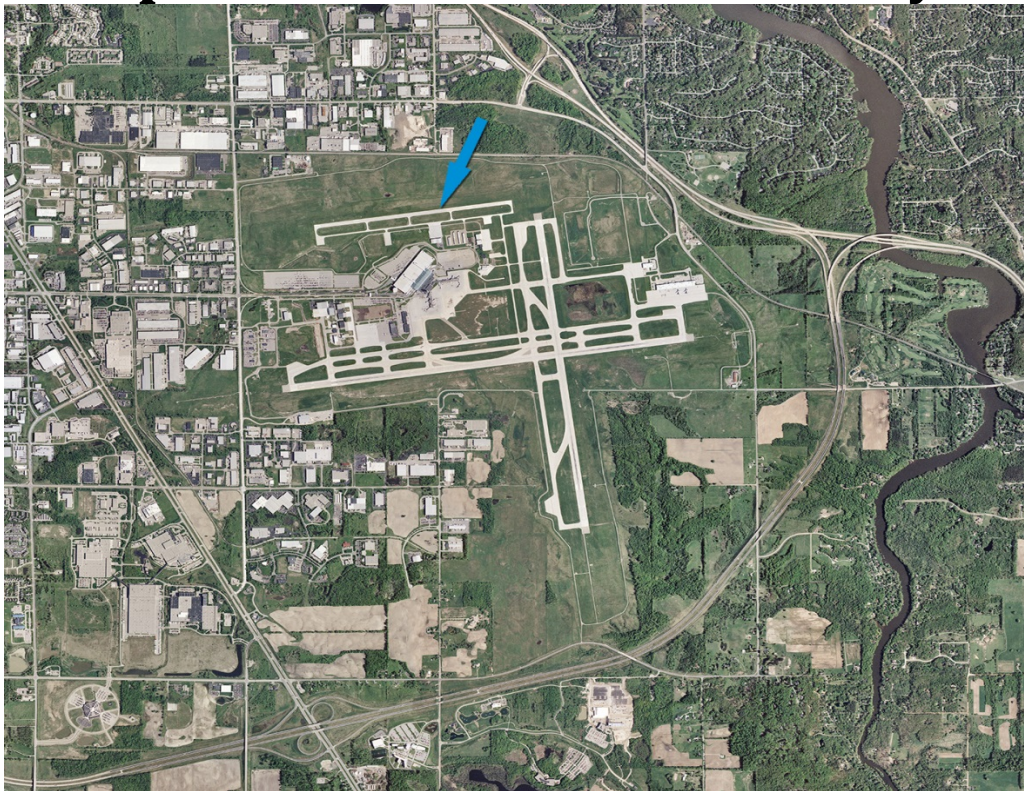


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Gerald R. Ford International Airport To Open Reconstructed Runway



An aerial photo of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport pointing out runway 8L/26R

Grand Rapids, MI – Construction on one of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport's (GFIA) three runways has concluded, and the West Michigan Aviation Academy's (WMAA) flight school will be the first to test the new surface.

Runway 8L/26R is an east-west runway just north of the airport terminal building with a primary purpose of accommodating smaller general aviation and flight training activity. The reconstruction project replaced the concrete runway surface which has degraded over time.

“Our investment in this runway reconstruction project represents our commitment to the general aviation and flight training community at our airport,” said GFIA Executive Director



Brian Ryks. “These improvements were necessary to support previous investments in general aviation facilities and hangars on the north side of our airfield, and will allow flight training activity to expand at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.”

The growing general aviation fleet at GFIA includes young pilots from the West Michigan Aviation Academy, which currently account for over 2,000 annual takeoffs and landings at the airport. **WMAA will make the first flight on the newly reconstructed runway on Friday, October 16th at 1:00 p.m., weather permitting.**

“With the continued growth of our flight training program at West Michigan Aviation Academy, the ability to conduct flight operations on the north parallel will be essential,” said WMAA Dean of Aviation George Pavey. “The use of 8L/26R will allow for our seamless integrating into the air traffic control environment at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The completion of this project will further help WMAA expand its ability to provide the next generation of aviators with the highest quality flight training in a truly world class environment.”

The reconstruction project began on June 22nd and included over 57,000 cubic yards of excavation and over 14,000 tons of asphalt. The total project cost is just over \$4 million with ninety-percent of the funds being covered by the Federal Aviation Administration’s Airport Improvement Program. Additionally, the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport each covered five-percent, respectively.

For more information or to join us as WMAA takes flight on the new runway, contact Tara Hernandez.

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