

## West Michigan Travelers Can Now Go (to) MIA

Just in time for holiday travel...nonstop service from the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GRR) to Miami International Airport (MIA) will begin in Grand Rapids this winter. American Airlines has announced that, beginning December 19, 2018, they will feature a once daily trip in and out of Miami International Airport. The flight will be operated by American Eagle and tickets are on sale now.

“This new service to Miami gives our customers in western Michigan unprecedented access to our gateway to Latin American and the Caribbean,” said Billy Glunz, American’s director – State and Local Government Affairs. “From Miami, American offers nearly 350 daily flights to 43 countries and territories, now just a stop away from Grand Rapids.”



The flight schedule for the new service includes a departure time from Grand Rapids daily at 6:05 am, and a daily return flight from MIA to GRR arriving at 12:48 am.

“Miami in December is a perfect way to not only kick off the holiday season, but an extremely busy travel period for the Latin American, Mexican, and Caribbean markets that Miami serves,” said Gerald R. Ford International Airport President & CEO Jim Gill. “This marks another Florida route on our map, but Miami is also a growing hub. Our West Michigan community will support this service, and be able to connect to American Airlines’ portfolio of great service.”

**mia**  
continued on page 2

## Passenger Numbers Are Soaring!

Five consecutive years of record-breaking growth is certainly not what most airports have experienced in recent years. At GFIA, we have seen annual growth rates from 4.06% to 9.21% and our 2018 year-to-date increase over 2017 is 14.98% as we grow toward a possible sixth consecutive year. In fact, we are currently on target to surpass the three million passenger mark this year!

“We are happy to see the record-breaking passenger counts continuing into the summer months,” said Gerald R. Ford International Airport President & CEO Jim Gill. “We are seeing increases on the schedule with American adding mainline service to Dallas, Delta adding more frequency to New York-LaGuardia, and United’s capacity to Chicago and Denver increasing.”

Each month of 2018 has resulted in record-breaking passenger numbers, and the Ford Airport is coming off a 2017 that saw over 2.8 million passengers. GFIA

**soaring**  
continued on page 2



### INSIDE THIS EDITION

2 | Airport Project Wins Prestigious Award

2 | Special Olympics Head Out West

3 | Cell Phone Lot Relocating

3 | Fire Fighters Become Masters of Their Craft

4 | News In Brief

## Airport Project Wins Prestigious Award



On July 28, the Great Lakes Chapter American Association of Airport Executives announced that the Gerald R. Ford International Airport's Gateway Transformation, Phase One project was selected as its Commercial Airport Architectural Project of the Year! This prestigious award is based on many criteria including showing a

unique solution to a common problem, demonstrating resourcefulness, cost-effectiveness, and being environmentally sound.

Some of the features of the Gateway Transformation Project that stood out to the judges were the vegetated "green" roof that was installed over portions of the project with supply of the system and plants from a local Michigan-based company. Portions of the "green" roof can be viewed from the observation area overlook. The displacement air ventilation system used in the marketplace distributes conditioned air throughout only the lower level of occupied spaces to save energy. A 15' roof overhang with solar grating and Solara glass (high insulating translucent glazing) was used in help control solar gain and glare along the southeast facing facade of the checkpoint and marketplace.

A variety of amenities such as work hubs, four new business centers/lounges, a Military Welcome Center, Mother's Nursing Rooms and Children's Play Areas support the diverse needs of passengers. All furniture was sourced from local manufacturers, minimizing shipping costs and energy consumption while boosting the local economy.

A unique aspect of this project was the airport's outreach to key community businesses and leaders for guidance in determining goals for the project as well as creating sponsorship opportunities within the terminal. Private donations contributed over \$17 million towards the cost of the project.

## Special Olympics Head Out West



On June 30, more than 40 Special Olympics athletes left GRR en route to Seattle for the USA Games. The send-off and celebration helped mark Special Olympics' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the USA games and many local athletes were featured on ESPN's

**olympics**  
continued on page 4

**mia**  
continued from page 1

The addition of nonstop service to Miami marks the 25<sup>th</sup> nonstop destination served out of Grand Rapids, and the eighth city in Florida. American Airlines has served Gerald R. Ford International Airport passengers for over 25 years, and also has nonstop service to Chicago-O'Hare, Dallas/ Fort Worth, Washington, D.C., Charlotte, and Philadelphia.

## American Airlines

In addition to the service provide by American Airlines, our other five carriers - Delta, Southwest, United, Allegiant, and Frontier - offer flights to Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago-Midway, Denver, Detroit, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Houston, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, New York-LaGuardia, New York-Newark, Orlando International, Orlando-Sanford, Phoenix-Mesa, Punta Gorda, St. Petersburg-Clearwater International, Tampa International, Washington-Reagan National, and Washington-Dulles.

With 120 daily flights to all these destinations, it's no wonder that **Getting There Is Better Here.**

**soaring**  
continued from page 1

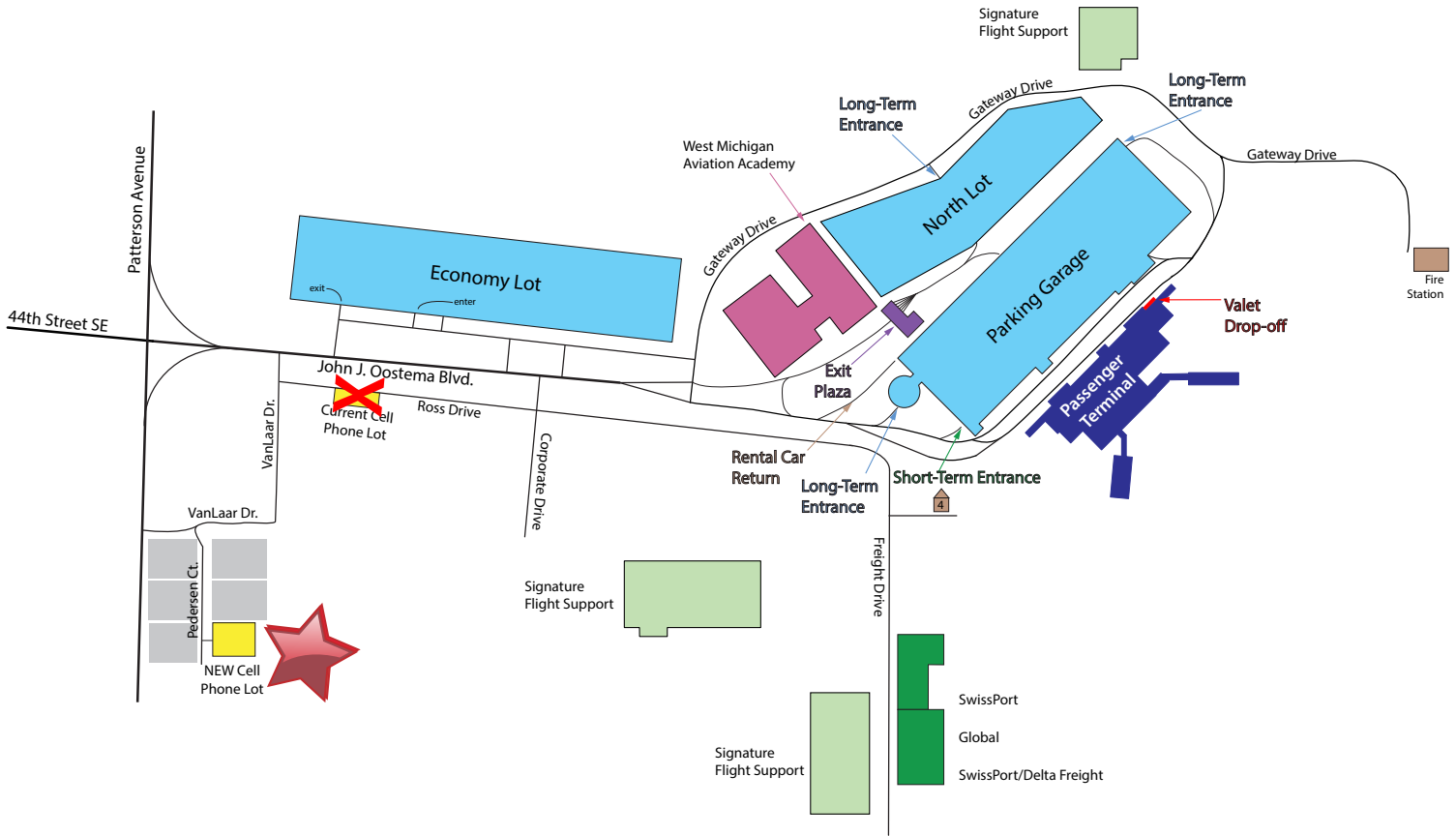
has seen growth in 59 of the past 66 months.

"Our airline partners continue to invest here and are adding more service through the summer with more routes, and larger aircraft to accommodate our growing passenger traffic," said Gill. "We expect the record numbers and trends to continue in the busy summer months as West Michiganders visit the world, and as the world visits our beautiful West Michigan region."

The upcoming summer is expected to be the busiest summer in the history of U.S. air travel, according to trade group Airlines for America. The group estimates that over 246 million passengers will fly in the U.S. between June 1 and August 31, 2018. Historically low fares and a strong economy are noted for aiding in that forecasted record-breaking summer travel period.

# Cell Phone Lot Relocating

The Cell Phone Lot, one of our most popular amenities, currently located on Ross Drive, is being relocated to improve safety and accessibility. An added benefit is that this move will also decrease the roadway congestion along Ross Dr., which is a main route for construction traffic hauling equipment and material for our aircraft apron reconstruction project (see below) as well as a new private hangar that is being constructed just west of Corporate Drive. The new cell phone lot is expected to open around Labor Day. Keep watch for new signs!



# Fire Fighters Become Masters of Their Craft

Firefighters Nate German and Dan Kipen have earned the Airport Master Firefighter (A.M.F.) designation. This prestigious title is the first level of the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) Professional Designation Program. This program is sponsored by the American Association of Aviation Executives (AAAE) and the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Working Group (ARFFWG), collectively known as the ARFF Training Alliance. The A.M.F. program confirms that associates understand, to an acceptable degree, the ARFF Body of Knowledge essential to carry out the responsibilities to manage an airport fire department and have a basic understanding of airport administration and management.

Nate and Dan successfully completed the prerequisite set of requirements, which included employment of at least three years as an airport firefighter as well as completion of both the National Incident Management System (NIMS) 100/200/700 courses and an ARFF training program. They earned their official A.M.F. designation by successfully passing the requisite A.M.F. exam. These two fire fighters join nine others on our team to earn this designation.



**Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority**  
5500 44th Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512-4055

*Getting there is better here.*



## News In Brief

- » The next three meetings of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority Board are currently scheduled to occur on August 29, September 26, and October 31. Board meetings begin at 8:30 AM and are held in the International Room in the passenger terminal building. All meetings are open to the public.
- » Catch us SOARING! Did you spot an airport employee going above and beyond? Nominate them for our customer service awards! Find more information and a link to the nomination form on our website at [www.FlyFord.org/contact-us.php](http://www.FlyFord.org/contact-us.php).
- » Mark your calendars and grab your running shoes! Our Runway 5K is coming up on October 6 and there is still room for more runners! Register for the event at [triviumracing.com/event/runway5k2018/](http://triviumracing.com/event/runway5k2018/)

### olympics

*continued from page 2*

coverage of the event. Southwest Airlines also sponsored many of the athletes for this trip (with free travel!) Thank you, Southwest!



**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 Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority office:

**Phone:** 616.233.6000

**Email:** [gfainfo@grr.org](mailto:gfainfo@grr.org)

**Facebook:** @FlyGRFord

**Airport Board** | Dan Koorndyk\*, chair; David Slikkers; vice chair; Steve Heacock; Birgit Klohs; Roger Morgan\*; Ted Vonk\*; Floyd Wilson, Jr.

(\* County Commissioner)

**President & CEO** | James R. Gill, A.A.E., IAP

**Editors** | Tara Hernandez, Marketing & Communications Director, [THernandez@grr.org](mailto:THernandez@grr.org)

| Susan Sherman, Marketing Coordinator, [SSherman@grr.org](mailto:SSherman@grr.org)