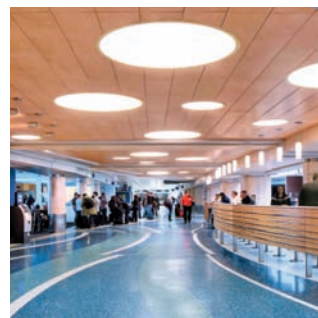
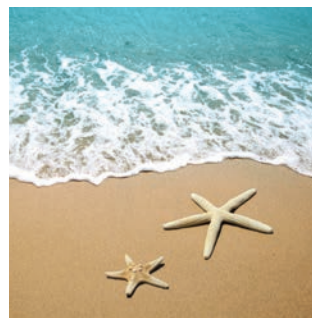


# Change is in the air.

2016 Report to the Community



GERALD R.  International  
**FORD** Airport  
*Getting there is better here.*

# We're changing before your eyes.

2015 was a year of big changes for the Ford Airport. Some you can see. Others you can actually feel. Like a newly reconstructed runway that provides smoother takeoffs and landings, and a roof for the top level of our parking garage that creates more covered parking when the snow is flying.

We also broke ground on a dramatic new gateway that promises to transform our entire airport experience. Add to that a growing list of daily nonstops to warm weather destinations like Punta Gorda and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. There are even some changes you can't see, like faster Wi-Fi and an innovative stormwater and glycol treatment system that ensures we're doing our part for the environment.

And that's only the start. It's what you'd expect from an airport that's on a mission to make travel better.







EXPENSES  
\$ Millions

\$23

Grand Hall & Marketplace

FUNDING  
\$ Millions

\$28

Sponsors & Gifts

## The transformation is underway.

December marked the groundbreaking of a project that will transform our entire airport experience. Once completed, the \$45 million, two-phased project will feature exciting new retail and restaurant options, improved security flow, and a sweeping, window-filled view of the airfield. And that's only the beginning.

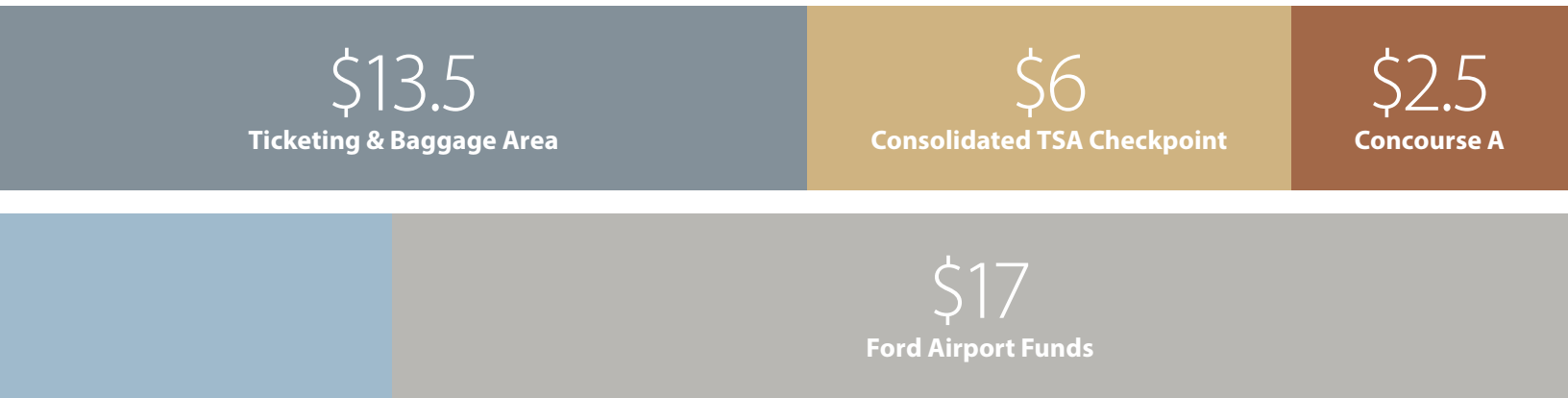
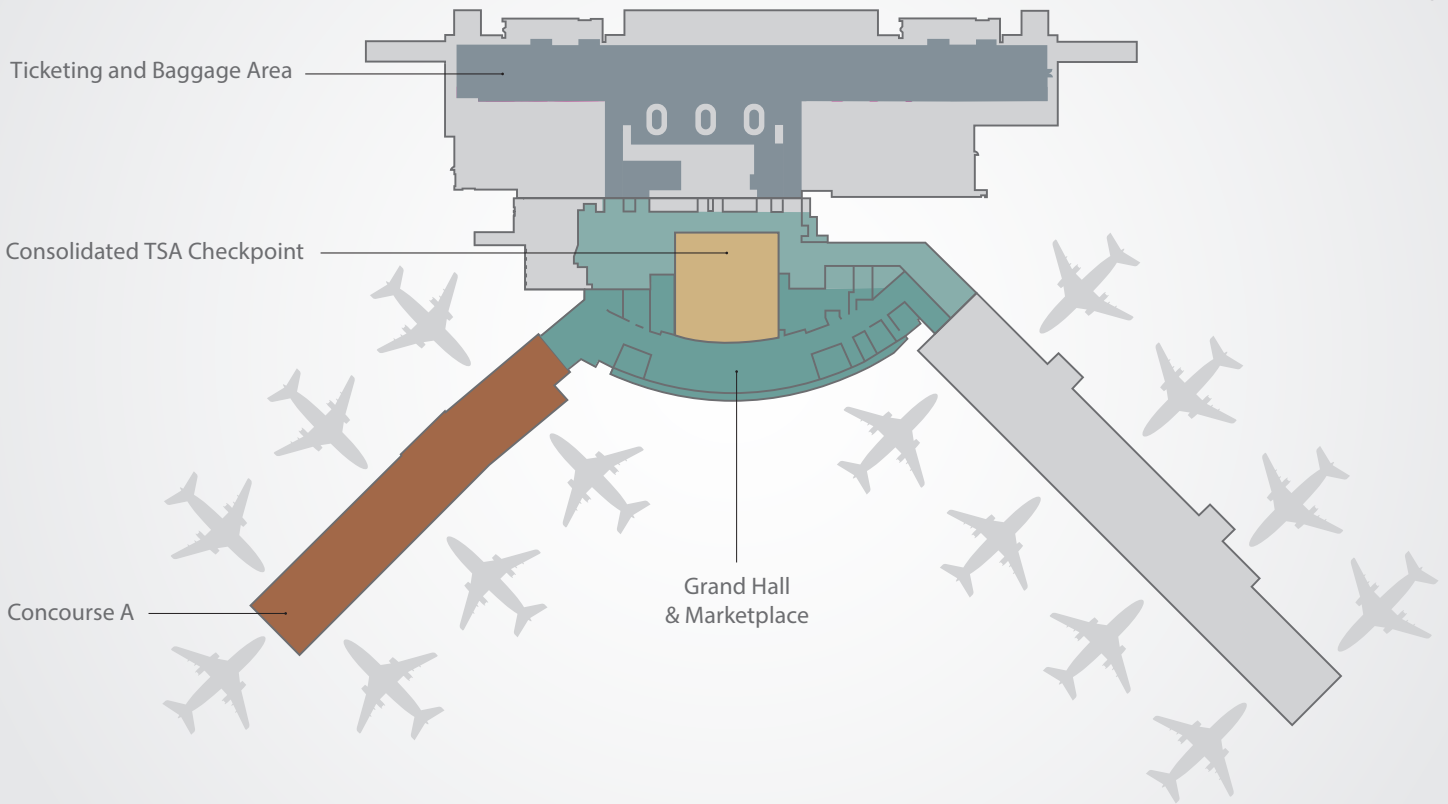
**Phase One.** Scheduled to be completed in summer 2017, phase one will combine the two current security checkpoints—at the entrances of Concourses A and B—into one centralized checkpoint, conveniently located in the newly renovated and expanded Grand Hall. Airport visitors will also be treated to a

marketplace, with an array of new food, beverage, and retail offerings, not to mention a 40-foot-high glass wall overlooking the airfield.

With a budget of \$32 million, phase one will incorporate terrazzo flooring, new restrooms, a children's play area, as well as nursing rooms for

new moms. Meanwhile, business travelers can stay conveniently on task at our pre- and post-security business centers.

In honor of our namesake and 38th President of the United States, the airport is working closely with the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum on an exhibit



featuring the life and times of our hometown hero. Located pre-security, travelers and airport visitors alike will be able to take in photos, displays, and rotating historical pieces generously made available by the Ford Foundation.

Finally, for those wishing to see friends and loved ones

off, an indoor observation area will be located on the mezzanine level of the Grand Hall. In total, the project is expected to utilize over 1,040,000 hours of work, equating to about 500 full-time jobs. It is also expected to contribute approximately \$90 million to our local economy.

**Phase Two.**

Commencing immediately upon completion of phase one, the next phase of the Gateway Transformation will streamline the airline ticketing, baggage screening, and baggage claim experiences.

All told, the investment represents the airport’s commitment to providing a first-class experience from the vehicle curb to the airline gate—improving customer service, amenities, infrastructure, and technology while honoring the culture and history of West Michigan.



Project design elements included rerouting stormwater from the airport's north detention basin to a new outfall at the Thornapple River, and reconfiguring the west apron stormwater system to consolidate runoff from all major existing and future aircraft deicing areas.



## Stormwater treatment gets even greener.

While the Ford Airport has grown to be the second largest in the state, it now has the first stormwater/glycol treatment system of its kind. Installed in 2015, the \$20 million system is designed to prevent any possible environmental risks associated with propylene glycol, the organic compound commonly used for deicing aircraft.

Knowing there's rarely a shortage of snowfall in West Michigan, an innovative solution was needed—one that would keep winter travelers safe while ensuring our environment remains pollutant-free. Today, we have

it with a system that utilizes gravity, vegetated beds, and natural organisms to treat the deicing compound.

Consuming virtually no power and creating no residual waste, the system ensures stormwater reaching the Thornapple River exceeds the state of Michigan's water quality protection standards.

As the centerpiece of the airport's stormwater management program, the new system will protect and improve water quality and help sustain the Thornapple River system's aquatic life and natural beauty.

The project also significantly strengthens the airport's environmental performance, helping us to meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting standards.

Our efforts haven't gone unnoticed. The project was named the winner of the 2016 ACI-NA Environmental Achievement Award for the Mitigation Award Category. The airport was also ACI-NA's 2014 winner for Outreach, Education and Community Involvement.



## Putting a brand new roof over our heads.

A record number of travelers made their way through the Ford Airport in 2015. This meant more people seeking close, convenient parking than ever before. Responding to the need, the airport underwent a \$17 million construction project, adding a roof to the fourth floor of our parking garage.

Completed in November, the newly enclosed parking garage provides 1,138 additional covered parking spaces, bringing the total up to 4,172. The added capacity is especially important during the winter months when heavy snows once forced the closure of the entire top floor. With the new roof, more spaces are available to keep vehicles covered year-round.



## Smoother takeoffs. Easier landings.

Beginning in June of 2015, the Ford Airport resurfaced its north parallel runway. Used primarily for general aviation and training purposes, runway 8L/26R now has a fresh new layer of asphalt, replacing a surface that was beginning to show signs of age.

A testament to skill and hard work of the designers, earthmovers, and pavers, the project received an Award of Excellence from the Asphalt Paving Association of Michigan. In fact, the runway earned the highest score of any asphalt project in the state of Michigan.

Working with a budget of \$4 million, the project demonstrates a commitment to the general aviation community, which has hangars and aviation facilities located on the north side of the airfield.

Also benefiting are the young pilots from the West Michigan Aviation Academy (WMAA) who account for nearly 2,000 takeoffs and landings each year. The reconstruction is one more way to provide the WMAA's next generation of aviators with the highest-quality flight training in a truly world-class environment.

# Our all-time record month, quarter, and year.

July was jumping at the airport when a historically busy month became even busier in 2015. With a total of 234,282 passengers, July beat our record-setting March, and shattered our previous all-time busiest month, July 2011, by nearly 13,000 passengers.

A record month was only the beginning. The airport also set a first-quarter traffic record with 600,336 passengers served. This beat 2005, our previous best quarter, by nearly 54,000 passengers.

we're experiencing in West Michigan with new routes and added capacity. 2015 marked the second full year of service for Southwest Airlines in our market, which soon will include flights to Chicago Midway Airport.

Month  
234,282

With a total of more than 2.5 million passengers in 2015, the airport topped 2014 by more than 215,000 passengers, a 9.2 percent upswing over our previous busiest year.

These eye-popping numbers are the direct result of airline investment in new service, and more travelers choosing to fly from the Ford Airport. Carriers have responded to the growth

Year  
2,550,193



## We're feeling the LUV of Chicago.

It's no longer necessary to go to Chicago by car. With the announcement of three daily nonstop flights, Ford Airport travelers will be able to have quick, easy access to the Windy City's Midway Airport, and Southwest Airline's largest hub. From Midway, passengers can choose to connect to a growing network of Southwest destinations throughout the United States, Caribbean, and Central America.

Commencing in April 2016, the three daily flights will open new possibilities for West Michigan travelers who will be able to take advantage of Southwest's 265 flights a day to 69 cities from its largest market. Or, for those seeking to enjoy all that Chicago has to offer, it means affordable fares and a far more convenient way to get to the Windy City. Either way, Southwest and the Ford Airport are connecting you to a better travel experience.



The Ford Airport's hardworking staff is another reason more business and leisure travelers are making the Ford their go-to airport. With a commitment to unparalleled customer service, "Getting there is better here" is more than just an advertising slogan. It's a promise that's bringing record-setting numbers to the airport.

Quarter  
600,336

## Sunshine state demand: Nonstop to Fort Lauderdale and Punta Gorda.

We spent 2015 growing, and part of that growth was adding nonstop flights on Allegiant Air to Fort Lauderdale and Punta Gorda, increasing our total to seven Florida cities with nonstop service.

For West Michigan travelers, it couldn't have happened at a better time of year. Flights to these two destinations resumed almost as soon as the weather began cooling down in early November. For some, Thanksgiving was a little warmer in 2015.

Allegiant was pleased to once again provide Grand Rapids travelers the opportunity to affordably vacation in southern Florida. And the community responded enthusiastically with a surge in holiday bookings. The addition of Punta Gorda and Fort Lauderdale marks four Florida destinations Allegiant serves out of Grand Rapids.

For those looking to take the edge off the colder months, Allegiant is making a strong case to fly out of the Ford.



## American Airlines

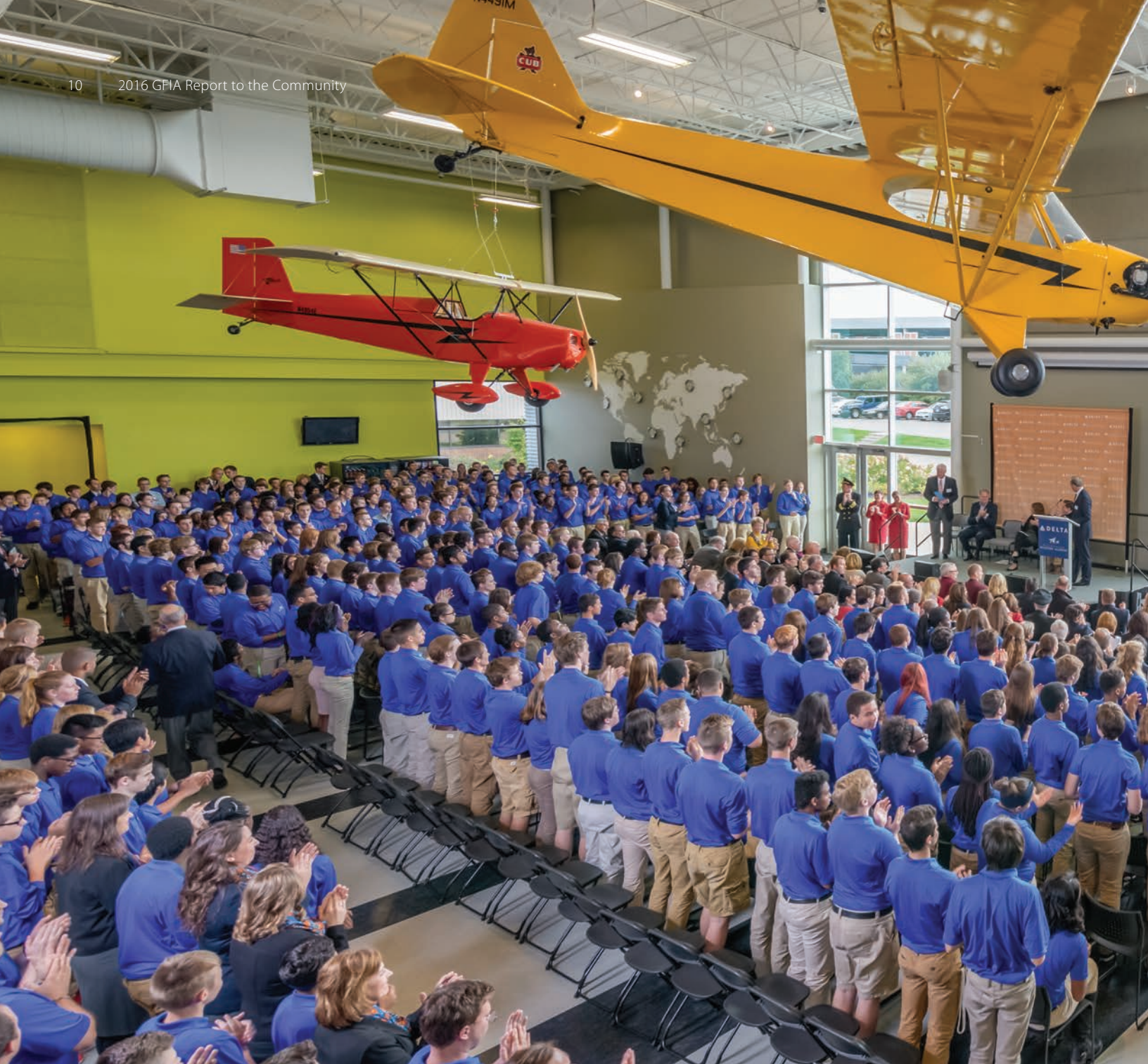
The US Airways-American merger became official in October 2015 creating, by some estimates, the largest airline in the world. The merger, along with the success of Charlotte and Philadelphia service in and out of Grand Rapids, brought larger planes to GFIA. This includes dual-class CRJ-700 service to Charlotte, which started in November 2015, giving frequent fliers the opportunity to utilize upgrades and more in-flight amenities.

## DELTA

The Ford Airport's largest carrier continues to grow. The airline flew 757s throughout the spring break periods of March and April 2015, and returned for nonstop service to Detroit during the summer months. Delta's nonstop flights to Atlanta, Minneapolis, Detroit, and New York LaGuardia continue to provide exceptional service for both business and leisure travelers.

## UNITED

If you're on a United flight to Denver in the winter, chances are you're surrounded by skis and snowboards. The nonstop service to DIA continues to soar during winter months, while connection opportunities to Chicago, Washington Dulles, Houston, and Newark offer coverage to other areas of the country.



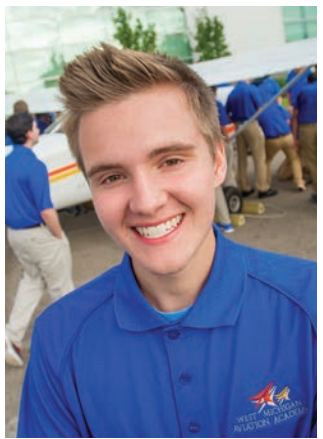
## Future careers take flight, thanks to Delta.

The Delta Air Lines Foundation opened new career opportunities when it awarded West Michigan Aviation Academy (WMAA) with \$150,000 for the purchase of a Cessna 172 in October 2015. The newest member of the fleet increases training capacity for the 550+ member student body, which in 2015-2016 has 18 students in its flight school.

Founded in 2010 by Dick DeVos, WMAA serves as a proving ground for the airline industry, producing the future's

leaders in aviation. In addition to its aviation curriculum, the school provides a rigorous education in science, technology, engineering, and math.

The generous gift came about as a result of Delta Air Lines Senior Vice President of Government Affairs and University of Michigan Regent, Andrea Fisher-Newman's visit to the academy. The Delta Air Lines Foundation graciously followed up with the funding for the Cessna 172.





## Signature addition.

With a focus on safety and exceptional customer service, Signature Flight Support (formerly Landmark Aviation) is the world's largest fixed-based operator (FBO). At the Ford Airport it's growing even larger.

Set to open in summer 2016, the company's two-story, 22,000 sq. ft. General Aviation and Corporate Arrivals and Departures facility will serve as a home base to general and corporate travel passengers and crews. Meanwhile, a separate 18,000 sq. ft. hangar will create space for some of the largest corporate aircraft and aircraft maintenance activities.

Signature/Landmark has operated its current facility since 2013, providing a range of aviation services, such as refueling, deicing, maintenance, concierge services, and catering.



## Adding more beef to our fleet.

Equipment is essential to a world-class airport experience. Fire safety equipment is no exception. In 2015, the Ford Airport's Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) Department added a new truck to its already impressive fleet.

For those not familiar with a Rosenbauer 1500, it looks like something out of Star Wars. Mated to a Panther 4x4 body, the state-of-the-art truck lives up to the billing with a back-

up camera, forward-looking infra-red (FLIR) heat sensor, and a voluminous 1,500-gallon water tank. Depending on the emergency, the vehicle can dispense water, foam, or dry chemical.

Whether serving our airfield, terminal building, or other airport facilities, the goal is to give our firefighting team the very best tools to complete their mission effectively.





## Honoring those who served.

It's never too late to honor those who defended our country in battle. Thanks to a generous Portage-based group, 107 Grand Rapids World War II veterans were rewarded with a trip to Washington, D.C., in the spring of 2015. For some, it was their first visit to our nation's capital; for others it was the first time in a plane since flying home from war. Organized and funded by Talons Out, veterans were treated to Honor Flights from the Ford Airport to Reagan National

Airport. From there, they received meals, a bus tour of Washington, D.C., and a visit to Arlington National Cemetery and several other historic sites.

Among the most notable destinations for the group was the World War II Memorial on the National Mall. Being a relatively newer memorial, many were seeing it for the first time. It was an honor few will forget.

## The best in North America.

Our efforts to provide exceptional service, amenities, and travel experiences are getting noticed in some high places. Airports Council International (ACI) announced the Ford Airport achieved first place in the category: "Best Airports by Size and Region—North America (2-5 million passengers per year)."

The Ford also took second place for "Best Airport by Region—North America (all airports over 2 million passengers per year)" in ACI's Airport Services Quality (ASQ) Awards.

ASQ is our industry's only global benchmarking program measuring passenger satisfaction while at the airport. Comprising more than 300 airports worldwide, ASQ assesses 34 key service areas, including: access, parking, check-in, security, airport facilities, food & beverage, and more.

ACI Director General, Angela Gittens, praised the airport's efforts: "Results in the 2015 ASQ Survey demonstrate your professionalism, commitment, and success in delivering that high level of customer service. Your airport is a credit to our industry and I thank you and your team for this splendid achievement."



While being recognized as North America's best is a tremendous honor, we're striving to become even better. Travelers to the Ford will see this in our continued investment in personnel, services, and facilities focused on providing a first-class experience—from the vehicle curb to the aircraft gate. Which could very well mean more awards in the years to come.





## New governance is coming to the airport.

For the past 52 years, Kent County has provided a sound framework for the development of a first-class, small-hub airport. Transitioning from this model to a “single purpose” Airport Authority, however, will allow the airport to truly take off—operating less like a utility and more like a commercial enterprise.

A major step toward reaching this goal occurred in 2015 when the state approved legislation allowing the transfer of control of the airport. The goal behind the change is to create a performance-based culture with an emphasis on:

### **Entrepreneurship**

Maximizing revenue-generating potential through commercial development strategies.

### **Innovation**

Developing funding strategies in place of eroding federal programs.

### **Private Sector Partnership**

Leveraging funding, air service marketing, and development opportunities.



**Agility**

Responding to a rapidly changing marketplace.

**Competition**

Taking a free-market approach to competing for passengers, air services, and funding.

**Leadership**

Recognizing that being “best in class” means attracting and retaining top airport management talent.

Expected to be approved by the FAA on July 1, 2016, the Authority will be headed by a seven-member board appointed by the Kent County Board of Commissioners.

For all involved, the transition is a huge success. The airport will become more business-centric and commercially focused, and our local and regional communities will have an airport that truly reflects the entrepreneurial spirit that epitomizes West Michigan.



## Dear friends of the Ford,

An already great airport experience just keeps getting better. This past year was no exception. Not only did we set all-time records for most travelers in a month, quarter, and year, but Airports Council International also named the Ford the best airport by size and region in all of North America.

Being the best means continually upgrading our infrastructure, streamlining operations, and creating an experience travelers want to return to again and again—one that's convenient, accommodating, and provides a personal touch.

Our Gateway Transformation project is evidence that we're only beginning to hit our stride. Beyond the expansive

views of the airfield, rich terrazzo flooring, and a tribute to our 38th President, visitors will be treated to an airport that offers amenities like never before.

As we continue to improve our facilities, we look forward to serving you each and every day. For the time being, please excuse our dust as we transform our airport, and ensure our promise: *Getting there is better here.*

Sincerely,

Roger Morgan  
Chairman, Airport Board of Directors

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

## 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*

Lisa M. Carr, C.M., P.E.M.  
*Public Safety and Operations Director*

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

Tara Hernandez  
*Marketing and Communications Manager*

## 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

	2015*	2014	2013
<b>OPERATING REVENUE</b>			
Ground Transportation	\$19,327,483	\$17,820,741	\$16,780,489
Airline Payments	12,120,448	11,475,779	10,267,491
Air Cargo	2,551,693	2,493,862	2,459,388
General Aviation	1,478,573	1,511,647	1,421,181
Concessions	1,513,390	1,241,665	1,005,550
Other	1,220,972	1,298,737	1,255,820
Total Operating Revenue	\$38,212,559	\$35,842,431	\$33,189,919
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Personnel Costs	\$8,285,659	\$8,094,180	\$7,824,883
Supplies	996,490	854,579	898,520
Contractual	11,295,175	9,556,585	9,402,739
Total Cash Expenses	\$20,577,324	\$18,505,344	\$18,126,142
Operating Income	\$17,635,235	\$17,337,087	\$15,063,777
Depreciation**	(\$18,200,160)	(\$16,446,327)	(\$16,539,908)
Net Operating Income (Loss)	(\$564,925*)	\$890,760	(\$1,476,131)

\* Unaudited figures. A comprehensive Annual Financial Report, including audited figures for 2015, will be available from the Kent County Department of Aeronautics as of June 2016. \*\* Depreciation is a non-cash item.

