

HOW TIME *Flies*

Creating lift in West Michigan for 50 years

GERALD R. FORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
2014 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Left: Then Congressman Gerald R. Ford addresses the crowd at the formal dedication of the new airport in 1964.



Right: A fly-by view of the Airport and the modern control tower that launched a new era of air travel for West Michigan.

# LOOKING BACK & MOVING AHEAD

## 50 YEARS AGO,

airlines treated customers like royalty. A cross-continental trip might have included a couple of sumptuous meals, served warm, on plates, with cloth napkins and silverware. And obeying some sense of reciprocal decorum, we dressed up when we traveled – men in coats and ties, women in hats and gloves. We checked all of our baggage and only stowed our purses, briefcases and hats in smallish overhead compartments.

Entertainment consisted of the spectacular views from our window and friendly conversation; there were no in-flight movies or personal seat-back entertainment systems. We didn't miss them. It was all very civilized and special.

Fifty years later, travel has changed. Today's experienced traveler is looking for comfort, convenience, and economy. Business travelers want the Airport to be an extension of their office, efficiently connecting them to resources they need and moving them effortlessly to their destination.

Today's leisure traveler surely looks different than 50 years ago. They travel more comfortably, toting their own in-flight snack, dressing for the weather they hope to enjoy, packing more diversions into their movable luggage, and decked out with every digital distraction to pass the time.

But today's traveler is anything but casual when it comes to their expectations of the Airport. So the Gerald R. Ford International Airport continues to find new ways to improve every aspect of the Airport experience with regard to customer safety, comfort, convenience, and efficiency.



THE PURPOSE OF AIR TRAVEL ISN'T JUST TO MOVE PEOPLE AROUND BUT TO MOVE THEM FORWARD

1963

November 22 assassination of President John F. Kennedy stuns the world.



November 23, the new Airport opens quietly, postponing celebrations to mourn.



1964

Airport dedicated on June 6 to crowd of 35,000.



Ford introduces the Mustang, launching the "pony car" class.



# TRANSFORMING TOUGH TIMES INTO TRIUMPH

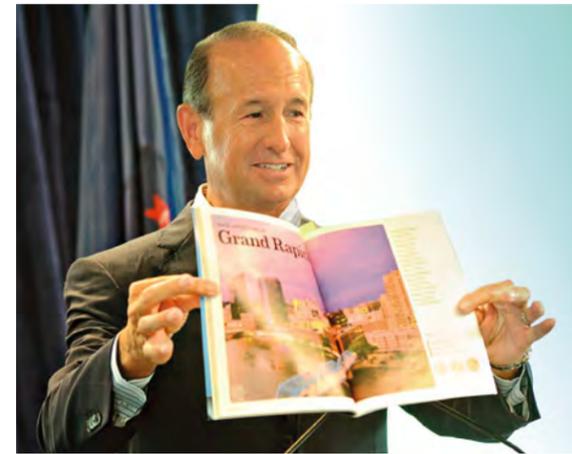
As the Gerald R. Ford International Airport celebrates 50 years of service, it's a chance to reflect on the challenges we've overcome. Our journey proves what can happen when you weather the storm. Just five years ago, the Airport was faced with sluggish passenger numbers and downright tough competition from the big cities. Committed community leaders and visionary Airport executives and board members collaborated to turn those numbers around.

Today, the Airport is thriving. We are offering more flights and new nonstops. Thirty percent of our seats are on low-cost carriers. Our fares dare big-city competitors to beat our value, and our record-breaking passenger numbers speak volumes. Local airports around the country are using our transformation as a benchmark by which to model their own. There is no greater reward for our work than seeing our region's residents take off into the clear skies of improved service, convenience, and value.

## WHAT IS YOUR TOTAL COST?\*



\*Overnight trip. Airfares based on average one-way fares. Mileage costs are calculated at 55¢/mile between Grand Rapids and the subject airport. Parking costs include the cost of one day of parking at the main terminal of the subject airport.



## FEELIN' THE LUV IN WEST MICHIGAN

GFIA continues its rise as the preferred West Michigan airport, as evidenced by the highly anticipated arrival of Southwest Airlines. In August 2013, Grand Rapids became the 86th city on the Southwest route map. Dick DeVos and the Regional Air Alliance of West Michigan (RAAWM) spearheaded the addition, collaborating with the Airport to bring the low-cost carrier to West Michigan. To mark the occasion, they rolled out the red carpet for a press conference

and a Texas-sized welcome reception. Dallas-based Southwest Airlines, with the friendly stock symbol of LUV, is known for its low fares, upbeat, "legendary" service and routes to many popular destinations. It's a great match for the spirit of the Airport and our region.

Southwest executives expressed equal excitement over their new Grand Rapids landing spot, noting the improved access to Michigan for their customer base.

They showed their "LUV" with special low fares out of GRR and, in partnership with Make-a-Wish Foundation, provided a complimentary flight and Disney® adventure package to a very special winner, Aryka Kamor and her family.

The addition of this popular carrier stemmed from its 2012 purchase of AirTran Airways, which RAAWM brought to GFIA and has operated out of the Airport since May 2010.



In addition to retaining the former AirTran routes of Baltimore, Ft. Myers, Orlando, and Tampa, Southwest will fly to even more nonstop destinations, including Denver and St. Louis. Southwest also adds connections to more than 75 domestic and international destinations. Welcome to West Michigan, Southwest! How time flies when you feel the LUV!

**MORE THAN 80 MILLION LBS. OF AIR CARGO PASSED THROUGH THE AIRPORT IN 2013.**

1965



Construction of private hangars approved.

1967



Miniskirts, hot pants and go-go boots take over the fashion scene.

1968

First scheduled jet arrives at the Airport, a North Central Airlines DC-9.



1970



The 747 jumbo jet debuts commercial service, doubling passenger capacity and increasing range to 6,000 miles.



## MAKING TIME FLY: YES, EVEN THROUGH TSA

Fifty years ago, air travelers were blissfully untroubled by security lines and body-scanning technology. Today's airport safety procedures can be challenging. Fortunately, the Airport is always working with governing agencies to explore ways to increase efficiency without sacrificing security.

The TSA Precheck Program at GFIA is a great example. Our passengers love the idea of keeping jackets, belts and shoes on, and not having to unload laptops or liquids from their carry on bags.

The program saw significant growth in 2013, bringing total national enrollment of more than 15 million fliers. By year's end, most airlines were participating, and there are more than 100 expedited screening lanes operating across the U.S., including the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Airlines operating on both GFIA concourses now offer pre-check capabilities.

### SIGN ME UP!

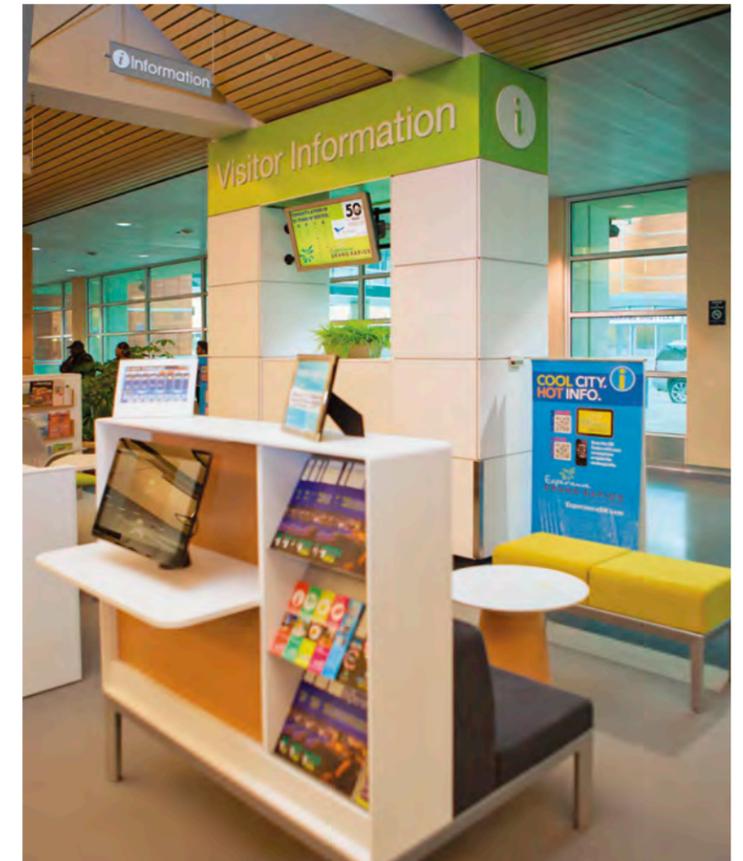
If you're not up to speed on how to join, the TSA website ([www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)) offers

an online "pre-enrollment" form. After paying an \$85 application fee, you provide documentation to confirm U.S. citizenship and fingerprints for a criminal background check. Within two to three weeks of completing the enrollment process, approved fliers will receive confirmation of a five-year precheck lane approval. The Airport is pleased to partner with our participating airlines in making the travel experience feel more like the days of our youth, when every airport experience was the beginning of a thrilling adventure.

## HOW TIME FLIES – WITH ZERO LAYOVERS!

Everyone's favorite, hands down. Check out the latest list of GFIA's direct flights.

Atlanta (ATL)	Delta
Baltimore/Washington (BWI)	Southwest
Chicago O'Hare (ORD)	American Eagle
	United
Cincinnati (CVG)	Delta
Cleveland (CLE)	United
Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW)	American Eagle
Denver (DEN)	Southwest <i>NEW!</i>
	United
Detroit (DTW)	Delta
Ft. Lauderdale (FLL)	Allegiant
Ft. Myers (RSW)	Southwest
Houston (IAH)	United
Las Vegas (LAS)	Allegiant
Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP)	Delta
New York – La Guardia (LGA)	Delta
New York – Newark (EWR)	United
Orlando (MCO)	Southwest
Orlando – Sanford (SFB)	Allegiant
Phoenix-Mesa (AZA)	Allegiant
St. Louis (STL)	Southwest <i>NEW!</i>
St. Petersburg-Clearwater (PIE)	Allegiant
Tampa (TPA)	Southwest
Washington D.C. – Dulles (IAD)	United <i>NEW!</i>



## ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING!

Did you know that the Airport's Visitor Information Center answers more than 40,000 questions a year? That's right! And now, thanks to a partnership with office furniture industry icon Steelcase, Inc., our Visitor Information Center has a first-class new look to go with all those FAQs.

With the project unveiling in March 2014, the Visitor Information Center offers a more visible presence that encourages visitors to stop by for area information, travel, or Airport-related questions. Staffed through our partner, Experience Grand Rapids, visitors can approach any "green coat" ambassador for fast, friendly support. In addition to ambassadors staffing the new desk, roving "green coats" are also out and about the Airport with their iPads® to help keep our visitors in the know as they're on the move.

1972



Kent County Airport adds 3,600-foot east-west runway.



A gallon of regular gas costs \$0.36.

1977



Kent County Airport adds "International" to name, due to opening of U.S. Customs and Border office at the Airport.

Elvis Presley, the king of rock 'n' roll, dies.





## A FACELIFT AT 50? NOW YOU'RE FABULOUS!

Throughout our 50 years, the Airport has expanded and updated its features and facades. It has been during the most recent decade, however, that we embarked on the journey to completely transform the Airport's look and feel. First came the clean, modern exterior and new parking structure, in 2009. And in 2013, we were excited to turn our focus inward, with a metamorphosis of interior spaces and expanded amenities. As the first and last thing fliers see when they travel to and from West Michigan, Airport leaders sought an interior design that was energetic, exciting, and beautiful.

Featuring revamped space and concessions, the Grand Hall is bustling with new food, beverage, and retail space. A highlight is the new West Michigan – based Bell's Brew Pub, offering travelers a taste of one of our local home-brewed favorites. The café offers a menu focused on locally sourced food and a selection of Bell's popular craft beers. Bell's Brew Pub

is joined by newcomer "Greens," with a DIY approach to healthy, nutritious fare. Some familiar faces remain, including iconic caffeine booster Starbucks and delicious Quiznos Sub Sandwich Shop.



Two sure passenger pleasers are the updates to both concourses, upgrading comfort and adding new amenities to pass the time. Until now, there has been little by way of passenger refreshments beyond the security checkpoint of the concourses. Following this \$10-12 million investment, passengers can relax at new eateries or grab a drink near their gates, without worrying about lines or changes in flight status.

Concourse A (home to Delta and Allegiant) will complete its remodel in 2014, with additional concessions and expansion of two existing passenger-gate waiting areas. This includes a new Grand Rapids Magazine travel store.

Concourse B (home to United, Southwest, and American Eagle) continues renovations into 2014, expanding its space with two new hold rooms, and a new travel store as well. It will also offer passengers the urban-chic MI Tap Room, slated to serve a tempting menu along with a variety of West Michigan craft-beer brands.

It's a lot to take in, and construction will be evident well into the months ahead, but this 50-year-old's facelift will be well worth the wait.



The compact disc (CD) using laser technology is introduced.



Captain Bob Pearson safely lands an Air Canada 767 after flying without fuel for 17 minutes.



## HOW TIME FLIES – WHEN YOU'RE CORRALLING THE KIDS!

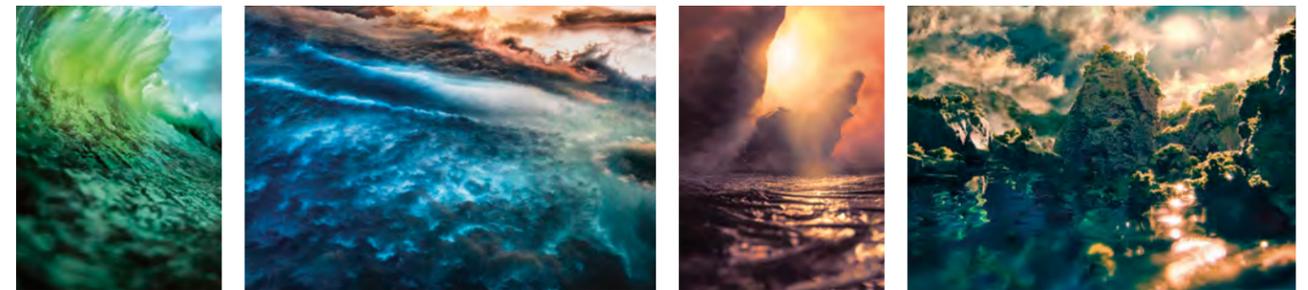
If you've ever traveled with children, you know it's not for the faint of heart. The strategy and execution required to successfully make your flight with everyone in tow is CEO-worthy. That's why the Airport was intrigued by an email tip from a mom who travels with her kids. It's easy to get caught up in the many demands of operating a first-class airport. But this simple idea brought us back to basics – and resulted in a new amenity for families flying from Grand Rapids: step-and-wash stools.

It's a fact: even kids as old as 7 to 10 years can find it a challenge to reach sinks, faucets, soap dispensers, and towels. This mom's smart suggestion offered an easy answer for clean hands and calm parents! The step-and-wash stools are now installed in a number of Airport restrooms, both before and after the security-screening area. Paired with our motion-activated faucets and soap dispensers, families will appreciate the fast, easy experience of the "last stop" before boarding. And from what we've seen, the kids think it's pretty cool, too. This is just one example of the Airport's desire to interact with our patrons, working together for a great airport experience. Anyone can send comments or suggestions to the Airport through Twitter (see page 11 for more details) or email at [gfiainfo@grr.org](mailto:gfiainfo@grr.org).

## HOW TIME FLIES – WHEN YOU'RE IN THE CREATIVE ZONE

**Creative Kids** As a handler of some precious ArtPrize entries over the years, the Airport is proud to promote our community's love of the arts. Summer 2013 was no exception, as we hosted a colorful "Be Your Own Artist" contest for kids ages 4 to 12. Youthful masterpieces were judged by Kent County Department of Aeronautics staff, with the top ten entries receiving ArtPrize/Airport goody bags.

**Become Creative Masters** The Airport has also partnered with Kendall College of Art & Design. The creative venture, formally launched in 2014, brings the works of undergrad and graduate students to the Airport on a rotating basis. As part of our transformative new look and focus on what makes West Michigan shine, visitors will see both two- and three-dimensional works displayed throughout the Airport and parking structure.



Artist: Matt D. Gubancsik



Airport reaches historical first, serving 1,040,007 passengers.



American Airlines begins service out of Grand Rapids.



## FLY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM A FRIEND

For most travelers, the Airport is the start and end to a happy adventure, whether experiencing the joy of personal travel or excitement of a distant business opportunity. For others, flying may be taking them to or returning them from difficult situations, and yet a few more become nervous at the prospect of flying itself. In both cases, these travelers suffer an anxious wait, and until this year they did so without so much as a whimper.

In 2013, the Airport once again found new ways to demonstrate its commitment to creating a uniquely positive experience for travelers.

Say hello to a new kind of “dog show,” right here at GFIA – the *Gentle Fur in Action (GFIA)* program. By partnering with West Michigan Therapy Dogs, Inc. and a team of devoted owner/trainers, the Airport began hosting weekly visits from wagging tails and four-legged friends in October. The furry friends can be found roaming the Grand Hall waiting area, departure gates, concourses and even the baggage claim area. All sightings of dogs sporting “Pet Me” vests are your invitation to come closer for a pat or to shake a paw. Unlike service dogs, these uniquely friendly canine ambassadors are intended to take the stress and anxiety out of travel – or just add an element of caring to our busy setting.

The dogs serving as ambassadors have worked with their owners/trainers in other environments, such as hospitals and nursing homes. Sensitive to human emotion, they lend comfort and support and bring a smile. The canine encounters at the Airport enjoyed immediate success, with reports of tearful hugs of appreciation and comfort pouring in. It's amazing how time flies when you share a moment with man's best friend.



## BREAKIN' IT

Each year, thousands of West Michigan families launch their Spring Break getaways from the gates of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Each year since 2004, the Airport has chosen this popular time as an opportunity to say “thanks for flying with us!” 2014 was no exception. We enjoyed hosting our Passenger Appreciation Days bon voyage celebration from April 3-5 in the Airport's Grand Hall, complete with great giveaways, refreshments, prize drawings, and contests.

@FLYGR  
FORD



## SWEET TWEET!

As part of the more than 500 million worldwide users, the Airport is embracing social media's answer to living in the moment. Already promoting a Facebook presence, Airport leadership believes that Twitter's two-way communication will enhance customer care by keeping passengers apprised of airport events and projects. Using the name @FlyGRFord, Twitter also serves to keep the Airport informed of customer needs, concerns, and conversations. As the second busiest airport in Michigan and among the top 15 percent of busiest airports nationwide, the Airport is committed to proactive communication and interaction with our customers – this instant!



## LOYALTY HAS ITS REWARDS!

While you may wish for the simplicity of life in 1963, you'd be missing out on the Airport's decidedly modern new rewards program! By the close of 2013, Gerald R. Ford International Airport became the first airport in Michigan (and one of more than 150 across the country) to offer a national rewards program.

GFIA has partnered with a national program called “Thanks Again” that awards miles or points whenever you shop, dine, or park at GFIA (or any other participating airport). Joining is easy; just create a free, secure online account associated with a credit or debit card. From there, you'll start racking up points with qualified purchases at participating airports. Use those rewards to redeem savings on future flights, hotel stays, and more.

As part of its mission to create the quintessential airport experience, GFIA funded the partnership and will pay the per-transaction fee for each use. What does this mean for you? You earn double miles and points for travel. It's another way the Airport is making today and tomorrow even more rewarding than our first fifty years – literally! Visit [thanksagain.com/GRR](http://thanksagain.com/GRR).

1986



Comair (Delta Connection) begins service out of Grand Rapids.

Voyager makes the first nonstop flight around the world without refueling in 216 hours, 3 minutes, and 44 seconds.



1989



Airport hosts 25th Anniversary air show.

1990



Nelson Mandela freed from prison after 28 years.

12  
Stormwater  
treatment  
cells

20+  
Cost in  
millions of \$  
for NTS



## ECO-FRIENDLY. IT'S OUR NATURE.

### SAFETY AND SENSITIVITY

Deicing. One of the most critical responsibilities faced by every airport whose climate experiences freezing temperatures, and one of the most sensitive. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport has followed an EPA-approved deicing-fluid-management program for many years. Airlines around the world use propylene glycol to ensure safe flying during cold weather. Considered the ideal product for deicing, it is an ingredient found in many foods, it is safe to use, and it has the unique ability to lower the freezing point of water. The Airport, working with a task force of stakeholders, studied ways to reduce even further the amount of propylene glycol found in runoff and stormwater from the Airport. The answer was a sophisticated Natural Treatment System (NTS).

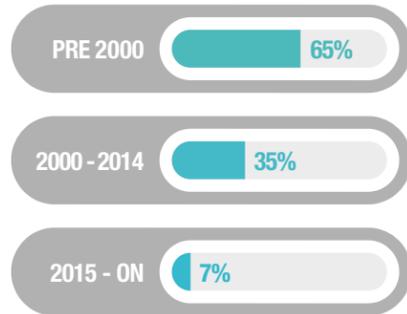
At a cost of more than \$20 million, the NTS will significantly improve the quality of stormwater leaving the Airport before reaching local waterways.

### HOW THE NTS WORKS

The NTS design includes a detention basin that is used to control the flow of stormwater into six treatment cells, after which it flows into a second set of cells. Gravity moves the stormwater from the detention basin through the cells – no mechanical pumping required! Layers of gravel and sand in the treatment cells provide a habitat for microbes to feed on organic matter, including the deicing materials. This accelerates the breakdown process.

This technology has been used for over 50 years to provide reliable and natural water treatment. The Airport is pleased to be the first airport in Michigan to implement an NTS. Similar systems have been successfully installed at other cold-weather climate airports around the world.

### Percentage of Deicer Potentially in Stormwater



### THE OUTCOME

The NTS is designed to naturally biodegrade and remove the majority of deicer before stormwater is returned to the waterways. While the Airport has always made compliance with regulations a priority, the Airport's Natural Treatment System provides a level of environmental stewardship that exceeds both state and federal requirements. The project is on its way, and we look forward to its completion in 2015. The Airport is grateful for the collaborative work of everyone who contributed to the project.

## WMAA'S FIRST GRADUATING CLASS SPREADS ITS WINGS



The Airport and the West Michigan community are fortunate in so many ways. One of our rare gems is the West Michigan Aviation Academy. Located on the Gerald R. Ford International Airport campus, we have been privileged to see the school take flight.

Students and faculty alike shared in the excitement of ushering in the first senior class of the West Michigan Aviation Academy, with graduation ceremonies to take place on June 5, 2014. Since the tuition-free charter academy opened its doors to 80 incoming freshmen in 2010, it has expanded its facilities by 46,000 square feet. Its enrollment has more than quadrupled, with 400+ students now attending and rapidly approaching its full capacity of 600.

Now officially a fully functional four-year high school, its academic standards are impressive. Students need not be focused on becoming the next generation of pilots – although they will learn a lot about aviation – but they share a focus on commitment and dedication to reaching their full potential. The 2013 school year got underway with even more lift than usual.

Another 2013 highlight that revved the engines of the Academy in May was the Leaders of Tomorrow Gala fundraiser, headlined by former president George W. Bush. The event, hosted by area business leaders at the Amway hangar, helped ensure future enhancements in aviation and engineering-related activities at the school.

It's thrilling to see excellence in education take flight at the West Michigan Aviation Academy. The opportunity to prepare highly trained pilots and engineers for tomorrow, right at our West Michigan doorstep, surely stands to make our community soar. Congratulations, WMAA and the Class of 2014!



### LOOK! A NEW LANDMARK!

Landmark Aviation officially began operations at Gerald R. Ford International Airport in July 2013, uniting assets of former Northern Air and Grand Rapids Air Center. The enterprise offers general aviation support to Grand Rapids and the surrounding communities. The facility features a VIP lounge, shower, executive

conference room, and flight-planning center. Hangar and office space are also available.

Ben Humbert joined the venture as Landmark's general manager for the GFIA location. Humbert brings more than a decade of aviation experience, including serving as safety and training manager at Atlantic Aviation. One of the key focuses of his role is to strengthen existing customer relationships at GFIA and

to make the base a vital part of the Landmark network.

Landmark Aviation is a Houston-based company with fixed-base operators throughout the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe. The company also offers aircraft management and charter services.



1992



Bill Clinton becomes 42nd U.S. President.

1994



Another record for air cargo. 1994's total doubled that of 1989.

1997



8,500-ft north-south runway added at a cost of \$32 million.

1998

International Space Station is launched.





## FLYING COLORS

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) has always prided itself on our no-nonsense approach to maintaining and operating our airfields. The commitment of our consummate professionals to the safety and security of the traveling public never wavers. It is no surprise, then, but a great honor to share the news of our fourth consecutive year without a single discrepancy on the 2013 Federal Aviation Administration Certification/Safety Inspection.

The FAA sets strict standards – and conducts in-depth inspections – for operations that contribute to the safety of our passengers and the community, including:

- Pavement conditions
- Airfield lighting
- Snow and ice control
- Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting
- Personnel training
- Handling and storage of hazardous materials
- Emergency planning
- Wildlife hazard management

The three-day inspection brings several usually behind-the-scenes departments into the spotlight, including Airfield Maintenance, Building Maintenance, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF), and Operations. Following this year's analysis, the FAA applauded the Kent County Department of Aeronautics, who owns and operates the Airport, on its perfect score. We applaud the unsung heroes in maintenance, aircraft rescue and fire fighting, and operations who keep the Airport safe and prepared.

1999



Airport was renamed the Gerald R. Ford International Airport in honor of the 38th President of the U.S.

Y2K

The world awaits the consequences of the Y2K bug.

2002

GFIA becomes first in the U.S. to screen all baggage using explosive-detection systems.



1.9M

Airport serves over 1.9 million passengers.



## YOU'LL GET A CHARGE OUT OF THIS

Phone or laptop dead again? Not if you're passing through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport! A big jolt of convenience amped up Airport concourses A and B this year, with the addition of 46 charging stations. Standing just over five feet tall in gate seating areas, each station offers six outlets and two USB connections for visitor use, free of charge. Whether you are finalizing a deal before takeoff or hoping the tablet will keep the kids busy on the flight, the Airport has got you covered for plug and play, all the way!

## FIFTY YEARS OF FIRE-RESCUE VEHICLES

In 1963, a fire "pumper" truck cost around \$15,000. Fifty years later, it costs more than \$500,000. In 2013, to ensure adequate service and safety for our growing Airport, it was time to replace our 1989-model fire fighting vehicle. The Kent County Department of Aeronautics selected an Oshkosh STA-1500 "Striker" Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) vehicle. The new vehicle carries 1,500 gallons of water, 200 gallons of foam

concentrate, and 500 pounds of dry chemical extinguishing agent, making it a versatile, powerful response vehicle. Thanks to an FAA airport-improvement grant, 90 percent of the cost was covered, with the remaining cost split between the State of Michigan and GFIA. While we hope the cost doesn't increase another 32 times over the next 50 years, the Airport remains passionately committed to safety.



# ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES



## WELCOME, STEVE HEACOCK!

Appointed by the Kent County Board of Commissioners in January 2014, Steve Heacock replaces Terri Lynn Land on the Airport board and will also serve on its finance and legislative committee.

Employed as senior vice president of public affairs for Spectrum Health Systems, Heacock joins the board noting a desire to build on the recent success of the Airport. Past positions include chief administrative officer, general counsel and board secretary of the Van Andel Institute from 2004 to 2010.



## DEPARTURE OF TERRI LYNN LAND

Former Michigan Secretary of State and Kent County Clerk Terri Lynn Land chose to forego a second term on the Airport board. Land joined the board in January 2011. Her three-year term ended in December 2013. The board wishes her well in her future endeavors.



## EXCUSE US, BUT OUR QUALITY IS SHOWING

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport provides first-class travel experiences and excellent customer service and amenities. Those efforts have contributed to the Airport being recognized by the Airports Council International (ACI) as one of the best in the world. Specifically, in 2013 we were honored as one of the Top Five Best Airports in the world for Airport Service Quality (ASQ) among similarly sized airports.

The ACI evaluates airports across the globe, using passenger opinions on 34 key service indicators for an objective, accurate measure of top performers. Some of the key areas of feedback include cleanliness, parking, courtesy of staff, concessions and security screening. As a facility perennially dedicated to providing a first-class experience for the traveling public, it was especially fitting to receive this recognition as we celebrate our 50th anniversary!



## HOW TIME FLIES – 100-YEAR RECOGNITION FOR OUR NAMESAKE, THE 38TH PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.

Grand Rapids native and President Gerald R. Ford would have observed his 100th birthday on July 14, 2013. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, the Airport proudly honored our namesake with a Centennial Celebration. Community members, business leaders, political dignitaries, and Airport staff all enjoyed the celebration and fondly remembered our native son, with appreciative recognition of his contributions to West Michigan and our nation.

2004

A new record high – the Airport served 2,150,125 passengers.



Singer, pianist, and composer Ray Charles dies at age 73.



2008

95,190,326 lbs.

New air cargo records, with more than 130 tons per day!

2009

Airport completes terminal and parking expansion.



# DEAR READERS,

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TO CELEBRATE THE GERALD R. FORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY RENDITION OF OUR ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY. IT HAS BEEN A SPECIAL YEAR FILLED WITH MANY POSITIVES AS WE NOT ONLY REFLECT BACK BUT ASPIRE TOWARD NEW HEIGHTS WITH OUR AIRPORT FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS. IT WAS A YEAR FILLED WITH TREMENDOUS MOMENTUM – A FITTINGLY SMOOTH LANDING FOR SUCH A MILESTONE.**

It's hard to believe that 1963, less than a generation past, was the virtual beginning of the "Jet Age" of commercial air travel. Flying faster and further than ever before, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport was born of inspiration and foresight of past leaders.

The transformation in aviation mirrored the rapid social changes that characterized the early '60s. The new generation of jet aircraft would make the world more accessible, helping local citizens expand their lives, their businesses, and their relationships. As a result, the world was moving faster; we were being challenged to understand people and cultures different than our own; and we were enriched to discover that we were more the same than we were different. Air travel to distant places allowed us to interact and appreciate people who were unlike us. It not only broadened our view of the world, it expanded our view of ourselves.

Today's Airport bears little resemblance to the 1963 structure, but the fundamentals that make the Airport a success today were a part of its genetics from the very beginning. Creating a safe, secure, customer-focused and convenient Airport experience was the goal in 1963 and continues to be reflected in every decision the Airport makes today. The sky really is the limit as we anticipate another first-class flight for the next 50 years. Thank you for being part of the celebration, the history, and our bright future.

No matter what yardstick you use to measure it, time really does fly.

Sincerely,



*Brian D. Ryks*

**Brian D. Ryks, A.A.E.**  
Executive Director  
Gerald R. Ford  
International Airport



*Roger C. Morgan*

**Roger Morgan**  
Chairman  
Gerald R. Ford  
International Airport Board

## BOARD

Policy and general oversight of GFIA are the responsibility of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board, a seven-member body appointed by the Kent County Board of Commissioners. The Airport board is composed of 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.

Roger Morgan, Chairman\*

Richard Vander Molen, Vice Chairman\*

Birgit Klohs

Steve Heacock

David Slikkers

Theodore Vonk\*

Floyd Wilson, Jr.

\*Kent County commissioner

## EXECUTIVE STAFF

The Airport is managed and operated by the executive director, deputy executive director, a management team heading the Airport's primary functional areas, and a 100-member Department of Aeronautics staff.

**Brian D. Ryks, A.A.E.**  
Executive Director

**Phillip E. Johnson, A.A.E.**  
Deputy Executive Director

**Brian Picardat, A.A.E.**  
Finance and Administration Director

**Robert Benstein, A.A.E.**  
Public Safety and Operations Director

**Thomas Ecklund, P.E.**  
Facilities Management Director

**Tara Hernandez**  
Marketing and Communications Manager

## FISCAL SMARTS

	2013*	2012	2011
<b>OPERATING REVENUE</b>			
Ground Transportation	\$16,780,489	\$14,878,412	\$15,511,283
Airline Payments	10,267,490	10,899,720	10,296,427
Air Cargo	2,459,388	2,638,184	2,420,444
General Aviation	1,421,180	1,382,038	1,394,948
Concessions	1,005,550	863,046	854,964
Other	1,255,822	1,211,745	1,151,614
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$33,189,919</b>	<b>\$31,873,145</b>	<b>\$31,629,680</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Personnel Costs	\$7,824,883	\$7,917,842	\$8,262,509
Supplies	898,521	728,333	750,259
Contractual	9,402,739	8,454,749	8,664,675
<b>Total Cash Expenses</b>	<b>\$18,126,143</b>	<b>\$17,100,924</b>	<b>\$17,677,443</b>
Operating Income	\$15,063,776	\$14,772,221	\$13,952,237
Depreciation**	(\$16,539,907)	(\$16,523,125)	(\$16,274,703)
<b>Net Operating Income (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$1,476,131)</b>	<b>(\$1,750,904)</b>	<b>(\$2,322,466)</b>

\* Unaudited figures. A comprehensive Annual Financial Report, including audited figures for 2013, will be available from the Kent County Department of Aeronautics as of June 2014.

\*\* Depreciation is a non-cash item.



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