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## Ford Airport Marks Sixth Straight Year of Record Growth



**Grand Rapids, Mich.** – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) set an all-time passenger record for 2018, marking the sixth straight year that the Airport has seen record-setting growth.

In 2018, 3,263,234 passengers flew in and out of GFIA, an increase of 16-percent from 2017. The record-setting year was capped in December with an increase of 17-percent year-over-year. With 273,673 total passengers, it marked the busiest December ever. This was the first time the Airport served more than a quarter-million passengers in the month of December.

“We had originally projected to hit the three million mark in 2020. To have that much growth in 2018 was a tremendous accomplishment,” said GFIA Interim President & CEO Brian Picardat. “We couldn’t have done it without our outstanding staff, our loyal passengers, and all of our airline partners and airport tenants.”

Additionally, the Airport has processed over 2.5 billion pounds of cargo since 1967. Cargo totals for 2018 hit 91 million pounds – a 3-percent increase over 2017.

Helping spur the passenger growth, the Ford Airport added six new routes in 2018. Frontier Airlines began nonstop service to Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), Denver International



Airport (DEN), Phoenix-Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX), and Tampa International Airport (TPA). American Airlines began new nonstop service to Miami International Airport (MIA) and Phoenix-Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX).

GFIA has invested in new facilities to accommodate the growing traffic by recently beginning construction on Phase Two of the Gateway Transformation Project – a remodel of the ticketing and baggage claim hall. The Apron Reconstruction Project, a \$30 million project that will repair the terminal apron – the area where aircraft are parked, unloaded or loaded, and refueled, will resume in the Spring.

Allegiant announced they were adding an aircraft base in Grand Rapids which is set to begin operation in June. They have also added three new nonstop destinations to begin in 2019. Service to Sarasota-Bradenton (SRQ) will begin in April. Service to Nashville International Airport (BNA) and Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport (SAV) will begin in June.

“We continue to grow our air service and facilities. On average, airports our size have nonstop service to 17 cities. We are now serving 29,” said Picardat. “We are increasing our capacity and working to accommodate more routes for our passengers.”

GFIA monthly passenger statistics are available on our website: <http://www.flyford.org/history.php>.

For interviews, please contact Alicia Roberts at the direct line above, or call the Airport Communications Center at 616-233-6055.

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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 million passengers in 2018 and over 8,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 29 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](http://www.flyford.org) or follow the airport on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter: @FlyGRFord

