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As May Passenger Numbers Rise, GFIA Expects to see Record Summer Travel



Grand Rapids, Mich. – May 2018 is going down as the busiest May ever at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA), and airport officials foresee the busy month kicking off an even busier summer schedule.

May passenger numbers were up 11.5 percent year-over-year; resulting in the busiest May ever, and marking the first time GFIA has served more than a quarter-million passengers in the month of May.

“We are happy to hear the first four months of increased traffic in 2018 were not just a fluke of winter and spring break traffic, but that our record-breaking passenger counts are continuing into the summer months,” said Gerald R. Ford International Airport President & CEO Jim Gill. “We are seeing increases in the upcoming months with American adding mainline service to Dallas, Delta adding more frequency to New York-LaGuardia, and United’s capacity to Chicago and Denver increasing.”

May 2017 saw 234,300 passengers, while May 2018 topped that in serving 261,281 – the third largest increase ever for the month of May.

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 - the fifth straight year of record growth. GFIA has seen growth in 58 of the past 65 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 (A4A). 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.

Because of the increases both nationally and at GFIA, those traveling are advised to arrive at the airport at least 90-120 minutes before their flight. Updated security screening information, tips on what to pack/not pack, and more are listed at www.tsa.gov

GFIA has invested in new facilities to accommodate the growing traffic by recently completing Phase One of the Gateway Transformation Project – an upgrade in space, retail, food and beverage, restrooms, finishes, amenities, and customer service offerings. The project’s main feature is the consolidated passenger security checkpoint which centralized and combined security screening to one main checkpoint in the Airport. Construction also included new terrazzo flooring, lighting fixtures, pre and post security business centers, a military welcome center, kids play areas, and much more.

Phase Two of the Gateway Transformation Project is slated to begin in Fall 2018 with construction taking place at the airline ticket counters, baggage claim area, and ‘front of house’ area.

“As we continue to grow in traffic it is imperative that our facilities keep up with our passenger demand,” said Gill. “Our passengers keep coming back because we listen to their wants and needs, and as they do we will continue to do our part to improve our amenities, technology, customer service and infrastructure. We are excited to see what the future holds, and we hope to add more growth in the years to come.”

GFIA monthly passenger statistics are available on our website: <http://www.grr.org/history.php>
For more information or interviews, 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 2.8 million passengers in 2017 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 24 major market destinations with more than 120 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 Twitter: @FlyGRFord