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Three Millionth Passenger Surprised at Ford Airport



(Above): Sue Diehl from Greenville, Michigan is surprised as the Gerald R. Ford International Airport's three millionth passenger in 2018.

Grand Rapids, Michigan – Sue Diehl had no idea when she stepped off her flight at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) that she would be walking into cheers, applause, gifts, and surprises as the Ford Airport's three millionth passenger.

"This is crazy, thank you, thank you!" said Diehl. "I was thinking I was in a dream because I did take a little nap on the plane and I woke up and I see balloons and all of this."

The Airport had a total of over 2.7 million passengers served through the end of October. November and December seat totals and flight information forecasted the three millionth passenger to arrive around 11 a.m. on December 5th, and Diehl was the lucky passenger having arrived to Grand Rapids on Delta flight 1367 from Atlanta at 11:11 a.m.

GFIA has now had six straight years of record growth, having grown from 2.2 million in 2013, to 2.8 million in 2017, and now serving its three millionth passenger in 2018.



“What a way to welcome in our three millionth passenger with all kinds of free stuff, travel vouchers, and just the thrill of being greeted by hundreds of our staff and tenants cheering and celebrating Sue Diehl as our three millionth passenger,” said GFIA Marketing & Communications Director Tara Hernandez. “Sue was emotional, happy, and appreciative, and I know she will remember this for years to come. For all of those that have traveled with us we celebrate this milestone with you, and we thank you for your patronage and support - not just this year but through the last 54-plus years of service to our community.”

As the three millionth passenger, Diehl received three \$300 travel vouchers and three free days of parking from the Airport Authority, a gift basket of travel accessories from Hudson News & Gifts valued over \$300, a Beer City Welcome Basket from Experience Grand Rapids, a Founders Brewing Company gift pack, three \$30 Starbucks gift cards, and more.

When told what her prize package included, Diehl was emotional. “No way, no way,” she said through tears. “Nothing like this ever happens to me.”

Airport staff will also be passing out cookies, candy, giveaways, and registering people to win three \$300 flight vouchers from 9a.m. - 2p.m. Wednesday.

For more information or interviews, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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About GFIA

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The Airport served over 2.8 million passengers in 2017 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 27 major market destinations with more than 120 daily nonstop flights. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. GFIA generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan, and employs over 2,000 people. For more information on GFIA visit: www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @FlyGRFord