



For Immediate Release

Contact: Stephen Clark,
Ford Airport, 206.450.8962

or
Mary Ann Sabo
Sabo PR, 616.485.1432

Ford Airport, Fire Chief Receive ARFF Working Group 2020 Outstanding Service Award

Team Recognized for Exceptional Dedication and Outreach

Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 11, 2020 – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport and now-retired Fire Chief Joseph Dancz have received the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Working Group’s 2020 Outstanding Service Award.

Now in its 31st year, the ARFF Working Group annually recognizes exceptional airports and firefighters at its International Educational Conference & Training Symposium. Dancz was instrumental in the coordination and organization of ARFF’s 30th annual conference, which took place in 2019 at the DeVos Place Convention Center, elevating the profile of West Michigan and the Ford Airport within the international organization.

The Outstanding Service Award description read in part: “Although Grand Rapids was not on our radar, Chief Dancz and his airport made a convincing effort to check it out. We unanimously decided it was an excellent location for our 30th Annual Conference. The success of this conference was greatly due to commitment from Chief Dancz and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.”

Dancz served the Ford Airport for more than 30 years, including 3 years as fire chief before retiring earlier this year. Tony Gutierrez currently serves as the department’s interim airport rescue and firefighting chief.

“Collaborating with the ARFF and hosting the 30th annual conference last year was a great experience, it’s an honor for Joe Dancz and the Airport to be recognized for that work,” said Lisa Carr public safety and operations director for Ford Airport. “The airport takes pride in providing an exceptional guest experience. Passengers and visitors don’t often see the airport’s firefighters, but this recognition truly demonstrates how hard the team works behind the scenes to ensure everyone’s safety.”

The Ford Airport additionally recently completed two days of training exercises, including a full-scale simulation of a plane crash that brought together firefighters and first responders from 12 area agencies. This exercise was a Federal Aviation Administration-mandated drill and one of the many crisis response trainings that take place regularly as part of the Airport’s preparedness strategy.

About the Ford Airport

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is the second busiest airport in Michigan, serving business and leisure travelers with nonstop and connecting flights on six airlines. The Ford Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. For more information, visit www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @FlyGRFord.

About the ARFF Working Group

The ARFF Working Group is the largest professional organization of aviation firefighters and industry experts worldwide. The organization works to promote the science and improve the methods of aviation fire protection and prevention.

#