



Gerald R. Ford International Airport

Dedication

This year's Airport Profile is dedicated to the memory of President Gerald R. Ford, whose profound commitment to public service inspires all of us at this Airport named in his honor to reach higher and accomplish more for the people of West Michigan.



Gerald R. Ford International Airport
5500 44th Street, S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49512
www.flygrandrapids.org
tel: 616.233.6000
fax: 616.233.6025



Welcome Home

2007 Profile



West Michigan's strong sense of place and pride was perhaps never more meaningfully displayed than on a beautiful Tuesday afternoon, January 2, 2007. On that day, Gerald R. Ford, our favorite son and 38th President of the United States, made his final journey home to the area he served for decades in Congress and which always held a special place in his heart. His triumphant return and the spectacular ceremonies that followed thrust West Michigan into the national and international spotlight, showing the world and reminding all of us here of the fundamental goodness and character possessed by this region and by the man who best represented it for so long.

As the region's leading passenger transportation and cargo hub, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GRR) bears great responsibility for the continued development of West Michigan and further enhancement of the entire area's quality of life. Just as importantly, we are responsible for living up to the high standards and preserving the principles of the man in whose memory we are so honorably named. We are proud to share a home with President Ford, whose upbringing here proved to be so beneficial to the entire nation. And we are committed to serving the best interests of West Michigan to help make this an even better place to call home.

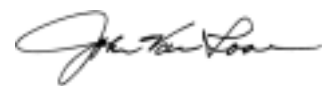
Gerald R. Ford

For us at GRR, the passing of Gerald R. Ford on December 26, 2006, and the following week's historic funeral ceremonies made the past year unlike any that came before or will likely ever come again. We were at once saddened by the loss of this great man and deeply honored to play a special role in his profoundly moving homecoming.

In most other respects, 2006 was very much business as usual at GRR – which simply means it was another year packed full of projects and activities designed to better meet the needs of a wide array of Airport users, today and long into the future. During the past year, we completed or continued many improvements to our facilities, from expanded vehicle parking to an additional aircraft gate on Concourse B. We made way for airlines serving GRR to add new nonstop destinations from here. We jetted ahead with several other enhancements – from completely redoing our website to improving concessions to exploring upgraded security protocols that would also improve the flow of traffic through the passenger terminal. Finally, all these things were accomplished against a backdrop of economic and political conditions that make these challenging times for America in general and the air transportation industry in particular.

While this year's Profile is dedicated to the memory of President Ford, the rest of its pages report on important strides we made in 2006 and preview what you can look forward to in 2007. We are committed to serving this area with the same spirit and vigor as our distinguished namesake. We certainly do have a good thing going in West Michigan, as the rest of the nation recently saw. Our every effort and motivation at GRR is to make this an even better place to call home.

Thank you for your continued support and patronage. We look forward to serving you at your Airport again soon.



JOHN VAN LAAR, CHAIRMAN
Kent County Aeronautics Board



JAMES A. KOSLOSKY, A.A.E., DIRECTOR
Kent County Department of Aeronautics



Dear Friends



Fuller flights, less crowded skies.

If it seems there are fewer empty seats on flights you've taken lately, it's not your imagination. Airlines have trimmed the number of flights throughout North America in response to steeply rising costs, largely stemming from record fuel prices during 2006. GRR and the carriers here were no exception. Without a similar decline in the number of people flying – which hasn't occurred – the result is simply more crowded planes. (Or, better opportunities to get to know your seatmates, depending on how you look at it.)

The good news is that the strategy is working to help return airlines to sustainable profitability, so they can continue offering the service that the traveling public has come to depend on and enjoy. The bottom line at GRR: Just over 2 million passengers departed or arrived here during 2006, only about 3 percent off 2005, which was one of the busiest years in our history. With business conditions continuing to improve and demand holding steady near its peak, forecasts call for a gradual uptick in the number of passengers traveling through GRR in the next few years, most likely along with an increase in flights. We're preparing for that, upgrading our facilities to support these growing numbers. So at least you'll find plenty of room to park your car and stretch out at the gate, even if your flight is still a bit snug.

Cargo and general aviation, both heading up.

In addition to the passenger airlines, cargo carriers and general aviation (GA) operators (private aircraft owned or operated by businesses and individuals) are big users of GRR. And while the number of commercial airline passengers at GRR dipped slightly in 2006, freight tonnage went the other way, setting a new all-time high for the third straight year. Total cargo shipped through GRR during 2006 weighed in at 87,281,497 pounds, a hefty increase of over 375 tons more than the previous year's record. GA flights shot up even more, to over 59,000 takeoffs and landings during the year, a soaring 7 percent increase over the previous year's total.



Commerce



Next stop: Denver – 5,280 feet up.

Ski buffs, alpinists, Rockies, Broncos and Nuggets fans take note: United Airlines launched new daily nonstop service in 2006 from GRR to its hub at Denver International Airport. The new route was so popular right out of the gate that United quickly announced a second daily nonstop to and from the Mile High City. DEN is the sixth busiest airport in the U.S. and 11th busiest worldwide. It was also the most popular destination from GRR without nonstop service. United's new service took care of that. It also bumped us up to 15 destinations that you can fly to nonstop from GRR.

NWA launches nonstop to NYC.

Northwest Airlines took another bite into the Big Apple in 2006 with new daily nonstop service from GRR to New York LaGuardia Airport (LGA). This convenient new flight departs GRR in early morning, landing travelers in New York at mid-morning – after rush-hour traffic. The return flight leaves LGA at dinnertime, getting you back to Grand Rapids in time to see the family or just relax that evening before going back to work. Northwest is now the third carrier flying nonstop to the New York area from here, bringing to five the number of daily nonstop flights to LGA or Newark. Northwest is the largest carrier out of GRR, now offering nonstop service to Detroit, Minneapolis, Memphis, Orlando and Washington, DC, as well as LGA.



Destinations

Walk this way: B Concourse ushers in new gate.

For several months during 2006–07, travelers in Concourse B had to walk by construction barriers and put up with sporadic hammering and sawing. But these temporary disturbances proved well worth it, allowing us to build gate B6 into the north side of the concourse without having to close any other gates. The new gate’s 50-seat waiting area matches the others in style and design. The accompanying aircraft ramp can handle all sizes of regional jet aircraft, which make up a large portion of the fleet serving GRR. Three new restrooms were also added on Concourse B – men’s, women’s and family assistance – to take care of more passengers who will need to use “the facilities.” This \$1.7 million project completes the expansion of Concourse B as defined by the Master Plan Update, bringing the main passenger terminal to its full capacity of 12 gates.

Westward expansion for rental car companies.

Construction of a new rental car service center was completed in 2006 on Patterson Avenue, south of the Airport entrance. GRR is currently served by five major rental car companies: Alamo/National, Avis, Budget, Enterprise and Hertz. Relocating these companies’ staging and service areas – previously based on Oostema Boulevard near the main terminal – gave them more room to maneuver while freeing up much-needed real estate for additional terminal parking. Meanwhile, customers won’t notice any difference, since the rental car counters are still located inside the passenger terminal, and car pickup is still right outside our front doors.



Expansions



Drawings here; next decision date for parking ramp draws near.

Final design drawings for the Airport's proposed new parking ramp have arrived. That may mean that convoys of cement trucks and pile drivers will be pulling up soon. The plan calls for a 4,900-space, multilevel parking ramp to be built directly across from the main terminal, along with accompanying capital improvements including a terminal canopy, pedestrian sky bridges, escalator/elevator lobbies and roadway modifications. The Kent County Aeronautics Board is scheduled to consider the proposal and vote in spring 2007 on whether to take bids for construction. Their decision will be based on the engineer's final estimate, projected operating and maintenance costs, financing costs and projected passenger traffic numbers that naturally translate into ramp revenues. If the Board gives its go-ahead, construction is slated to begin in late 2007.

Express Shuttle Lot growing by leaps, bounds.

More and more travelers have jumped at the opportunity to use the Airport's newest long-term parking option since the Express Shuttle Lot opened at GRR in 2002. It's become so popular, in fact, that we're expanding it for the second time, adding 1,022 more spaces during 2007 to bring the lot's capacity up to 2,750 spaces. This expansion will come in especially handy during peak travel times at GRR – such as the holidays and spring break – when spaces in the Express Shuttle Lot get harder to find. What's more, this expanded lot will very capably make up for the hundreds of parking spaces that would be temporarily displaced during construction of the terminal parking ramp – if that project is approved.

Airport website gets first-class upgrade.

The Airport's unique place in cyberspace – found at www.flygrandrapids.org – underwent a major redesign in 2006 to make the site easier to navigate, even more informational and user-friendly, better looking and literally easier on the eyes. "Once they're on the site, people want access to information without a lot of searching," noted Dick Vander Molen, Kent County Aeronautics Board member. "The new site gives the user quick access through logical links to all of the information that is available." That information runs wide and deep. With just a few clicks, website visitors can get everything from driving directions to terminal maps to real-time flight information to parking rates at the Airport. You can do virtually everything at our website except actually fly. For that, we hope you'll keep coming here.

Upgrades

Charitable events at GRR lift spirits, raise funds.

On June 10, Airport tenant Northern Jet Management hosted the third annual Wings of Mercy CareAffaire. More than 400 attendees enjoyed a big pancake breakfast inside the Northern Jet hangar, then got a close-up look at several aircraft brought in for the event – everything from an Aero Med air ambulance helicopter and Army Black Hawk chopper to a Cessna 208 cargo aircraft owned by FedEx. Those attendees making an additional donation were offered a plane ride on various types of aircraft, including jets, helicopters, even an open-cockpit biplane. Over 125 passengers took to the air, pitching in mightily to the \$42,000 raised by the event. Proceeds go to support Wings of Mercy, which provides free air transportation for people with limited financial means who need treatment at distant medical facilities.

The year's second big charity event at GRR gave a huge boost to young people right here in our community. On September 9, nearly 50 families arrived at Northern Jet's hangar for the ninth annual Fly Day event for Dreams and Wings for Kids (formerly Challenge Air). This year's event – hosted by Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital – gave seriously ill as well as physically, mentally or emotionally challenged young people the opportunity of a lifetime: to fly "right-seat" in an aircraft with two or three family members or friends in back. Just over 150 participants enjoyed flights that averaged 30 minutes each, piloted by five wheelchair and non-wheelchair aviators.

Holidays bring joyful sounds and hundreds of toys to GRR.

Travelers were again treated to the beautiful sound of live music during the busy holiday season at GRR. From December 4 to 8, 17 area middle-school and high-school musical groups performed in the Airport's Grand Hall, singing and playing a wide range of compositions, from classical Latin arias to traditional Christmas carols. Ensembles ranging from nine to 170 vocalists and instrumentalists performed during this 11th annual Airport Holiday Music Festival, entertaining passengers, visitors and Airport employees alike.

2006 was also the third straight year we asked Airport visitors to bring some extra holiday cheer with them in the form of toy donations to Toys for Tots. Hundreds responded, filling giant collection boxes that the Airport Firefighters managed. The Grand Rapids Santa Claus Girls coordinated distribution of these toys to needy families throughout Kent County. Thanks to toy donors and cooperating agencies, the whole operation was a big hit – proving once again how important air travel is to Santa leading up to Christmas Day.



Community



Usage of the **new wireless Internet service at GRR** – which lets Airport visitors get online at no charge via their Wi-Fi-enabled laptops, PDAs or cell phones anywhere from the curb front to the aircraft gate – really took off during 2006. By year’s end, more than 7,700 users per month were accessing the system.

Popularity of the **new Cell Phone Lot** – designed for people coming to GRR to pick up arriving passengers – is itself picking up. Drivers can now wait for inbound passengers in this small lot located just inside the Airport entrance, then pull up to the terminal when their parties call to say they’re ready.

At the **fourth annual Passenger Appreciation Days** – held during the spring break rush from March 30 through April 1 – thousands of travelers were treated to free refreshments, fun activities, contests and prizes, courtesy of the Kent County Aeronautics Board. Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Aero Med and FedEx generously sprang for thousands of giveaway items.

A total of 3,413 **military operations** took place at GRR during 2006. That’s the number of times any military aircraft landed or took off here. Often, these two events happen seconds apart when KC-135 Stratotankers and A-10 Thunderbolts from nearby bases practice touch-and-go landings at GRR.

Our **“Sneaky Sam” Security Challenge** turned 10 years old during 2006, while turning in a perfect score. This program encourages Airport employees to keep an eye out for people in restricted areas who don’t belong, rewarding any employee who stops someone not wearing an ID badge in these areas. We sent nearly 50 Sneaky Sams into restricted areas during 2006, and they were quickly caught every single time.

“Bird watchers” at the **Airport Viewing Area**, located on Kraft Avenue just south of GRR, can now listen to air traffic control conversations while watching planes take off and land. Just tune your radio to 1650 AM. The viewing area features plenty of parking for cars and buses, along with picnic tables and a restroom facility in a parklike setting that is free and open to the public daily from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

A \$2.7 million Homeland Security grant funded the **upgrade of all Airport Police vehicles** with new computer equipment that provides vital law enforcement information – such as stolen vehicle notices and missing-person reports – directly to officers in their cars. The same grant also paid for **new computer equipment installed in Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting’s incident command vehicle** that provides access to a mobile digital communications system linked to other mutual aid providers in the area.

To bolster support for the National Guard and Reserve among employers, Alticor hosted a **“Boss Lift” Event** in 2006, originating at GRR. Representatives of 60 area employers gathered to hear a reservist from Selfridge Air National Guard Base explain what his unit does and the importance of attending all training sessions. The group then flew aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker to Selfridge, watching through the plane’s glass underbelly as it performed midair refueling of A-10 Thunderbolts.



Highlights

2006 Awards and Recognition.

The Airport received **zero discrepancies on its annual FAA certification/safety inspection.** This is the fourth consecutive time that GRR received a perfect score on this very important examination, with no issues requiring corrective action.

The Airport's Finance Division was awarded its 12th consecutive **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** from the Government Finance Officers Association for the Department's annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Staff from Airport Maintenance won **first place in an equipment operation contest** held as part of a maintenance seminar at South Bend (Ind.) Airport.

Two employees from Airfield Maintenance were awarded **first place in the "Idea Corner" competition at the annual Snow Symposium** held in Buffalo, N.Y. The winning idea was the design and installation of a spray bar to the Airport's sanding/anti-icing vehicles that allows for the simultaneous application of wet and dry materials during snow- and ice-control operations.

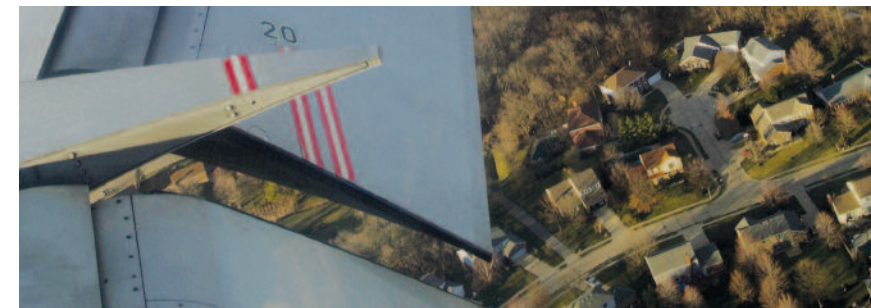
The Airport's Marketing and Communications Division took home **two awards in the annual Airports Council International – North America Excellence in Marketing and Communications Contest**, one for its quarterly public newsletter and another for its online (website) news media kit.

The 2006 Airport Profile received an **Adrian Award for creative excellence** from the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International and a **gold ADDY** from the Ad Club of West Michigan.

Airport Management and Leadership.

THE KENT COUNTY AERONAUTICS BOARD is a six-member body appointed by the Kent County Board of Commissioners with responsibility for setting policy and providing general oversight of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The Aeronautics Board comprises three Kent County Commissioners and three citizen members, each serving staggered three-year terms. The Aeronautics Board maintains two standing committees: Aeronautical, Facilities and Marketing; and Finance, Administration and Public Relations.

THE AIRPORT IS MANAGED AND OPERATED by the Aeronautics Director, Deputy Director, a four-person management team heading the Airport's four primary functional areas and a 120-member Department of Aeronautics staff.



AERONAUTICS BOARD

John Van Laar, CHAIRMAN
 Thomas G. O'Hare, VICE CHAIRMAN
 Dean A. Agee*
 Joseph D. Jones
 Daniel M. Koorndyk* (Board term concluded 12/31/06)
 Richard A. Vander Molen*
 Theodore J. Vonk* (Board term commenced 1/1/07)

* County Commissioner

AERONAUTICS DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE STAFF

James A. Koslosky, A.A.E.
 AERONAUTICS DIRECTOR

Phillip E. Johnson, A.A.E.
 DEPUTY AERONAUTICS DIRECTOR

Brian Picardat, A.A.E.
 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DIRECTOR

Robert W. Benstein, A.A.E.
 PUBLIC SAFETY AND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Thomas R. Ecklund, P.E.
 FACILITIES DIRECTOR

Bruce L. Schedlbauer, APR
 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

THE MISSION OF THE KENT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AERONAUTICS is to provide safe, efficient, environmentally sensitive and economically self-sustaining air transportation facilities that are responsive to regional needs.

THE GERALD R. FORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS A FINANCIALLY SELF-SUPPORTING PUBLIC ENTERPRISE receiving no general tax revenues for day-to-day operations or ongoing capital development. Airport operations and improvements actually generate net revenue, rather than consuming valuable tax dollars.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

	2006*	2005	2004
Operating Revenue			
Airline Payments	\$9,892,673	\$9,702,981	\$10,262,050
General Aviation	1,385,140	1,393,718	1,409,199
Concessions	747,250	780,477	765,055
Air Cargo	2,455,920	2,521,443	2,310,711
Ground Transportation	11,562,774	10,839,974	9,652,477
Other	784,496	841,560	480,897
Total Operating Revenue	\$26,831,253	\$26,080,153	\$24,880,389
Operating Expenses			
Personnel Costs	\$7,801,658	\$7,578,929	\$7,018,478
Supplies	723,028	759,351	523,467
Contractual	6,823,513	7,520,312	6,046,897
Depreciation	10,553,432	9,956,762	9,716,002
Total Operating Expenses	25,901,631	25,815,354	23,304,853
Net Income from Operations	\$929,622	\$264,799	\$1,575,536

* Unaudited figures. A comprehensive Annual Financial Report, including audited figures for 2006, will be available from the Kent County Department of Aeronautics as of June 2007.