

Getting there is better here.SM

Gerald R. Ford International Airport / 2015 Report to the Community







The Airport's future takes shape.

Today's Gerald R. Ford International Airport is responsive and dynamic. It offers a memorable customer experience, nonstop convenience to more cities and more competitive travel value than ever before.

The year witnessed important physical transformations at the Airport campus. With dramatically renovated concourses and exciting amenities, future travelers will enjoy more comfort and efficiency every time they fly with us. In addition, as part of its new appeal, visitors will experience an exciting portal to the riches and character of West Michigan through art, stores, products and even local "Beer City" brews at our newest eateries.

The airport accelerated its commitment to distinctive features and excellent service. A \$95 million investment in capital improvements over the next five years will ensure the

Gerald R. Ford International Airport delivers world-class travel experiences that include faster check-ins, streamlined security, new retail offerings, and more nonstop and fresh destinations. It all adds up to more compelling reasons to begin every trip locally.

With so much under way, it's also a great time to share our vision and investment with the community. We recently completed a Brand Discovery process to help refine our identity going forward. Those insights led to a new brand promise, reminding travelers that wherever life takes them, *getting there is better here*. At the same time, a new logo was created

to reflect the energetic and contemporary experience of today's Ford Airport. Inspired by the iconic shape of our distinctive canopy, it also suggests an airfoil, the movement of air or even waves breaking on the shoreline of Michigan. This simple, yet artful symbol offers a reminder of the Airport that feels like home, yet reflects a gateway to the world.

We hope you enjoy turning the pages of this year's Report to the Community, with facts, figures and a bird's-eye view of who we are today, where we're headed, and the many ways we're proving that *getting there is better here*.

Getting there is better here, and our numbers prove it.

The Airport continued its pursuit of providing the ultimate travel experience for passengers and visitors in 2014.

True, we've been committed to customer satisfaction for more than 50 years, but the pace of change within the industry and economic conditions challenge us to keep our thinking—and actions—fresh.

Great news. Our results continue to soar along with our fliers. We are thrilled to post a new, all-time passenger record for 2014, with 2,335,105 travelers flying into and out of the GFIA. The Airport's previous record was set in 2011, 2,275,332 passengers.

For trivia buffs, these numbers (and those of the other 49+ years we've been operating) add up to a total of more than 65 million passengers. Gerald R. Ford International Airport Executive Director Brian Ryks, who took the helm in 2012, is pleased.

"Our record-breaking year is a reflection of the thriving West Michigan economy, expanded air service and renewed commitment of area business and leisure travelers to choose the Gerald R. Ford International Airport as their primary airport."

2,335,105



Number of passengers who flew into & out of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport in 2014 – an all-time airport record! Thank you, West Michigan!



The new Concourse B: a first-class experience.

As a wonderful way to welcome a new year, the closing weeks of 2014 saw the finishing touches add modern flair and function throughout the freshly renovated and expanded Concourse B at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. With an official christening in January 2015, a traditional ribbon cutting was celebrated by airport officials and special guests. The concourse renovation project was launched in June 2013. 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, and a new Grand Rapids Magazine Travel Store. A business area featuring an expanded work space and charging stations was also among the changes on Concourse A.

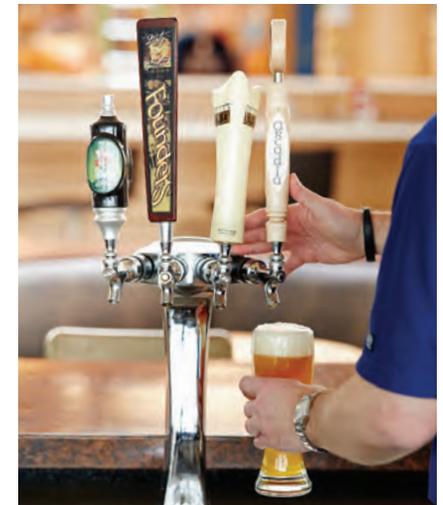
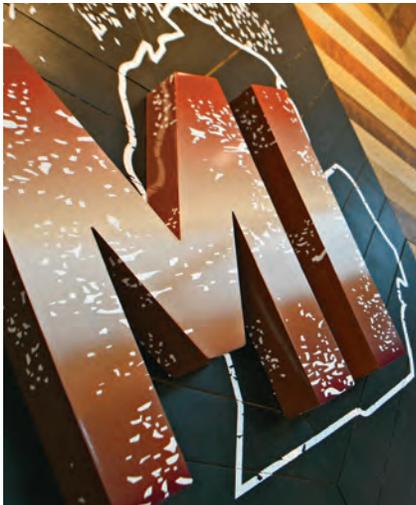
In 2014, it was time for the renovation of Concourse B to take the stage. The “B” features two new airline gates, passenger hold rooms and passenger loading bridges, new restrooms, and the lure of local flavor from Great American Bagel and MI Tap Room Restaurant & Bar. Shoppers can browse the Grand Rapids Magazine Travel Store, loaded with local treasures in addition to standard

Airport shopping fare of snacks, gadgets and reading materials. The inviting setting also shines with eye-catching signage, terrazzo flooring, new carpet and gate seating. “Our primary goal is to give travelers a great experience when transitioning through our airport,” said GFIA 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.”

With our new construction, we were excited to show off our region and celebrate West Michigan’s unique attractions.

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

The investment in renovations and the resulting elevation of the GFIA brand and its growing appeal to fliers, continues to generate a strong return on investment.





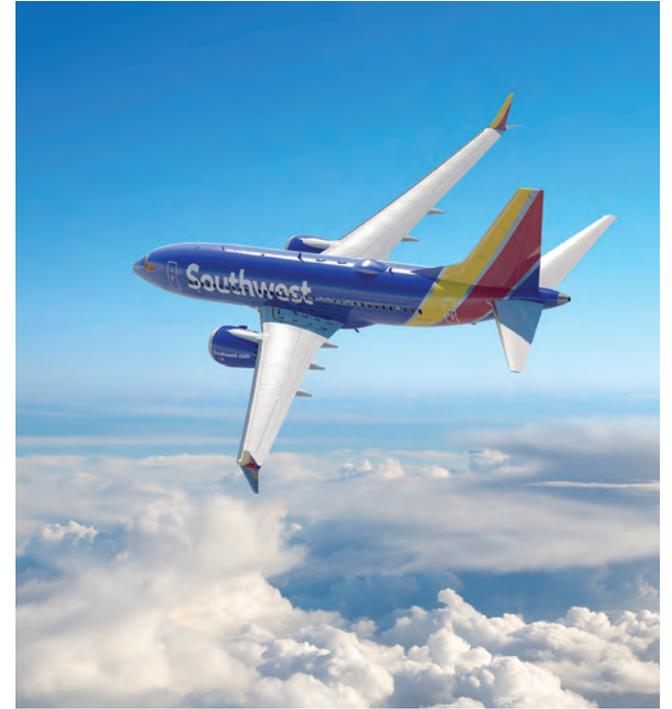
Getting there is better here.

Because there's no stopping us when it comes to convenience.

As part of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport's valued relationships with our airline partners, we are always looking for new connections to add to the convenience of flying the Ford. With the finalization of the American Airlines and US Airways merger, we were able to add two new daily direct flights to our list of desirable destinations. September 2014 brought Charlotte and Philadelphia officially on board, for a total of 22 nonstop destinations.

The Airport celebrated the inaugural flights with a traditional water cannon salute by our outstanding Airport Fire Department. Attendees were treated to a Charlotte and Philadelphia-themed cake, Carolina BBQ and Philly cheesesteak sandwiches. Airport staff, board members, and West Michigan dignitaries gathered to welcome passengers arriving from Charlotte on the first US Airways Express flight 3890.

Regarding our new nonstops, GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks commented, "This new nonstop service to Charlotte and Philadelphia will not only connect West Michigan to two large, thriving cities, but it will also provide convenient connections to many other domestic and international destinations."



One year in LUV.

Our fun-loving partner, Southwest Airlines, showed West Michigan some serious low fare LUV* during its first year serving GFIA. Credited with helping GFIA achieve its seven percent overall fare drop in 2014, we followed Southwest's lead by showing some first-anniversary love right back.

Thank you, Southwest Airlines, for partnering with us for the Ford's best year ever! Here's to many more—and also to many more West Michigan fliers taking advantage of Southwest's low fares, free-flying bags, no change fees and fantastic routes around the country.

**In case you're wondering, "LUV" is the Southwest Airlines stock ticker name.*



120 DAILY NONSTOPS 22 CITIES 1 AIRPORT

Atlanta (ATL) • Baltimore/Washington (BWI) • Charlotte (CLT) • Chicago-O'Hare (ORD) • Cincinnati (CVG) • Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) • Denver (DEN) • Detroit (DTW) • Fort Myers (RSW) • Houston (IAH) • Las Vegas (LAS) • Minneapolis (MSP) • New York-LaGuardia (LGA) • Newark (EWR) • Orlando International (MCO) • Orlando-Sanford (SFB) • Philadelphia (PHL) • Phoenix-Mesa (AZA) • St. Louis (STL) • Tampa International (TPA) • Tampa / St. Petersburg-Clearwater International (PIE) • Washington-Dulles (IAD)

Making the most of our golden year.

A November 2013 open house at the Ford was a festive kickoff to mark our 50th year of service. That event set the stage for a calendar of commemorative activities throughout 2014. Looking back, we did our golden year proud, with special giveaways for Valentine's Day, Mother's and Father's day, and more. We showered passengers with air fare vouchers, gift cards, Grand Rapids Griffins tickets, Picnic Pops tickets and goodies galore—but we also pulled out all the stops for a couple major events that captured our spirit, 50 years and climbing.

Passenger Appreciation Days.

Passenger Appreciation Days represent an annual don't-miss event. The "Days" had special significance as part of our 50th anniversary festivities. We decked the Grand Hall in our beloved tropical theme. We hosted the wildly popular paper airplane flying contest. We served up games, food and great giveaways for thousands of spring breakers. And then, we drew three winners who received travel vouchers, compliments of the GFIA Board of Directors. We really appreciate our passengers. You can't beat this kind of high-flying fun.



The “Pack Your Bags” Contest Heated Up Summer Travel.

Gerald R. Ford International Airport created another way to give back to our passengers and include them in some fun. In a partnership with our friends at the St. Louis Airport (STL), we flew six people, along with DJ “Gravy” from Grand Rapids’ HOT 105.3 FM, to St. Louis for a weekend away! Winners received roundtrip airfare, hotel accommodations, transportation, a tour of the St. Louis Arch, and suite tickets to a St. Louis Cardinals game. The feedback? The winners said they had an amazing time discovering St. Louis and using our nonstop Southwest service to STL!



The GFIA 50th Anniversary Airport Day and Plane Pull.

If you missed out on this fantastic community event, we’re happy to fill you in. On July 19, 2014, the Airport hosted a high-energy Airport Day, featuring aircraft displays, skydivers, music, food, and giveaways. One of the main attractions featured some pumped up teams for a good cause: The Plane Pull! Teams of up to 25 people competed to see which could pull a 222,000 pound FedEx plane down a taxiway the farthest and fastest. Plenty of fans joined to cheer them on, including NHL veteran Mike Knuble and American Idol’s Maurice Townsend, who performed the national anthem. Over \$2,000 was raised for Special Olympics of Michigan.



Did you know?
FedEx moved
81,333,134
lbs. of cargo
in 2014.



Getting there is better here. Especially when Santa is involved.

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) has always enjoyed spreading the holiday spirit. This year was no exception. After decking the halls, GFIA celebrated the 20th anniversary of hosting the classic Holiday Music Festival. True to its history, this musical mood-lifter featured Christmas music performances by 18 area middle and high school choirs representing public, charter, and private schools. The young carolers delighted airport visitors with song sets throughout the day. Nothing says happy holidays like a plane ticket and a merry melody!

Airport staff also arranged for a special visit from Kris Kringle. In the spirit of charity, Santa’s appearance capitalized on his popularity, with families donating food items as their kids whispered their wishes. Together, Santa and his friends collected a sleigh-full of non-perishables. The food was donated to Catholic Charities West Michigan’s food pantry, Loaves & Fishes.

Getting there is better here ...even in winter.

The Snow Masters

In 2014, the Ford Airport's crews were deservedly acknowledged for their Herculean efforts. The International Aviation Snow Symposium recognized GFIA with its Balchen/Post award for Outstanding Achievement in Airport Snow & Ice Control.

Of the award, Executive Director Brian Ryks said, "This is a tremendous achievement for our staff, and I cannot say enough about the hard working airport operations and field maintenance crews who are the recipients of this award. We are very proud to be recognized as the best among our peers."



The Snow Wolf

In 2014, the Airport purchased a beast of a snow blower called the Snow Wolf. Our visionary maintenance crew worked for more than two years to add the massive machine to its arsenal. Field Maintenance Supervisor Jeff McNally credits Airport officials for recognizing the importance of investing in the snow-blowing giant. Their efforts also make the Ford the first airport in the US to blast winter with the Snow Wolf.

Redefining the term "snow blower," the Wolf is more like a snow-breathing dragon, capable of gobbling up tons of snow and launching it over 140 feet and clearing a 7,500-foot path in an hour.

The welcome addition joins an impressive fleet to ensure that traveling from the Ford is the safest, most reliable choice in the region.

While the 2014-15 winter was a big deal, Grand Rapids emerged relatively unscathed compared to last year's record-setting 112.6 inches. Across the continental US, Syracuse, NY, led the way with 117.1 inches. In a surprise twist, Anchorage, AK, saw just 20.7 inches (49.0 inches average) and Fargo, ND, measured just 15.8 inches (44 inches average).

Snowfall 2014-15

117.1"
Syracuse, NY

77.9"
Grand Rapids, MI

20.7"
Anchorage, AK

15.8"
Fargo, ND



Getting there is better here. Because we're ready!

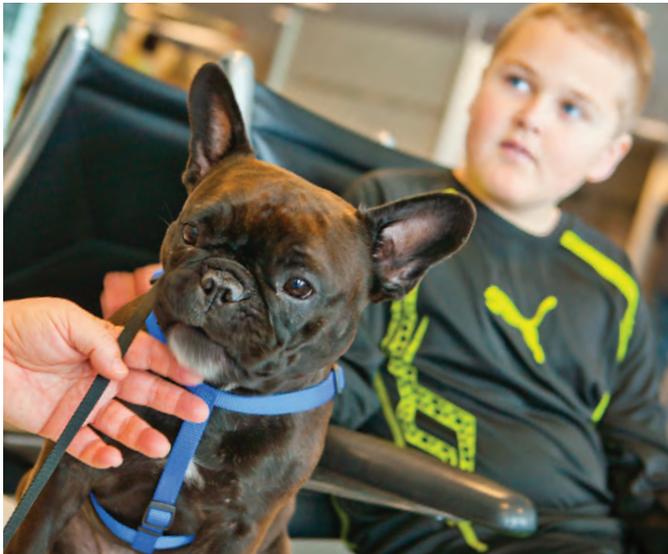
The Ford Airport conducts full-scale emergency exercises every three years to comply with FAA regulations. Our preparedness for any emergency situation was confirmed during a series of May 2014 exercises. Many Airport security departments and local police joined community partners to help us conduct our drill, including Lacks Enterprises, Inc., the Kent County Local Emergency Planning Committee, and Cascade Township Fire Department. We also enlisted help from multiple other supporting fire departments, EMS agencies, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Delta Air Lines, and Davenport University.

We pride ourselves on our superior safety record, but it's always good to know GFIA is ready for anything. We couldn't do it without the help of our partners.

Gentle Fur in Action.

Three Barks for "GFIA's" First Anniversary.

The Ford Airport is dog-gone friendly, and we're proud of it. August 2014 marked the one-year anniversary of GFIA: Gentle Fur in Action, our therapy dog program. The program had launched with a single, simple goal: to invite therapy dogs to visit with Airport travelers. An instant success, the Airport's four-legged friends eased the stress of flying, banished the boredom of waiting and made the Ford the friendliest Airport around!



9

Number of therapy dogs dedicated to passenger comfort at GFIA.



Chase Jensen spends quality time with therapy dog Fiona Rose.

Case in Point: Paw Power.

At age 10, Chase Jensen likes to go places. But he hasn't always enjoyed the process of getting there. Chase has a condition called Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), which makes him sensitive to too much sensory input; e.g. light, motion and noise. Even a well-organized, well-appointed, friendly hub like the Gerald R. Ford International Airport can't avoid sensory inputs in abundance.

Knowing that the unavoidable stimulation of travel could cause tremendous anxiety in their son, his parents dreaded getting him through an airport. In 2013, all of that changed, thanks to the Airport's Gentle Fur in Action therapy dog program.

As the Jensens arrived at the Ford to depart on a family vacation, they met up with Gunner, a black Lab/greyhound mix and his handler. Within seconds, Chase was having so much fun with the dog that the noise and activity of the airport faded away.

Now, whenever it's time for a getaway, the Jensens call the Airport to arrange for a canine buddy to accompany Chase from check-in until boarding. Chase has now met many of the therapy dogs, including English bulldog Fiona Rose; European Great Dane (140-pounds of love), Pavlov; and his original therapy dog, Gunner. It allows the whole family to relax with a stress-free airport experience.

What's Ahead for the GFIA Gentle Fur In Action Program.

The Airport expanded the presence of therapy dogs in 2014 and looks forward to the "pawsitive" impact on the passenger experience. These affectionate companions are here for everyone; and unlike service dogs, the GFIA dogs encourage petting and snuggles, and have plenty of love for anyone whose travel is made better when it starts here.

The 2014 expansion welcomed seven owner/trainers and a total of nine therapy dogs to the Airport. This means plenty of regularly scheduled pups will be roaming the Grand Hall, ticketing areas and concourses with their trainers, eager to serve as tail wagging welcome committees.

Getting there is better here. Especially when there is a special mission!

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport showed our heart, along with the Patriot Guard Riders of West Michigan in 2014, as we assembled with Blue and Gold Star Mothers local chapters to complete our "Operation Handshake" mission. It was a rewarding day for all of us, as we welcomed arriving military members and veterans home for the Thanksgiving holiday. Turkey and pumpkin pie may have been on their minds, but thankfulness for their service was on the minds of all of us who attended.



The Patriot Guard Riders is a national, nonprofit volunteer group committed to "showing dignity and respect at services honoring Fallen Military Heroes, First Responders and Honorably Discharged Veterans." The Airport shares its commitment to welcome active duty military as they arrive home from tours of duty or on leave. Blue Star Mothers is a national, nonprofit organization of women who have children serving in the United States military. Gold Star Mothers is a national, nonprofit organization of women who have lost a son or daughter serving in the United States armed forces.

Lights, camera, action!

GFIA in the movies.

There are many memorable highlights of 2014. Among those that rank high in fun factor—and spreading positive awareness of the Airport—was our role in the James Ponsoldt movie *The End of the Tour*, filmed last March. For more than 14 hours, a movie crew of over a hundred people and a cast of Hollywood actors shot scenes for the film.

GFIA staff worked with the cast and crew for months leading up to the shoot and the Airport executives fully embraced the opportunity. Recalls GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks, “We were excited to be featured in this film.

We fully support the film industry and love to see it grow right here in West Michigan. It is a unique experience working with the cast and crew to transform our airport for their scenes.”

The film shoot was kept under wraps until it was finally under way. Airport visitors who happened to pass through on the day of filming received a firsthand glimpse into the world of Hollywood filmmaking.

After completing scenes, which featured actors Jesse Eisenberg, Jason Segel, and Joan Cusack, Location Manager John Johnston said, “We couldn’t have been in

better hands. We really appreciate the hospitality and true enthusiasm of everyone at the Ford International Airport. I look forward to coming back in the future.”

GFIA will never take its eyes off of our mission to remain one of the top airports in the US, but it was a nice change of pace when the lights of Tinseltown couldn’t take their eyes off of us.



Getting there is better here with the expansion of TSA’s speedy Pre✓™ program.

The popular TSA Pre✓™ program added two new TSA Pre✓™ checkpoints at GFIA in 2014. The TSA Pre✓™ now allows any US citizen or lawful permanent resident to apply for “express” pre-flight security screening.

2014 TSA Pre✓™ Airlines at GFIA

American Airlines
Delta Air Lines
Southwest Airlines
United Airlines
US Airways

West Michigan Aviation Academy continues to fly high.

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport has experienced plenty of limelight in its recent years of innovative transformation. It is rewarding to see that our airport campus partner and educational innovator, West Michigan Aviation Academy, is enjoying its time to shine, as well. The charter school that congratulated its first graduating class in June 2014 continues to grow – in size and reputation. With enrollment outpacing space in its current facility, the academy has planned its fourth expansion, to accommodate up to 600 students in Grand Rapids.

The project adds an additional 15,000 square feet to the school, including an airplane hangar. Other features include additional

classrooms, labs and collaborative workspace. With a significant global need for more qualified aviation and aerospace talent, the sky really is the limit for the school and its students. WMAA's unique approach was also the subject of features in both the Detroit Free Press and USA Today Weekend editions in June 2014.

The photo gallery story in USA Today spoke highly of the academy's aviation-focused backdrop and its strong emphasis on a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) curriculum. In a separate story, the Detroit Free Press noted that the West Michigan Aviation Academy is the only charter school of its kind (featuring key aviation-industry skills) currently operating in the US.



In addition, the school was notified of \$150,000 in scholarship funding to support graduates attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University over the next 20 years. Donors Mr. and

Mrs. Louis Seno Jr. announced the scholarship program in December. The couple also donated Seno's late father's personal aircraft to be displayed at the school.

How to Apply

1. Apply online at www.TSA.gov
2. Pay the non-refundable \$85 fee
3. Visit an application center (Bring: valid picture ID, and citizenship/immigration documentation)

TSA Pre✓™ Member Benefits

- ✓ Leave shoes on
- ✓ Leave belt on
- ✓ Leave lightweight jacket on
- ✓ Leave 3-1-1 compliant liquids in bag
- ✓ Leave laptop in bag

West Michigan TSA Pre✓™ Application Center Locations*

976 3 Mile Road NW Walker, MI 49544-8203

4788 Grand Haven Road Muskegon, MI 49441-5514

3030 S. 9th Street Suite 2C Kalamazoo, MI 49009-9455

811 Sunnyside Drive Suite I Cadillac, MI 49601-7003

*For a complete list of U.S. enrollment centers, visit <https://universalenroll.dhs.gov/locator>



Dear friends of the Ford,

There is no question about it — 2014 was a great year to be part of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The ongoing modernization of our architecture and interiors does more than change our look. It is a visible reminder of what is still to come and a reflection of the energy and vibrancy of our region. As the airline industry continues to open the world as far as anyone desires to venture, the Ford Airport continues to deliver that possibility to the region and beyond, in new ways.

Our rebranding campaign is another example of our intention to modernize our facility and your experience in every way. There are so many opportunities to demonstrate how and why *"Getting there is better here."* We hope the new branding conveys the contagious excitement we feel as we aim to be a worldwide benchmark of an extraordinary airport experience.

The Airport Board of Directors approval in October of our \$95 million, five-year capital improvement plan is the next step in unveiling our bright future.

It is our commitment to continue to improve and invest in our region's airport each and every day.

The record-breaking passenger numbers of 2014 continue into 2015 as this Report to the Community goes to press. We are ready to facilitate and support that growth and what's yet to come, and we're rolling up our sleeves with a demanding slate of "next steps."

We continue to build upon our momentum to do more. We believe our new promise is the precursor of great things. Because *Getting there is better here.*

Thank you for your continued support and sharing in our journey.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Roger C. Morgan in black ink.

Roger Morgan
Chairman, Airport Board of Directors

Handwritten signature of Brian D. Ryks, A.A.E. in black ink.

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

Board

Policy and general oversight of GFIA are the responsibility of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board, a seven-member body appointed by the Kent County Board of Commissioners. The Airport Board is composed of three Kent County commissioners, three Kent County citizen members, and one citizen member from a county other than Kent in the West Michigan combined statistical area, each serving staggered three-year terms.

Roger Morgan, Chairman*	Birgit Klohs	Floyd Wilson Jr.
	Steve Heacock	*Kent County Commissioner
Richard Vander Molen, Vice Chairman*	David Slikkers	
	Theodore Vonk*	

	2014*	2013	2012
OPERATING REVENUE			
Ground Transportation	\$17,820,741	\$16,780,489	\$14,878,412
Airline Payments	11,475,779	10,267,491	10,899,720
Air Cargo	2,493,862	2,459,388	2,638,184
General Aviation	1,511,647	1,421,181	1,382,038
Concessions	1,241,665	1,005,550	863,046
Other	1,298,737	1,255,820	1,211,745
Total Operating Revenue	\$35,842,431	\$33,189,919	\$31,873,145
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Personnel Costs	\$8,094,180	\$7,824,883	\$7,917,842
Supplies	854,579	898,520	728,333
Contractual	9,556,585	9,402,739	8,454,749
Total Cash Expenses	\$18,505,344	\$18,126,142	\$17,100,924
Operating Income	\$17,337,087	\$15,063,777	\$14,772,221
Depreciation**	(\$16,446,327)	(\$16,539,908)	(\$16,523,125)
Net Operating Income (Loss)	\$890,760	(\$1,476,131)	(\$1,750,904)

* Unaudited figures. A comprehensive Annual Financial Report, including audited figures for 2014, will be available from the Kent County Department of Aeronautics as of June 2015. ** Depreciation is a non-cash item.

Executive Staff

The Airport is managed and operated by the executive director, deputy executive director, a management team heading the Airport's primary functional areas, and a 100-member Department of Aeronautics staff.

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

Phillip E. Johnson, A.A.E.
Deputy Executive Director

Brian Picardat, A.A.E.
Finance and Administration Director

Robert Benstein, A.A.E.
Public Safety and Operations Director

Thomas Ecklund, P.E.
Facilities Management Director

Tara Hernandez
Marketing and Communications Manager



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