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Economic Impact Study Results Released for Gerald R. Ford International Airport



Grand Rapids, MI – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is an economic engine behind the West Michigan economy, and a recent study by Grand Valley State University's (GVSU) economics department supports that statement.

The study found that GFIA supports or contributes over 40,000 additional jobs in West Michigan, with 25% of these jobs directly related to area visitors, the airport and airport-dependent businesses. Additionally, GFIA adds \$3.1 billion in annual economic output, equivalent to 5.8% of the Muskegon and Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSAs.

“The strength of our airport is a direct reflection of the thriving West Michigan economy, and renewed commitment of local business and leisure travelers to choose the Gerald R. Ford International Airport as their primary airport,” said GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks.



“We are proud to do our part to help facilitate the creation of jobs, and the movement of people and products across our region. We are pleased with the results of the Grand Valley State University study.”

The study, conducted by GVSU Economics Associate Dean Paul Isely, Ph.D., also found that businesses and governmental units, located at the airport, contribute \$212 million directly to the West Michigan economy.

In addition, GFIA is a focal point of tourism for the region as the study found that visitors from outside the region spend \$418 million, thanks in part to the airport. This total is a 69% increase in visitor spending (adjusted for inflation), compared to the last economic study at GFIA in 1995.

“The responses by local firms showed that not only did the airport have the traditional economic impact generated by aviation and visitor spending, but also significantly affected local business activity not directly related to the airport,” said Isely.

Paul Isely, Gerald Simons and GVSU’s Economics Department worked with the airport for six months, gathering data for the economic study.

For more information, please contact Tara Hernandez (GFIA) or Dottie Barnes (GVSU) at the numbers above.

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