56 percent increase over 2016.

GFIA has invested in new facilities to accommodate the growing traffic by recently completing Phase One of the Gateway Transformation Project – an upgrade in space, retail, food and beverage, restrooms, finishes, amenities, and customer service offerings, the main feature of which is the consolidated passenger security checkpoint which centralized and combined security screening to one main checkpoint in the Airport.



Phase Two of the Gateway Transformation Project is slated to begin in Fall 2018 with construction taking place at the airline ticket counters, baggage claim area, and 'front of house' area.

"As we continue to grow in traffic it is imperative that our facilities keep up with our passenger demand," said Gill. "Our passengers keep coming back because we listen to their wants and needs, and as they do, we will continue to do our part to improve our amenities, technology, customer service and infrastructure. We are excited to see what the future holds, and we hope to add more growth in the years to come. Our 2020 Vision is to hit the three million passenger mark."

Let's Get Social!

How do you stay up-to-date on the latest happenings at your favorite airport? Do you know just how many ways there are? Check out the list below to see how easy it is to stay in the know...



fb.com/FlyGRFord is a great place to learn about the latest happenings and upcoming contests and events at the airport. We also post job openings here!



@FlyGRFord on Twitter is the fastest way to get the latest news updates on the go.



FlyGRFord on Instagram is our newest social media! We're sharing our photos with you, but we want you to share your photos with us too!



LinkedIn.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport is where you'll find our business page. We post press releases and employment opportunities here.



Check us out on YouTube to view our commercials as well as some great video shots of planes taking off and landing at the airport.



Even with all the new social media outlets available, we still maintain a solid presence on the world wide web. For a repository of the most reliable information visit us at FlyFord.org.

GFIA Hosts Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 16, GFIA opened its doors for a unique experience where guests pre-registered for an open house and enjoyed the new amenities and offerings post-security as a part of the airport's new Gateway Transformation. After receiving a checkpoint pass, guests were able to go through security, and had a chance to shop at the new retail stores, grab a bite to eat at one of the new restaurants, and explore the new business centers, kids play areas, and more.

"We've heard so many wonderful compliments about our new space from our regular travelers, but we knew there were many who hadn't seen the new renovations and wanted to. This gave them the opportunity to check out the offerings, even if they weren't flying," said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill.

In addition to the open house, Santa stopped by to listen to children's requests, and pass out treats with Mrs. Claus in the Airport's Grand Hall in the pre-security area. Carolers and a string trio also provided live music to put travelers and visitors in the holiday spirit.



Snow Removal Equipment at its Finest

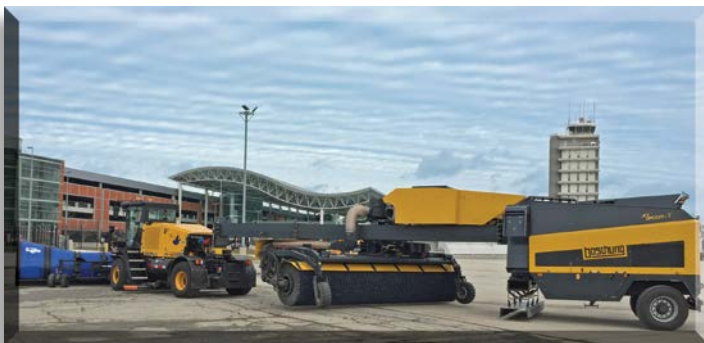
At GFIA, snow removal is the most significant part of our winter operations. Maintaining a safe airfield is our number one priority and our award-winning crew is the best at what they do. The best also need great equipment.

Meet the Snow Mauler PV-400. Manufactured by Airport Technologies of Canada, with its mid-ship located diesel engine, it is one of the best four-wheel drive airport plow vehicles available today.

Our Snow Mauler is paired with the high performance 45-ft. long sweeper blowers called the Jetbroom 10000-Ts manufactured by Boschung of Switzerland. The broom is 22-ft. wide with a horizontal turbine for blowing snow in front of the angle broom, and a power dual sided blowing unit in front of the rear axle. Lastly, we added Wausau Everest, a New Berlin, WI manufactured, 24-ft. "Blue Max" plow blades for a superb combination unit. The entire unit, from plow blade to rear of the sweeper-blower, is approximately 74-ft. long.

This fully capable, technologically advanced combination unit is efficient at removing snow, slush

and any other contaminants on all airport pavement surfaces. It was announced by Boschung and Airport Technologies as being the first of its kind combination in the United States and Canada. The 10000-T sweeper/broom with the "Quattro-Jet blowing system" as the first of its kind at an airport in the world.



Mark Your Calendars!




Get more information at www.FlyFord.org/public-notices.php

Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority
5500 44th Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512-4055

Getting there is better here.

Follow us on Twitter! 
@FlyGRFord

Connect with us on Facebook! 
Facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport

News In Brief

- » The next three meetings of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority Board are scheduled for February 28, March 28, and April 25. Board meetings begin at 8:30 AM, are held in the International Room in the terminal building, and are open to the public.
- » GFLA's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report has once again been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This Certificate is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government unit and its management. This is the 24th consecutive year that the Airport has received this honor.

Authority Board Elects New Leadership

At its January organizational meeting, the GFIA Authority Board elected new officers for 2018. Stepping into the role of Chair is former Vice Chair and current County Commissioner Dan Koorndyk. Now filling the role of Vice Chair is citizen member David Slikkers. Elected to the role of secretary is citizen member Floyd Wilson, Jr.

The Authority Board comprises three Kent County commissioners, three Kent County citizen members, and one citizen member from a county other than Kent in the West Michigan combined statistical area, each serving staggered three-year terms.



Dan Koorndyk



David Slikkers



Floyd Wilson, Jr.

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:

Phone: 616.233.6000

Email: gfainfo@grr.org

Facebook: [GeraldRFordInternationalAirport](https://www.facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport)

Airport Board | Dan Koorndyk*, chair; David Slikkers, vice chair; Steve Heacock; Birgit Klohs; Roger Morgan*; Ted Vonk*; Floyd Wilson, Jr.

(* County Commissioner)

President & CEO | James R. Gill, A.A.E., IAP

Editors | Tara Hernandez, Marketing & Communications Director, THernandez@grr.org

| Susan Sherman, Marketing Coordinator, SSherman@grr.org