

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local Schools (and Santa!) Set to Participate in 25th Annual Holiday Music Festival



(Above): East Kentwood's Varsity Voices perform at the 2018 Holiday Music Festival

Grand Rapids, Mich. – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is busy with holiday travel, but local choirs will soon fill the airport with festive cheer for passengers and guests along with an appearance from Jolly Old St. Nick. The 25th Annual Holiday Music Festival will take place the week of December 9-13th in the Airport Grand Hall. Daily performances run from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. but a full schedule is attached, and available on the Airport's Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/FlyGRFord.

Santa Claus will be stopping at the Ford Airport before heading back to the North Pole for some last-minute work with his elves. Santa will be at GFIA on Friday, December 13 from 1-3 p.m. Photos with Santa are free and open to the public, but visitors are encouraged to bring a new, unwrapped toy to donate to Toys for Tots and La Mejor Radio's Annual Toy Drive.

A total of 21 West Michigan choirs are scheduled to sing a variety of holiday music during the festival. Local choirs representing public, charter, and private schools will sing 20-minute song sets throughout the day.

"We know the hustle and bustle of the season can sometimes get in the way of us stopping to enjoy the season's cheer and spirit," said GFIA President & CEO Tory Richardson. "We hope our



passengers and guests will enjoy these performances, and we're sure it will put a smile on their faces."

All festival performances are free and open to the public.

The Airport is currently under construction on Phase II of its Gateway Transformation Project, and along with the busy holiday traffic, lines could be longer than normal. The Airport encourages passengers to arrive at least two hours before their flight, and check flight and parking information at www.flyford.org or through the airport's mobile app.

TSA also encourages passengers to stay up-to-date on the latest travel notices and information about what you can or cannot bring on your flight by visiting: www.tsa.gov. Additionally, travelers should keep these top three tips in mind:

1. **Pack smart.** Prepare for security when packing and ensure that there are no prohibited items in baggage. As always, passengers can bring pies, cakes and other baked goods through the checkpoints; however, liquids such as eggnog and maple syrup, and gels such as preserves and jellies, should go into checked bags. Liquids in carry-on must follow the [3-1-1 liquids rule](#). Download the [MyTSA app](#) or use the "[What can I bring?](#)" tool on tsa.gov. This allows you to type in an item to find out if you can bring it in your carry-on bag, checked bag, either or neither.
2. **Renew your TSA PreCheck membership.** Individuals who obtained TSA PreCheck five years ago are now able to [renew their TSA PreCheck membership online](#). Individuals who do not have TSA PreCheck should [enroll now](#) to get TSA PreCheck benefits, available at more than 200 U.S. airports, in time for their holiday travel. Travelers enrolled in a trusted traveler program, like TSA PreCheck, do not need to remove shoes, laptops, liquids, belts and light jackets. To find the trusted traveler program that best suits your travel needs, use the [DHS trusted traveler comparison tool](#).
3. **Ask for passenger support.** Travelers or families of passengers with disabilities and/or medical conditions may call the [TSA Cares](#) helpline toll free at 855-787-2227 at least 72 hours prior to flying with any questions about screening policies, procedures and to find out what to expect at the security checkpoint. TSA Cares also arranges assistance at the checkpoint.

For interviews or more information, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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About GFIA

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The Airport served over 3.26 million passengers in 2018 and over 9,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 32 major market destinations with more than 140 daily nonstop flights. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. GFIA generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan and employs over 2,000 people. For more information on GFIA visit: www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter: @FlyGRFord