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Final Homecoming for Betty Ford

Elizabeth “Betty” Ford passed away at her home in Rancho Mirage, CA, in the evening hours of July 8, 2011. She was 93 years old. Mrs. Ford is survived by her children Michael Gerald Ford, John “Jack” Gardner Ford, Steven Meigs Ford, Susan Elizabeth Ford Bales, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and other family members. She was laid to rest on July 14, her husband’s birthday. He preceded her in death on December 26, 2006.

Thrust into the spotlight when Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as 38th President of the United States, Betty Ford became well-known in her own right for her public battle with breast cancer in 1974 and her treatment of addiction to alcohol and prescription medications in 1978. In 1982, the Betty Ford Center, a chemical dependency treatment center, was opened in Rancho Mirage, CA. Mrs. Ford received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1991, and was the co-recipient with her husband of the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999.

Mrs. Ford’s remains arrived at GFIA at 5:00 pm on July 13, accompanied by many family members. A contingent of invited guests was on hand to welcome the Ford family back to Grand Rapids and to pay their respects to Mrs. Ford. The family was greeted by Governor and Mrs. Rick Snyder, Lt. Governor Brian Calley, and Secretary of State Ruth Johnson.

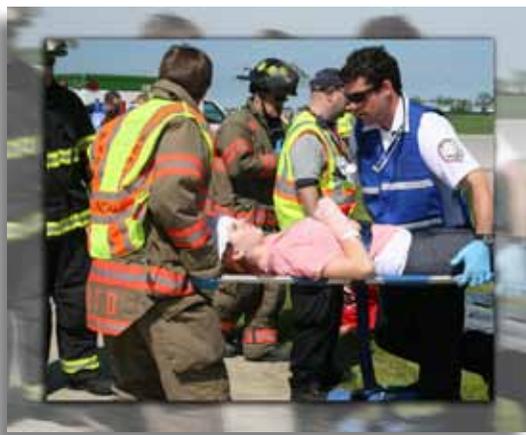
The Aeronautics Board wishes to extend their deepest condolences to the Ford family during this time.



Safety Is No Accident

In its 48-year history, GFIA has never experienced a major accident, but that doesn’t mean we aren’t prepared. For example...

On Tuesday, May 24, 2011, Patriot Airlines flight 123, a CRJ 700 on a scheduled flight from Grand Rapids to Boston, experienced an engine failure during take-off from runway 26L. The flight crew elected to abort the take-off; however, the aircraft was not able to stop and it left the runway surface at the departure end. At 10:30 am, the FAA GRR air traffic control tower notified the Airport Communications Center of the crash. The Communications Center declared an Alert III, and began notifying emergency responders per the Airport Emergency Plan. The aircraft had 2,900 pounds of fuel on board, 70 passengers, and a crew of four.



Bailey Wessel, a freshman from the West Michigan Aviation Academy, plays the role of victim while area first responders participate in the drill.

Thankfully, that CRJ 700 was really a charter bus, the 74 passengers and crew were students and faculty from the West Michigan Aviation Academy, and the incident was actually the fictitious scenario around which the airport’s FAA (Federal Aviation Administration)-mandated triennial full-scale emergency exercise was based.

GFIA staff and the airport’s mutual aid partners review the Airport Emergency Plan annually, completing a tabletop exercise as they review the elements of the Plan. However, the FAA requires that the airport stage a full-scale drill every three years in order to test the command, communications, and resource management functions. “This drill is extremely important,” said Rob Benstein, Airport Public Safety and Operations Director.

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Birds Of A Different Feather

Those who live or work near the airport, frequent visitors, and “bird-watchers” who spend time at the airport’s viewing area get pretty familiar with the aircraft that operate at Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Commercial aviation jets, general aviation planes, and even a few helicopters (most notably, perhaps, is AeroMed’s Sikorsky S-76) are considered by most to be native to the airport. Spend much time here at all, and you are almost guaranteed to see several variations of each as they take-off and land throughout the day. We even have some frequent visitors that you may be used to.



A KC-135 flies over the runway at GFIA as it performs touch-and-go maneuvers during a training flight.

The most common visitor would likely be the KC-135 Stratotanker used by the military for aerial refueling. The KC-135 aircraft frequently seen in the skies over GFIA fly in from Milwaukee or Selfridge to perform touch-and-go maneuvers.

Another less-frequent military visitor is the A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft. These Air Force jets – more commonly known by the nickname “Warthog” – are part of the 127th Wing, 107th Fighter Squadron at Selfridge ANG base and also use the airfield facilities for training flights. However, if you are visiting at the right time on the right day, you may bear witness to some lesser known aircraft that visit the area.



This Boeing 747-8F (freighter) flew to GFIA from Seattle, WA, to perform touch-and-go operations during a certification flight.

For instance, on June 13, Boeing brought a new 747-8F (freighter) here from Seattle, WA, to perform several touch-and-go runs while on a certification testing flight. All aircraft are required to complete flight testing to show compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airworthiness standards. The 747-8F is the longest aircraft in the world at 250’ 2”. The aircraft has a wingspan of 224’ 7”, a payload of 295,000 lbs. and a maximum take-off weight of 975,000 lbs.



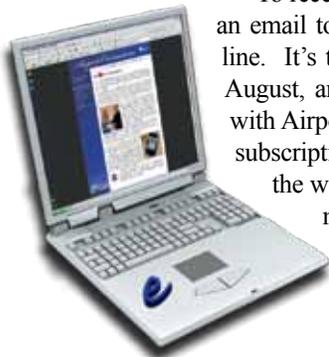
An A-10 “Warthog” flies in from Selfridge ANG Base for training maneuvers.

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Airport Connections Electronic Edition

Airport Connections is available in electronic edition. Each quarterly publication is posted online at www.flygrandrapids.org/Pubs.php and is available via our e-distribution database!



To receive Airport Connections in your inbox each quarter, just send an email to gfiainfo@grr.org with the word “Subscribe” in the subject line. It’s that easy! After that, on or about the 1st of February, May, August, and November each year you will receive an email from us with Airport Connections as a .pdf attachment. You may manage your subscription at any time by sending an email to the address above with the word “Unsubscribe” in the subject line to be removed from the mailing list.

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Passenger Numbers Still Rising

Commercial passenger traffic for first half 2011 continued to climb as GFIA served 12% more travelers than first half 2010. Although June traffic was up just 1% over 2010, West Michigan travelers continue to make aviation travel plans.

The key component is you, the travelers. Your loyalty to include GFIA in your travel plans is what shows the market strength that airline route planners need to see.

On behalf of all the businesses at GFIA, we thank you for your continued patronage!

birds

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On Friday, June 17, two Canadian Air Force (CAF) F-18s made a brief stop at Grand Rapids Air Center. Maj. Eric Haas of the United States Air Force (USAF) and Flt. Lt. Andy Shaw of the Royal Air Force, United Kingdom, piloted the aircraft as part of an exchange program with the CAF 425 Squadron in Bagotville, Canada. They were on their way to a training mission in Kansas when they stopped for fuel and lunch. (Eric Haas is the son of Grand Valley State University president Thomas Haas.)

Most recently, GFIA accommodated a C-17 military transport aircraft and a C-32, a military passenger transportation version of the 757 used by the USAF.



This C-32 military passenger transportation plane arrived at GFIA on July 13 carrying Betty Ford's remains and Ford family members coming for her funeral.

look toward the sky and see if you can identify any of these birds of a different feather.



One of two Canadian Air Force F-18s that stopped by GFIA for refueling on route from Bagotville, Canada, to Kansas for a training mission.

The C-17 was used to bring in support equipment for the arrival of Mrs. Ford's remains in preparation for her funeral service. The C-32, which is identified as "Air Force Two" when carrying the Vice President of the United States, provided transportation for Mrs. Ford's remains as well as more than 20 members of the Ford family.

So next time you're in the vicinity of GFIA,



A military C-17 lands on runway 26R with support equipment for Betty Ford's funeral.

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"It improves inter-agency coordination and cooperation by providing the different groups an opportunity to work together and identify areas for improvement."

While the stage is set in advance, the response is real-time within the confines of a controlled setting. Even the "injuries" are made as realistic as possible with the help of moulage make-up artfully applied by the Medical Reserve Corps.



Nick Umali and Brandon Spencer, WMAA students, await treatment of their "injuries" during the drill.

The first step is to establish a Unified Command Post in a key location selected by airport staff. The post is staffed by representatives from each agency involved in the response and all major decisions are shared and centralized, so communication and cooperation are enhanced, and confusion is minimized. Each agency is assigned a particular task and sets about doing it. Three hours later, the "victims" had been treated and removed from the scene, and the runway was re-opened.

Participating in this year's drill were American Medical Response, Caledonia Fire Department, Cascade Fire Department, Federal Aviation Administration, Grand Rapids Fire Department, Grand Rapids Police Department, Kent County Emergency Medical Services, Kent County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, Kent County Road Commission, Kent County Sheriff Department, Kentwood Fire Department, Kentwood Police Department, Life EMS, Rockford Ambulance, the Transportation Security Administration, and West Michigan Aviation Academy.

By the way, for the record, air travel is still, by far, the safest mode of travel.

News In Brief

- » Executive Director Jim Koslosky, A.A.E., was recently appointed to the International Association of Airport Executives (IAAE) Board of Directors.
- » GFIA will be partnering with Michigan Community Blood Centers to host a community blood drive on Friday, September 30, in the International Room in the passenger terminal building. You may pre-register for a time on our website at www.flygrandrapids.org/BloodDrive.php or by contacting Donna Thomas, office administrator, at (616) 233-6046. Walk-ins are also welcome.
- » The next three meetings of the Kent County Aeronautics Board will take place August 31, September 28, and October 26, at 8:30 am. All meetings are held in the International Room in the passenger terminal building and are open to the public.

Presenting...

Is your group looking for a speaker for an upcoming meeting? Would your organization like to learn more about the airport?

The GFIA Marketing and Communications division would welcome the opportunity to come to your next meeting and provide an overview of the airport, as well as updates on ongoing airport development projects and the state of the aviation industry. Presentations can be timed to fit nicely into a breakfast or lunchtime meeting.

For more information, or to request a speaker for your next meeting, please call the Marketing and Communications division at (616) 233-6053 or visit the website at www.flygrandrapids.org for more information located under About Us, Newsroom.



Airport Employee Information Corner

GFIA uses two plan documents, both required by law, to describe and guide stormwater management activities at the airport: the Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP) and the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

The SWMPP describes the “Six Minimum Measures” that are used to protect stormwater quality. These include education, public participation, construction and post-construction controls, preventing illegal and accidental spills and discharges, and other pollution prevention measures such as good housekeeping practices.

The SWPPP, on the other hand, contains an inventory of materials that could potentially pollute stormwater, and the best management practices that are used to prevent or reduce their exposure to stormwater runoff. The plans are available at <http://www.flygrandrapids.org/Enviro.php>.

Anything that comes into contact with precipitation at the airport has the potential of getting to the local waterways. Anyone can and should call Airport Communications (staffed 24/7) at (616) 233-6055 to report any observed practices or situations that appear to have the potential to negatively affect the quality of stormwater at the airport.



Gerald R. Ford International Airport is on Facebook! We have uploaded some great photos of the airport and aircraft so check out our photo gallery. Be sure to ‘like’ us and our business partners on your next visit. As always, you can check out our main website for a listing of all the great nonstop destinations, real time flight information, and other important information you should know when visiting GFIA.

Airport Connections is the quarterly newsletter of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. We encourage our readers to contact us with comments, suggestions, and submissions. If you wish to be added to the mailing list for *Airport Connections*, please contact the Kent County Department of Aeronautics:

Phone: 616.233.6000

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