

## GFIA Unveils New Logo, Brand Promise

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) has a new look and a new promise to complement its same great customer service and convenience.

GFIA released its new logo and brand promise in early January, which is pictured at right. The new promise encompasses an airport-wide belief that no matter where your travel plans take you, “Getting there is better here.”

The new logo was inspired by the iconic shape of GFIA’s main parking canopy, but is also reminiscent of an airfoil, or the movement of air. The brand mark also brings to mind the gentle shoreline of Lake Michigan and the beauty of our West Michigan scenery.



“We are pleased to unveil a new logo and promise that showcase a more modern, energetic airport which is exactly what we are becoming.”

~ Brian Ryks,  
Airport Executive Director

“We are pleased to unveil a new logo and promise that showcase a more modern, energetic airport which is exactly what we are becoming,” said Airport Executive Director Brian Ryks.

“We have future expansion and construction projects that will take us to an elite airport status, and we feel our new identity completes that circle of transformation, modern design and boldness.”

During its 50th year, the airport conducted a discovery process to help refine its brand position. Discovery examined the airport’s current perceptual position among stakeholders, identified its key strengths, and summarized the results in the simple new promise that reflects its competitive advantage – “getting there is better here.”

**brand**  
continued on page 6

## GFIA Officially Opens Expanded & Renovated Concourse B

The newly renovated and expanded Concourse B at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) was officially christened on January 28th, following a ribbon cutting by airport officials and special guests.

Construction began in June 2013 and included expansion of both concourses providing new amenities, and an overall fresh look. Two new airline gates and passenger hold rooms, along with restrooms, the MI Tap Room Restaurant & Bar, and Grand Rapids Magazine Travel Store were among the renovations on Concourse B. New signage, terrazzo flooring, carpeting, and gate seating were also included. Concourse A renovations included an expansion of passenger hold rooms, new seating, carpeting, updates to food and beverage areas, and a new Grand



**concourse B**  
continued on page 3

### INSIDE THIS EDITION

- 2 | GFIA Sets New Passenger and Cargo Records!
- 3 | Concourse B Renovations

- 4 | Sounds of the Season
- 4 | Operation Handshake Warms Holiday Hearts
- 5 | Winter Weather is No Match for the Snow Wolf

- 5 | Presenting...
- 5 | Airport Property
- 6 | News In Brief
- 6 | Did You Know?

# GFIA Sets New Passenger and Cargo Records!

2014 was a banner year for the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) as it hit an all-time passenger record total of **2,335,105**. The more than 2.3 million people that flew in and out of GFIA in 2014 breaks the airport's previous record of 2,275,332 set in 2011. This new record is a 2.63% increase.

In total, over 65 million people have flown through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport in its 51-year history at its current location.

"Our record breaking year is a reflection of the thriving West Michigan economy and expanded air service at the Ford International Airport," said Airport Executive Director Brian Ryks. "Our community continues to support our airport and its growth. We are excited to see airlines invest and expand opportunities in our market, and we are confident that even more growth will follow in the coming years."

In 2013, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport served a total of 2,237,979 enplaned and deplaned passengers. The record-breaking number of 2,335,105 passengers in 2014 is a 4.34% increase year-over-year.



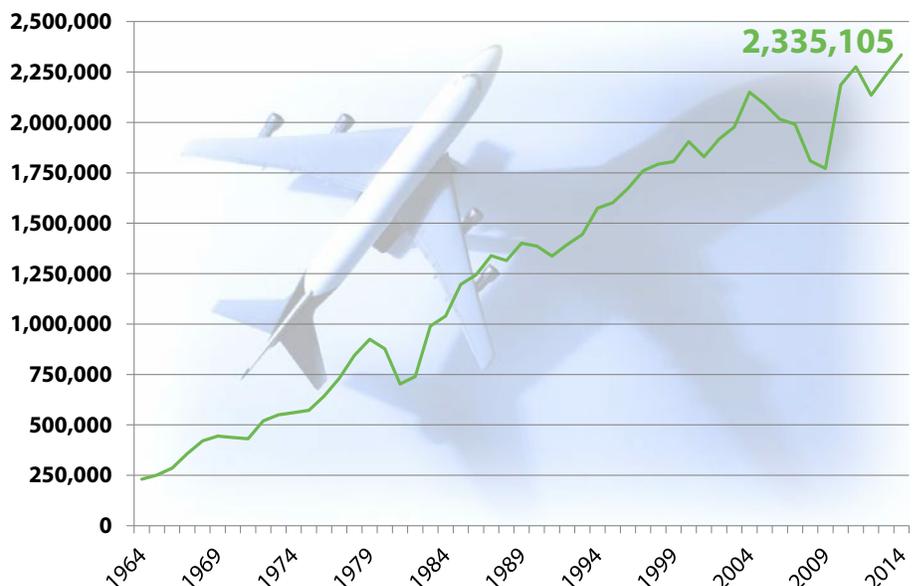
"Our community continues to support our airport and its growth. We are thankful to have the support of each of our airlines, and all of our travelers."

~ Brian Ryks,  
Airport Executive Director

2014 marked the first full year of service for Southwest Airlines in the Grand Rapids market. In addition, the US Airways-American Airlines merger added nonstop service from Grand Rapids to Charlotte and Philadelphia in September, and Delta added a fourth daily nonstop flight to Atlanta in October.

"Our airline partners see opportunity in West Michigan and that is why they continue to add routes and capacity," said Ryks. "We are thankful to have the support of each of these airlines, and all of our travelers." At GFIA, passenger air service is provided on 120 flights per day, to 22 nonstop destinations by Allegiant, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, and US Airways.

## Total Passengers 1964 - 2014



In addition to setting an all-time annual passenger record, GFIA set monthly passenger records in seven months throughout 2014 (March, April, May, June, September, October and December).

Passengers numbers were not the only factor that saw a year-over-year increase for 2014 either. Total cargo activity (enplaned and deplaned mail and freight) also increased by 2.1% over 2013. In total, the airport saw 82,087,599 pounds of cargo come through last year — that's just over 4,100 tons!

The airport's current-year monthly passenger statistics and previous years' annual passenger statistics can be found on our website at [www.FlyFord.org/History.php](http://www.FlyFord.org/History.php).

## concourse B

*continued from page 1*

Rapids Magazine Travel Store. A business area featuring an expanded work space and charging stations were also among the changes on Concourse A.

“Our primary goal is to ensure travelers have a positive experience when transitioning through our airport,” said Airport Executive Director Brian Ryks. “The airport is the first and last impression when visiting our region and it is important travelers get a sense of what West Michigan has to offer as soon as they step off the aircraft.”



West Michigan-themed murals featuring tulips, downtown buildings, lighthouses, shorelines and the Calder Plaza now adorn the walls at each gate on Concourse B. The MI Tap Room features several local Michigan craft beers on tap as well as many local-themed menu items.

“We are very proud of the strong partnership that HMSHost and Gerald R. Ford International Airport have cultivated over the years, and we could not be more excited for what the future holds in the newly expanded concourses,” said HMSHost Senior Director of Business Development Bryan Loden. “With restaurants like MI Tap Room and Great American Bagel, it is greatly rewarding to offer Michigan travelers access to first-rate food as well as some fantastic local products.”

The newly renovated Grand Rapids Magazine Travel Stores, operated by World Duty Free Group, feature traditional snacks, books, magazines and travel items. New features include a refrigerated snacks section, and a selection of West Michigan-themed products.

“Giving the Grand Rapids Magazine name to our travel retail stores is a great way to extend the visibility of their brand, bringing an unmistakable sense of place to Gerald R. Ford International Airport passengers,” said Sharon Adler, Regional Head of Operations for World Duty Free Group.

The total cost of the project for both concourses A & B came to \$12.3 million.



## Sounds of the Season

From December 8 through 12, the airport's Grand Hall was transformed into a holiday concert venue for 17 area junior and senior high school vocal groups, including two new choirs. The Airport Holiday Music Festival is an annual tradition that has become a favorite of airport employees and patrons alike.

From a 17-voice ensemble to the 100-voice choirs, these student groups filled the air with a wide variety of musical stylings from Latin arias to classic carols to some new twists on old seasonal favorites. Airport employees, arriving and departing passengers and our meeters and greeters, everyone found their spirits lifted as the students performed.

Far from their ordinary venue, the directors and students thoroughly enjoy performing at the airport. One choir director commented, "We never know if we will be singing for five people or 75 people. It's a great experience for the students to sing for virtual strangers instead of the parents, grandparents, and fellow students that make up our regular audiences."

The Department of Aeronautics would like to thank the following schools for sharing their talented students with us this year:



- Alger Middle School
- City High School
- East Kentwood High School
- Grand Rapids Christian High School
- Grandville High School
- Jenison Public Schools - Bauerwood and Rosewood choirs
- Legacy Christian School
- Moline Christian School
- Northpointe Christian Middle and High Schools
- Ottawa Hills High School
- The Potter's House Middle and High Schools
- Tri-Unity Christian High School \*
- Vista Charter School \*
- Wyoming High School

*\* indicates a new choir for the 2014 Festival*

## Operation Handshake Warms Holiday Hearts

There's no place like home for the holidays, and that's why the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) along with the Patriot Guard Riders of West Michigan, were welcoming troops home during the busy holiday season.

The Patriot Guard Riders, along with airport volunteers, participated in "Operation Handshake," an event to welcome home returning military members and veterans, and to thank them for their service. Volunteers staffed concourse exits the day before Thanksgiving and on December 23rd as returning troops landed in West Michigan.

"We know that not every member of our military can make it home during the holidays, but for those returning to West Michigan we want to make it special and let them know we are thankful for their service," said Airport Executive Director Brian Ryks. "We appreciate the partnership with the Patriot Guard Riders of West Michigan, and their loyalty to serving our community through events like Operation Handshake."

For more information on the Patriot Guard Riders or to schedule a welcome home for a returning military member, visit [www.patriotguardmi.org](http://www.patriotguardmi.org).



# Winter Weather is No Match for the Snow Wolf

If you're leaving on a flight out of GFIA this winter, the Snow Wolf is paving the way for a clear takeoff.

GFIA has a fleet of snow plows, blowers and sweepers that keep the airfield clear in winter conditions, but the Snow Wolf is the first of its kind at GFIA. In fact, our airport is the first airport in the country to purchase a Snow Wolf.

"We have something unique and different here," said GFIA Field Maintenance Supervisor Jeff McNally. "It doesn't matter what kind of snow is thrown at us, we are manhandling it right now."

The Snow Wolf is capable of throwing snow over 140 feet, clearing a 7,500-foot path in an hour, and it's helping the airport achieve goals of clearing the runways faster and more efficiently to ensure aircraft arrive and depart on time.

"Safety is our top priority," said airport Executive Director Brian Ryks. "Our team did a wonderful job of researching this machine to ensure that we were investing in a product that would quickly remove snow from our airfield and ultimately enhance the safety of our passengers and flight crews as well."

As impressive as all these numbers are, the Snow Wolf — and all snow removal activity — requires manpower, and that's where our award-winning airfield maintenance crew of 27 comes in to play. Divided into two shifts, these men are on-call 24/7 and put in copious hours every snow season to ensure the safe departures and arrivals of all our aircraft as well as safe operations of ground crew equipment



The Snow Wolf — By The Numbers	
Weight	» 58,000 lbs.
Maximum speed	» 50 mph
Transmission	» Automatic
Blower Specifications	» 9'5" wide by 6'5" high » Two-stage "V" design » Two 31" diameter side augers » One 67" diameter center impeller
Capacity	» 7,500 tons per hour
Casting Distance	» 85 - 140 ft.

on and around the airfield. Two operators from each shift and three mechanics received special training related to the Snow Wolf. In April 2014, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport was awarded the Balchen/Post Award for small commercial airports by the North East Chapter American Association of Airport Executives. The award recognizes airports for their outstanding performance in snow control activities.

More than 70 inches of snow has already blanketed the airfield this season, with more expected before spring. For an airport that clears enough snow to fill 20,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools each winter, the Snow Wolf has been a welcomed addition to the fleet.

## 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, 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) 233-6031 or visit the website at [www.FlyFord.org](http://www.FlyFord.org) for more information located under About Us, Newsroom.

## Airport Property

Is your business looking for property with convenient access to the airport and/or surrounding transportation infrastructure? Gerald R. Ford International Airport currently has both developed and undeveloped properties available for lease.

For more information about available properties, land use restrictions, or the airport's aeronautical minimum standards, contact Joel Burgess, Properties Administrator via phone at (616) 233-6054 or email at [JBurgess@grr.org](mailto:JBurgess@grr.org).

**Kent County Department of Aeronautics**  
5500 44th Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49512-4055

*Getting there is better here.*

Follow us on Twitter!



@FlyGRFord

Connect with us on Facebook!



Facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport

## News In Brief

- » The next meetings of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board will be held on March 25, and April 29. Meetings begin at 8:30 am and are held in the International Room in the passenger terminal building. Meetings are open to the public.
- » Kent County Department of Aeronautics is pleased to introduce two new staff. Mr. Casey Ries, PE, LEED AP is our new Civil Engineering Manager. Casey comes to us from QoE Consulting, a Lansing based Property Management Company. Robert Wilson, former Airport Building Maintenance Supervisor, is now our Facilities Manager.

### brand

*continued from page 1*

The Airport Board also recently announced a \$95 million investment in the Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP) projects scheduled for completion from 2015 through 2020.

The anticipated ACIP projects include a substantial investment in the new consolidated checkpoint & marketplace, the addition of a roof over the parking structure, reconstruction of the terminal aircraft apron, an update of the airport master plan, and reconstruction of the north and east surface parking lots. In addition, the plan includes resurfacing a portion of the airfield perimeter road as well as mid-term maintenance items related to the parking structure.

## Did You Know?

A few facts about airplane wings:

- » Wings keep an airplane up in the air, but the four forces of flight - lift, thrust, drag and weight are what make this happen. They push a plane up, down, forward, or slow it down.
- » The bend at the end of some wingtips are called winglets. They reduce wingtip vortices of swirling air from above and below. They produce a performance boost by reducing this drag.
- » If you look at the top of a jet airliner's wings, you might see a row of small metal tabs standing about one inch tall. These are vortex generators, which help the air follow the shape of the wing during flight.

So now you know!

**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

**Email:** gfainfo@grr.org

**Facebook:** GeraldRFordInternationalAirport

**Airport Board** | Roger Morgan\*, chair; Dick Vander Molen\*, vice chair; Steve Heacock; Birgit Klohs; David Slikkers, Ted Vonk\*; Floyd Wilson, Jr. (\* County Commissioner)

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

**Editors** | Tara Hernandez, Marketing & Communications Manager, THernandez@grr.org

Susan Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator, SSherman@grr.org