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Customer Service Is A Top Priority

Customer service, by its very nature, means different things to different people. It can be objective, measured against a set of standards, or subjective, what you personally like and dislike. But one thing's for sure...we all know when it's done wrong and when it's done right.

That's why we were honored to receive notice in February that Gerald R. Ford International Airport was recognized among the top five airports in the world in the "Best Airports by Size: 2-5 million passengers" category as part of Airport Council International's 2013 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards. The annual ASQ Awards recognize and reward the best airports in the world according to the Airports Council International (ACI) ASQ passenger satisfaction survey. Since its creation in 2006, the ASQ Survey has become the world's leading airport passenger satisfaction benchmark. In 2013 over 350,000 passengers were interviewed prior to boarding their flight and asked to rate their satisfaction with the airport.

"Customer service is a top priority and we are thrilled to be recognized as one of the top performers. We are dedicated to providing a first-class experience for the traveling public."

*~ Brian Ryks, A.A.E.
GFIA Executive Director*

Far from the casual, "How was your experience today?" questionnaire, the ASQ survey uses a strict methodology specifically designed to provide accurate, comparable results. Both the face-to-face data collection and analysis processes follow specific quality control guidelines and, each year, a number of airports are randomly selected for on-site auditing to ensure compliance and validate the results. Survey questions elicit feedback from passengers on 34 key service indicators covering accessibility, the check-in process, security, wayfinding, the airport facilities and environment.



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Art Program Takes Flight

A splash of color and creativity now adorn GFIA as a new art partnership began in February 2014. The Airport is working with Kendall College of Art and Design, Ferris State University (KCAD) on rotating art throughout various spaces in the airport terminals, concourses and parking structures.

The art is displayed in pre-security areas as well as the parking garage and the Grand Hall. Various walkways and hallways will soon don artist works as well.

"We are very excited about our new partnership with KCAD to curate art throughout our terminal facility," said GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks. "This community partnership will further our efforts to bring local and regional culture into the airport that can be viewed by thousands of people passing through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport each day."



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Experience Grand Rapids, GFIA & Steelcase, Inc. Partner to Unveil New Visitor Information Area

Steelcase, Inc., a global leader in the office furniture industry aims to establish great experiences and make every moment more meaningful for people, wherever they are. When teamed up with additional local partners, that is exactly what they have done for the millions of visitors that pass through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport each year! Experience Grand Rapids, The Gerald R. Ford International Airport and Steelcase have collaborated for several months to redesign the visitor information area at the airport, and the official ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Friday, March 14, 2014.

The new visitor area is a comfortable and convenient place to accommodate travelers. With a variety of spaces within the area, visitors can relax and browse on provided iPads, or use the interactive walk-up screen to quickly find what they need such as area restaurants, hotel information, cab services, weather, etc. For those who prefer a more personal touch, or for those in-depth inquiries, there is a friendly ambassador at the ready to help. The design thinking and furniture for the new visitor space were provided by Steelcase.



Cutting the ribbon (from left to right) are Experience Grand Rapids Board Chair Tim Pietryga, Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board Chair Roger Morgan, Steelcase, Inc. Community Relations Director Deb Bailey, and GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks.

“This space serves as a nice touch point for travelers to be welcomed to West Michigan”

*~ Deb Bailey
Steelcase, Inc.
Community Relations Director*

“We see this new information center as an attractive, purposeful landing place for people to either get a great first impression of the area or to have a positive, helpful experience at GFIA and in West Michigan,” said Deb Bailey, community relations director, Steelcase, Inc. “This space serves as a nice touch point for travelers to be welcomed to West Michigan, speak one-on-one with someone ready to lend a hand, wait for

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Passenger Appreciation Days...The Tradition Continues

As West Michigan residents begin packing shorts, swimsuits and dreaming of the sun and fun that awaits them for spring break, we begin preparing the grandest send-off party of the year. We start by setting a festive mood with tropical decorations and some great beach tunes. Then, we fill our hospitality station with complimentary refreshments, bagels, muffins and snacks for folks to sit and enjoy or to grab and go as travelers head to their gates. Patrons could also select from give-away items like pens, activity books and crayons, can coolers, Frisbees, tote bags, and more.



Next we staff the station with warm and friendly employees who enjoy interacting with our patrons, engaging passengers and visitors in the games and activities that are available and sending folks off with a smile. But what's a party without prizes? We had those too! We held a drawing for a \$150 travel voucher (one name drawn each day) compliments of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board.

Of course, our Passenger Appreciation Days celebration would not be complete without the ever-popular paper airplane flying contest! Pilots of all ages enjoy creating their very own aircraft and then launching it down our indoor “runway” in hopes that their airplane will soar into a drawing for one of three \$100 gift cards to Rivertown Crossings Mall, compliments of the Airport Board.

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“Customer service is a top priority for our entire team at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and we are thrilled to be recognized as one of the top performers from ACI’s Airport Service Quality,” said GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks. “We are dedicated to ensuring continued progress in this area as we make significant investments in personnel, services and facilities that are focused on providing a first-class experience for the traveling public.”

This achievement is shared by the airlines, parking and transportation services, curb front security personnel, sky caps, visitor information staff, Transportation Security Administration, food & beverage and retail shopping, personal service concessionaires, and the Kent County Department of Aeronautics...basically anyone you may encounter on a trip through the airport.

As we continue to make improvements to customer service offerings at GFIA, we welcome your feedback on how we are doing. If you aren’t one of the lucky passengers surveyed, feel free to contact us with your suggestions. After all, some of the best ideas come from those who use the facilities and have firsthand experience traveling through the airport.

More Great Customer Service News

If you have traveled through Concourse A in the past several months, you have likely seen and heard the evidence of construction activities. (And may we take a moment to thank you for your patience!) While not all of the new areas are completed, we are pleased to announce the opening of the new Grand Rapids Magazine Travel Store located post-security.

Formerly, the retail space on Concourse A was a small kiosk-style area where you could pick up a packaged snack or beverage. There was a limited selection of reading material available along with a few travel-related items.

The new store, however, offers much, much more. You will find coolers packed full of your favorite beverages, a wide variety of snack options, and a large array of books and magazines. There are also some unique West Michigan souvenirs and Michigan-made products. There’s a good chance you’ll find exactly what you need before boarding your flight.



At GFIA, your retail shopping experience is brought to you by the World Duty Free Group which operates 550 stores in 100 airports located in 21 countries around the world.

TSA Pre✓™ Expands At GFIA

In February, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) expanded its popular TSA Pre✓™ operations for travelers flying out of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Pre-check is now available to passengers flying on Delta Air Lines via Checkpoint A and on Southwest, United and American Airlines via Checkpoint B.

The TSA Pre✓™ program provides enhanced security and added traveler convenience by allowing approved passengers to keep their shoes, light outerwear and belt on at checkpoints. In addition, pre-check passengers can keep their laptop in its case and their 3-1-1 compliant liquids/gels bag in a carry-on in select screening lanes.

“We’re pleased to expand TSA Pre✓™ and other risk-based procedures to an additional location at Grand Rapids which will both strengthen transportation security while improving the passenger experience,” said GRR TSA Federal Security Director Max Harnish.

TSA also recently launched a TSA Pre✓™ application program, allowing more U.S. citizens to enroll in TSA Pre✓™. The application process allows U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to go through a pre-enrollment process online at www.TSA.gov and visit an application center to provide biographic information (e.g. name, date of birth, address, etc.), fingerprints, payment and valid required identity and citizenship/immigration documentation. There is an application fee, and all TSA Pre✓™ program applicants must visit an application center in-person to verify their identity and provide documentation to confirm their citizenship/immigration status as well as to provide fingerprints. Interested applicants can visit <https://universalenroll.dhs.gov/locator> to find the enrollment center nearest them.



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baggage, sit and unwind and gain easy access to information through smart technology in a relaxed, modern setting. It is an exciting addition to this airport in our wonderful, ever-growing city.”

Visitor information services are provided in partnership with Experience Grand Rapids, the local convention and visitors bureau. In addition to ambassadors who staff the information area, roaming ambassadors travel throughout the airport with their distinct green jackets and iPads, helping to answer patron’s questions. The visitor information area is staffed from 9:00 a.m. until 11 p.m. seven days a week.



“This energized and very functional space for visitor interaction is much more reflective of the overall Grand Rapids brand,” said Experience Grand Rapids President Doug Small. “With world-class infrastructure and design from our partners at Steelcase and the ability to serve today’s technologically advanced traveler, visitor satisfaction at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport will move to the next level.”

In addition to the newly redesigned visitor information area, the airport offers two business centers that were refreshed with new paint, desks, chairs and graphics by Steelcase, Inc. These business centers are located in the Grand Hall near the end of each concourse.



“Steelcase does an incredible job of making sure our business and leisure travelers feel comfortable when they step foot in our airport,” said GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks. “We are thrilled to have partnered with Steelcase and Experience Grand Rapids to redesign the visitor information area. The new space will be enjoyed by millions of passengers and visitors each year, and provide our Experience Grand Rapids ambassador staff a wonderful area to assist West Michigan travelers.”

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The initial installation from Kendall College of Art and Design, Ferris State University (KCAD) features the work of Graduate Students Laurie Hunt and Matt Gubancsik. Ms. Hunt’s prints focus on Michigan lakes and speak of environmental concerns and the fragility of our delicate ecosystem. Mr. Gubancsik’s photos explore environments that are illusion and fabricated, but are informed by a sense of awe and the sublime as found in nature.

Two dimensional and three dimensional works from a variety of both KCAD’s Undergraduate and Graduate Programs will be included in the displays. New artwork and display locations are in the works so keep an eye out for new installations on your next visit to the airport.

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Our winners for 2014 were:

Travel Voucher Drawing:

- Dani Naum of Grand Rapids
- William Ruiz of Allegan, and
- Harley Kline-Scheltmeyer of Lowell

Paper Airplane Drawing:

- Alex Cradle of Grand Haven
- Maureen Whitney of Three Rivers, and
- Morelia Garcia of Grand Rapids

CONGRATULATIONS to all our winners!

We would be remiss if we didn’t give a huge shout out to our food and beverage concessionaire HMS Host for their help with all the wonderful refreshments they help us provide! But, most importantly, we say thank you to all our passengers who include Gerald R. Ford International Airport in their travel plans throughout the year. For those who traveled on our special days, we sincerely hope that Passenger Appreciation Days was just the beginning of a wonderful Spring Break vacation. To all of our passengers at GFIA, we know you have choices for your air travel, and we thank you for choosing your local airport!

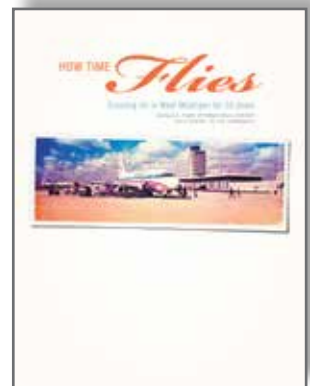


Hot Off The Press!

The 2014 *Report to the Community* is hot off the press. The *Report* is an annual publication of the Kent County Department of Aeronautics that recaps the previous year’s activities and shares information about upcoming projects and goals.

This year’s *Report*, titled “How Time Flies” offers a unique look back over the past 50 years and brings you up to speed on what’s new at the airport to give you a sense of how we are working to continually improve our service in West Michigan.

The *Report to the Community* is available on the airport website at www.FlyFord.org. If you would like to receive a printed copy of the *Report*, please contact the Department of Aeronautics offices at (616) 233-6000.



Lights, Camera, Action! Gerald R. Ford International Airport Serves as Location for Filming of “The End of the Tour”

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport had hundreds of extra visitors in early March as the James Ponsoldt movie, “The End of the Tour,” was filmed on location.

A crew of over 100 people worked for over fourteen hours at GFIA, and filmed in various locations throughout the airport. Locations included the economy parking lot, the parking ramp, the airfield, the Concourse B hallway as well as two vacant ticket counter areas. Grand Rapids was standing in as both the Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago O’Hare airports with two different scenes created among the location.

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport staff and security worked with the cast and crew for several weeks leading up to the filming to scout out locations, times for filming and acclimate “The End of the Tour” crew with strict security rules and regulations.

“We are excited to be featured in this film,” said GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks. “We fully support the film industry and love to see the industry grow right here in West Michigan. It is a unique experience working with the cast and crew to transform our airport for their scenes.”

Actors Jesse Eisenberg, Jason Segel and Joan Cusack were at the airport for filming. “The End of the Tour,” is a biographical drama film based on David Lipsky’s 2010 book, *Although of Course You End Up Becoming Yourself*. Eisenberg is playing Lipsky while Segel was cast as David Foster Wallace, an American novelist.

“It was a really smooth shoot at GRR. Realizing that the airport’s first priority is its passengers and their safety and convenience, we wanted to show the airport we were willing to accommodate and alleviate their concerns,” said “The End of the Tour” Location Manager John Johnston. “Once we met on that level, the airport administration welcomed us and made our work day flow smoothly. They were behind us 100% and the airport staff supported every move we had at the airport. We couldn’t have been in better hands. We really appreciate the hospitality and true enthusiasm of everyone at GRR. I look forward to coming back in the future.”

The actors and crew also utilized the Gerald R. Ford International Airport for its main intention – travel. Location manager John Johnston as well as Director James Ponsoldt and other crew members were in and out of Grand Rapids for several months leading up to filming to prepare and scout the city.



Before departing Grand Rapids, Jason Segel (left) and Jesse Eisenberg paused for a photo with a few of the Delta Airlines staff.

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News In Brief

- » The Kent County Department of Aeronautics' Comprehensive Annual Financial Report has once again been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This Certificate is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government unit and its management. This is the 20th consecutive year that the Department has received this honor.
- » The next three meetings of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board will be held Wednesday, May 28, June 25, and July 30, 2014 beginning at 8:30 am. All meetings will be held in the International Room at the passenger terminal building unless otherwise posted on our website at www.FlyFord.org. The meetings are open to the public.

**Gerald R. Ford International Airport
50th Anniversary Open House
PRESENTS**

PLANE PULL CHALLENGE

To Benefit Special Olympics Michigan

Saturday, July 19, 2014, 9:00 am
Register Online at:
www.firstgiving.com/somicivic/2014-grand-rapids-plane-pull

Other Activities will include
Static Aircraft and Equipment Displays | Kids Activities
NASCAR vehicle | Food Tent | And MORE!

Special Olympics Michigan

50 YEARS
1964-2014
GERALD R. FORD
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PLANE PULL CHALLENGE

Airport Connections is the quarterly newsletter of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. We encourage our readers to contact us with comments, suggestions, and submissions. If you wish to be added to the mailing list for Airport Connections, please contact the Kent County Department of Aeronautics:

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