



# AirportConnections

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## Direct to the City of Brotherly Love

Beginning August 8, US Airways will fly nonstop from GFIA to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, complementing the airline's existing nonstop service between Grand Rapids and Pittsburgh. This brings the total number of nonstop destinations from GFIA to 15 – and also significantly increases the number of available connecting opportunities.

"This new flight will not only bring our customers in Grand Rapids nonstop service to one of



the largest business and tourism destinations on the East Coast, but also provide convenient connections to many of our Caribbean destinations," says Andrew P. Nocella, US Airways vice president of network and revenue management.

The 50-seat Canadair Regional Jet, operated by US Airways Express carrier Mesa Airlines, will depart Grand Rapids at 7:00 a.m. and arrive in Philadelphia at 8:41 a.m. Return flights will depart Philadelphia at 8:05 p.m. and arrive in Grand Rapids at 10:16 p.m.

Whether it's a walking tour of the oldest colonial city or a cruise through the waters of the Caribbean, GFIA and US Airways are teaming up to get you there quickly and comfortably. →

## Behind the Scenes with the Police and Firefighters of GFIA

In light of increased aviation security and more passengers than ever passing through GFIA, Airport police officers and firefighters play a crucial role in protecting the health and safety of everyone at the Airport.

Dave Stricklen, Chief of Airport Police, says, "Everything we do as a department has some relationship to the safety and security of the traveling public."

Staffed with 20 officers and one clerk, the department's primary responsibilities include the security of the airfield and terminal, law enforcement support at the passenger screening checkpoints and assisting airport patrons. The department also responds to traffic accidents, investigates any suspicious activity and handles all background security checks of Airport employees.

The upcoming election is likely to result in some additional responsibilities, too. Says Stricklen, "When presidential candidates visit, our officers work side by side with Secret Service. We are responsible for everything that occurs on the airfield."

Stricklen is proud of his crew's interpersonal skills, as well. "Our officers recently had to deliver a death notice to a family waiting at GFIA," he says. "Afterwards, we received a very nice note about the care and consideration our officers had shown at such a difficult time."

What's more, the department is training to receive recognition from CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies). "Achieving accredited status



With 50 years of combined service at GFIA, Police Chief Dave Stricklen and Fire Chief Jake Callier are proud to lead the Airport's police officers and firefighters.



Chief Dave Stricklen welcomes Vice President Dick Cheney safely to Grand Rapids.

through CALEA would be a testament to the high standards to which we hold our officers," says Stricklen. He expects to complete the process by June 2005.

Across the airfield is another branch of GFIA's public safety and operations division, the fire department. Jake Callier, Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Chief, says, "We're here for the safety of the flying public and the aircraft that operate at this Airport."

The staff of 15 is organized into three five-person shifts that work 24 hours at a time. "The 24-hour shift allows us to

have a crew concept, which enhances everything from our training activities to our coordinated response to

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Airport firefighter Thea Dornbush teaches Airport employees the basics of CPR and First Aid.

emergencies,” says Callier. To accommodate these 24-hour shifts, the fire station was remodeled in 2002, adding sleeping quarters and expanded living space.

In the event of an emergency, the department has three vehicles ready. One truck holds 2,500 gallons of water and 400 gallons of foam, while the other two hold 1,500 gallons of water and 200 gallons of foam.

Fortunately, aircraft emergencies are rare. More typically, Callier says, “We respond to car fires, fuel spills and medical emergencies.”

Anyone needing medical assistance at the Airport is in

good hands. “All of our firefighters are Michigan-licensed EMTs,” says Callier. The entire team is also trained in hazardous materials handling and has met the Firefighter I and II requirements of the State of Michigan.

Callier says his staff is also called upon to teach basic medical response to other Airport personnel. The department recently won an FAA Good Friend Award for instructing employees on how to use a defibrillator and perform CPR. “I’m pleased we have these opportunities to utilize our expertise in training others in lifesaving skills,” says Callier. →

## Gourmet Java Is Here

On May 17, GFIA joined 150 other airports that offer Starbucks coffee. According to Wayne Cole, General Manager of HMSHost, GFIA’s food and beverage provider, coffee is the most sold item in airports. “We’re taking a cue from other HMSHost providers that have partnered with Starbucks and had tremendous success,” says Cole. “People enjoy the high quality of Starbucks, and Grand Rapids travelers are no exception.”



Starbucks is located in the Grand Hall in the food court, and will be open daily from 4:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. The entire beverage menu is available, including espresso drinks, brewed coffees and Frappuccinos, along with an assortment of signature baked goods and souvenir merchandise.

Cole predicts this will be a natural fit for the travelers at GFIA. “Starbucks’ standards are very high, and we hold ourselves to the same high standards in serving our customers at GFIA.” →

## First Stop on the Way to Michigan’s West Coast

The Airport is often the first opportunity to welcome visitors to West Michigan. As such, GFIA is on board with the Michigan’s West Coast campaign, launched last year by a coalition of interests in Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, Holland and Muskegon. The goal is to market the best assets of West Michigan – from our museums and other attractions and community events, to the scenic beauty, recreation and natural features of the lakeshore – with the goal of increasing tourism throughout the region. Michigan’s West Coast has already become a widely recognized brand in the areas beyond West Michigan where it has been advertised. The first year of the marketing campaign attracted



more than 290,000 new visitors to the region and generated more than \$29 million spent at area businesses. →

## Dare to DreAAM

American Airlines and Children’s Oncology Services partner up once again for the 18th DreAAM flight, a program that sends children with cancer on a free vacation to Orlando, Florida. →



Peter Simms, American Eagle Station Manager at GFIA, joins John Deguisse (father) and Johnny Deguisse, Rick Daniels (sponsor), Kelly Hostetler (sponsor), Ashley Robillard and Lisa Barr (mother) for a preflight party before takeoff.

## A Plan for Success

The current GFIA Master Plan Update (MPU) project is on schedule for completion this summer. According to Roy Hawkins, Planning Engineer for the Department of Aeronautics, the update is part of a continuous planning process that serves as a guide for the Airport's short-term (5 years), intermediate-term (10 years), and long-term (20 years) development needs.

"Currently, we're growing faster than we anticipated, so we must make sure we can accommodate this growth in a financially responsible manner, and stay ahead of forecasted demand. Correct timing of projects is key," explains Hawkins.

The FAA-approved forecasts predict that GFIA will be doubling in both passengers and cargo over the next 20 years. General aviation jet aircraft activity is also expected to double over the next two decades. To prepare for this growth, the Kent County Aeronautics Board is considering increases in passenger terminal capacity and air cargo building space. Increases in vehicle parking are also under way, with the Aeronautics Board having approved the design of an expansion to the Express Shuttle lot. Construction is planned for this fall. Also, the design of a parking ramp is back on track since being suspended in September 2001.

GFIA has been working with the international Master Plan consulting firm HNTB Corporation, and FAA approval of the MPU is expected this summer.

Other issues reviewed in the MPU were the timing for a third air-carrier runway and the potential for an I-96 direct connection to the terminal area. The additional runway capacity was explored, but based on forecasted growth, the need for the third air-carrier runway was determined to be

beyond the 20-year planning horizon. HNTB also reviewed the capacity of Oostema Boulevard at the entrance of GFIA, security issues and other considerations, and determined a direct connection from I-96 is not needed.

Says Hawkins, "We're confident these Master Plan findings will serve as an effective guideline for the Airport's forecasted growth and development needs." →

### Master Plan Key Findings

- Increase in terminal capacity, with the addition of five gates: four on Concourse A and one on Concourse B
- Other terminal capacity increases including expansion of ticketing, baggage make-up, baggage claim and lobby areas
- Increase in parking capacity by several thousand vehicles, including the construction of a parking garage, expansion of existing surface lots and the relocation of rental car service centers to an area adjacent to Patterson Ave. and south of the Airport's fuel farm
- Expansion of air cargo facilities and relocation of the U.S. Post Office facility to the Air Cargo and Trade Center
- Improvements to the airfield including air-carrier apron expansion, taxiway "E" relocation and construction of additional perimeter security roads

## The NWS: Always Looking Ahead

At the northern edge of the Airport, there's a group of people who can predict the future. But instead of a crystal ball, they rely on Doppler Radar and a host of other scientific data and observations.

Welcome to the National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office. With a staff of 23, including nine operational meteorologists, the Grand Rapids office serves 23 counties in southwest Michigan.

While you're probably most familiar with the warnings broadcast on weather radios or across the bottom of your television screen, the NWS provides many other services as well. According to Randy Graham, Science Operations Officer, the organization offers short-term and extended weather forecasts, plus aviation, marine, fire and hydrologic forecasts. The staff also collects data on temperatures, precipitation and river stages throughout the region. During the boating season, the NWS reads temperature, pressure, wind and wave data collected from two buoys in Lake Michigan. And at least four times a day, the staff updates the forecast on the NWS web site ([www.crh.noaa.gov/grr](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/grr)).

What's more, each year the agency conducts "spotter training" for volunteers in 23 counties across southwest Michigan. During the two-hour session, weather buffs learn how storms develop, how to rate their severity – and how to safely collect data during a storm. These storm spotters are asked to contact the NWS in the event of hail, wind damage, flooding, or wall or funnel clouds. Additional volunteers, called Cooperative Observers, are equipped with rain gauges and thermometers and report temperature and precipitation values for their location to the NWS each day.

Located in Grand Rapids since 1903, the National Weather Service relocated to its current facility on Airport grounds and raised its Doppler Radar tower in 1995. The 80-foot tower boasts an antenna elevation of 100 feet above the ground, making it easy to spot from many parts of the Airport and the surrounding area.

Says Graham, "Many weather forecast offices tend to be near airports. Of course pilots, air traffic controllers and airport employees want to know the wind direction and speed. But airport maintenance crews also want to know the forecasted start and stop time for snowfall, so they can decide if and when their crews will need to clear the runways."

So the next time you're heading out for a flight or an afternoon on the beach, consult the experts first. With a quick peek at the NWS web site, you, too, can look into the future. →



NWS Doppler Radar Tower

- The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has recognized the Kent County Department of Aeronautics for the 10th consecutive year by awarding the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Department's annual financial report. This award is presented to those government agencies whose financial reporting meets the high standards established by the GFOA.
- Join GFIA and FedEx at the 2004 Plane Pull Challenge of Michigan at the Air Cargo and Trade Center, located off Thornhills Avenue/Thornapple River Drive, at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 14. Teams of 20 people from local businesses and public safety agencies will compete to see who can pull a 155,000-lb. FedEx Boeing 727 jet a distance of 12 feet in the shortest amount of time. There will also be an Airport expo, free of charge, featuring vendors, entertainment, aircraft displays, fire trucks and specialized airport machinery. Plane Pull team entry fees support the year-round sports training and athletic competition for the children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics Michigan. For more information on the event, please visit [www.somi.org/planepull](http://www.somi.org/planepull).
- Northern Jet Management will host the Wings of Mercy CareAffaire pancake-breakfast fundraiser at its hangar from 8:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, September 11. The organization includes approximately 200 volunteer pilots who provide free air transportation for people with limited financial means who need medical treatment at distant facilities. All proceeds from the fundraiser will be used to purchase fuel for Wings of Mercy missions.
- The Kent County Aeronautics Board's next three meetings are scheduled for August 25 (8:30 a.m.), September 29 (7:00 p.m.) and October 27 (8:30 a.m.). Meetings are held in the International Room on the first floor of the terminal building. The meetings, open to anyone who wishes to attend, generally run between 60 and 90 minutes.

## There's a New Airbus on the Airfield



The new FedEx Airbus, with a length of 153 feet and a wingspan of 144 feet, will be able to transport nearly 50% more cargo than the Boeing 727.

FedEx welcomes the addition of a new Airbus A310 to its fleet at GFIA, replacing one of their two Boeing 727's. The new aircraft, about 20 feet longer and 15 feet taller than the 727, will enable FedEx to transport nearly 30,000 additional pounds of cargo per trip.

"We are constantly looking for ways to serve our customers better by moving things more quickly and more efficiently to more places around the globe," says Ken Kranz, Senior Manager of FedEx at GFIA. "This aircraft will give us the ability to move more volume in and out of Grand Rapids, and help us stay ahead of the demand for our services."

The Airbus made its debut at GFIA on May 29, and will make two trips a day to Memphis, Tennessee, every Tuesday through Saturday - arriving at GFIA first around 6:30 a.m. and again around 6:00 p.m. Today, FedEx transports roughly 225,000 pounds of cargo daily at GFIA, an average of 18,000-20,000 packages.

"This significant increase in cargo capacity means that less cargo will have to be re-routed to Detroit or Chicago and then transported by land to Grand Rapids, because we can now accommodate almost 50% more cargo on each trip," explains Kranz. "What this means for our customers is faster, better service." →

**Airport Connections**, the newsletter of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA), is published quarterly by the Kent County Department of Aeronautics. We encourage GFIA tenants and all of our readers to contact us with your comments, suggestions and submissions. Also, if you are not already receiving *Airport Connections* by mail and wish to be added to the mailing list, please call the Kent County Department of Aeronautics at (616) 233-6000. For additional information, be sure to visit us on the web at [www.flygrandrapids.org](http://www.flygrandrapids.org).

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