



volume 14 | no. 3
Summer 2006

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Next Stop: Rocky Mountain High

Beginning September 6, 2006, United Airlines will be operating nonstop jet service to its hub at Denver International Airport. Passengers will fly from GRR to DEN aboard a Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ) 700 aircraft with six first-class, 28 economy-plus, and 32 economy-class seats. The service will be operated by SkyWest Airlines, a regional affiliate of United. Flight 6771 will depart GRR at 3:15 pm and arrive in DEN at 4:07 pm. Flight 6770 returns, leaving DEN at 10:05 am and arrives in GRR at 2:35 pm (all times local).



Denver International Airport is the sixth busiest U.S. airport and the 11th busiest worldwide. Currently, it is the largest market for Gerald R. Ford International without nonstop service.

Currently, United Airlines flies nonstop from Grand Rapids to Chicago O'Hare. The addition of Denver International Airport brings the total number of nonstop destinations from GRR to 17.

Other nonstop destinations currently available from GRR include Atlanta, Chicago - O'Hare, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas/Fort Worth, Detroit, Houston, Las Vegas, Memphis, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York - La Guardia, New York - Newark, Orlando, Tampa, and Washington, DC - Reagan National.

Best Of...Airline Awards

On May 18, the 2006 OAG Airline of the Year Awards ceremony was held in London. The Awards, sometimes referred to as "The Oscars of the Airline Industry," are based on votes polled by a worldwide audience of business travelers. This year, three of GFIA's carriers brought home four awards.

Continental Airlines was named Best Airline based in North America for the third year running and Best Business/Executive Class for the fourth consecutive year.

United Airlines was named Best Economy/Coach Class.

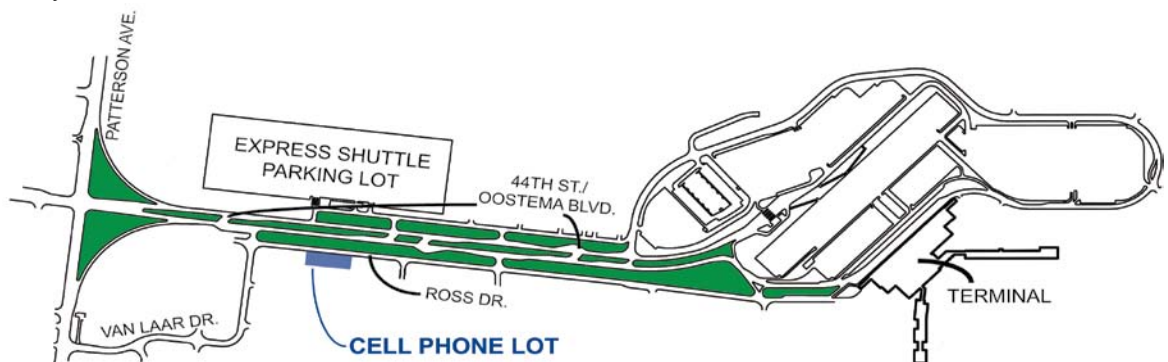
American Airlines was named Airline of Choice for Travelers with a Disability, a new award category introduced this year.

Congratulations to each airline, and thank you for providing GFIA's travelers first-class service!

The Wait Is Over...For A Better Place To Wait

In the post-9/11 world of air travel, one of the challenges for travelers has been coordinating the arrival of their greeter/transportation with the arrival of their flight. Well, at GFIA, this will be getting easier this fall.

Gerald R. Ford International Airport will be opening a new "Cell Phone Lot" in late September. This 15-space lot will be located on Ross Dr., which is just south of Oostema Blvd. as you enter the airport, and will offer time-limited parking for airport greeters. This convenient lot will provide off-street parking for those who need to wait only a few minutes for a phone call from their traveler(s) saying they are ready to be picked up at the terminal curb front. Within minutes you can make your connection and be on your way.



You've Got Questions...They've Got Answers

Is there anything more frightening than being lost? Perhaps you are a first-time visitor, or it has just been too many years since you've been here. Either way, it can be frightening, or maybe just frustrating, to not know where to go or who to ask for help.

Well, at GFIA, the friendly staff at the Visitor Information Center are waiting to help you.

Don't know if your party has arrived yet? One of these cheerful individuals would be happy to page them for you. Can't figure out where to go to claim that oversized luggage? You can find out quickly at the Visitor Information Center. Located in the lower lobby across from baggage claim, these men and women have a wealth of resources at their fingertips to help you.

Staffed by employees of the Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau, the GFIA Visitor Information Center has been a hit since it first opened in 2000. The desk is staffed daily from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm. Additionally, there are visitor guides, maps, brochures, and other information available 24/7 for travelers to pick up.

Questions don't have to be limited to the airport either. Just ask Karen Walsh, manager of the Visitor Information Center. "We field nearly 180 questions every day," Walsh said. "For the airport, they range from taking the airport shuttle to downtown hotels, to where to hail a cab, to where to drop off an outgoing package, to the location of the nearest restrooms." And that's just the beginning of the inquiries. "We are asked just as many questions about the Michigan West Coast region. Visitors want to know the cool places to visit and the hot things to do," Walsh said. And the Visitor Information Center staff stands ready to help.

So, next time you're passing through the airport and in need of assistance, just ask! In an age when "Customer Service" many times seems more like a title than a job description, we think you'll be pleasantly surprised.



VanHyfte Earns High Honors

In May 2006, Diane VanHyfte, Account Manager at GFIA for Grand Rapids Building Services (GRBS), joined an elite group of women as she earned her Registered Building Services Management (RBSM) certification. There are roughly only 100 women worldwide to hold this distinction.

The RBSM certification program includes an eight-hour, 800-question examination. In addition to specific building service knowledge, the RBSM exam covers topics such as employee relations, training, and retention; customer relations and communication; first aid and safety; and government regulations and labor laws. This two-year renewable certification includes the essential component of continuing education and knowledge review testing. These



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Operation Safety

When it comes to knowing what is going on at the airport, few people's knowledge rivals that of the Airport Operations and Dispatch staff. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week they have their fingers on the pulse of the airport. And yet, few people outside the industry know what Airport Operations is all about.

In 1970 Congress passed the Airport and Airway Development Act, which later led in 1987 to the development of Federal Aviation Regulation Part 139, Airport Certification. These certification requirements must be maintained by airports providing commercial air carrier service. At GFIA, the Airport Operations section is responsible for ensuring through a rigorous routine of self-inspections that these standards are maintained. You might say they go around looking for trouble. Trouble might be a burnt out taxi-way light, birds on the airfield, snow/ice on the runways, or myriad other possibilities. But when they find it, they coordinate and oversee the resolution to ensure the safety and security of the airport is maintained.

Operations staff has overall management responsibility of the facility during non-business hours. They enforce the rules and regulations of the airport, and coordinate all aeronautical facilities usage. And, at GFIA, all of this is done by five operations supervisors and the operations manager.



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New Port Director With U.S. Customs



On May 14, Bob Pykosz was selected as the new Port Director of the U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) office in Grand Rapids.

Bob steps in to replace retired Port Director Ann Broker. Although new in this position, Bob is no stranger to the CBP or to Grand Rapids.

Bob is beginning his 22nd year with the CBP, and he comes to Grand Rapids from the Battle Creek Port, having served as Port Director there for the past three years. And, from 1987 to 1997, Bob was an inspector at the Grand Rapids Port. (In between, Bob worked at ports in Canada, Nebraska, and elsewhere.)

With summer in full swing, the Grand Rapids CBP office ramps up its work with cargo vessels on Lake Michigan. The Grand Rapids Port is responsible for all freighters on the Lake from Holland to Traverse City, in addition to the year-round tasks at its office on the airport. CBP provides on-airport Customs & Border Protection clearance to general aircraft and small commercial charters, as well as examinations and collection of duty and taxes on commercial merchandise entering the area.

When asked about coming back to Grand Rapids, Bob said, "It feels like I'm coming home. Ever since I left in 1997 I have hoped to be able to come back to Grand Rapids."

Well Bob, welcome home! We're glad to have you back with us.

Giving From The Heart

Twice each year, GFIA partners with Michigan Community Blood Centers to host a blood drive at the airport. The most recent drive was held May 19.

Previous Total	615 pints
Given at 5/19/06 drive	22 pints
Total donated at airport drives	637 pints

Community Gives Lift To Wings

On Saturday, June 10, more than 400 people enjoyed a pancake breakfast with an aerial view. The third annual Wings of Mercy CareAffaire in Grand Rapids was hosted by airport tenant Northern Jet Management.

As you entered the hangar, the aromas of coffee, sausage, and maple syrup mixed with the sight of aircraft, both on the ground and in the air, to create the perfect setting for this fund-raising event. The breakfast was sponsored by the Grand Rapids Lions Club, its third partnership for the Grand Rapids CareAffaire.

On the ground, there were a number of aircraft and other items on display for guests to look at and explore. The Aero Med rescue helicopter and flight staff were available, as well as a fire truck and firefighter from the airport's Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting unit. A Cessna 208 feeder aircraft for FedEx was on display courtesy of CSA Air, Iron Mountain, MI. The Army National Guard provided a Blackhawk helicopter. A glider was on display courtesy of Benz Aviation of Ionia, MI. The Kent Intermediate School District Aviation Mechanics Program – located at GFIA – provided a jet engine for folks to get a firsthand look. There was also an airplane cutout for children's pictures and plenty of Wings-wear available for purchase.



Visitors talk with the crew of the Army National Guard Blackhawk helicopter.

In addition to the static displays, aircraft rides were available ranging from \$25 to \$300 per person on single- and multi-engine airplanes, helicopters, corporate jets, and open cockpit bi-planes. With blue skies, plenty of aircraft, and the cheerful assistance of the air traffic controllers, more than 50 flights were taken giving an aerial view of GFIA, greater Grand Rapids, and Michigan's West Coast to over 125 passengers. A few lucky fliers had the honor of flying with U.S. Representative Vern Ehlers, who was in attendance at the event.



Two T-34s prepare for take-off on runway 17-35 as they give rides to raise money for Wings of Mercy.

In total, this year's event raised \$42,000 to support the mission of Wings of Mercy, which is to provide free air transportation for people with limited financial means who need treatment at distant medical facilities. For more information on Wings of Mercy, visit www.wingsofmercy.org or call 888.786.3729.

Presenting...

Is your group or organization looking for a speaker for an upcoming meeting? Would you like to learn more about the airport?

The GFIA Marketing and Communications Department would be happy to come to your next meeting and provide an overview of the operations of the airport, as well as updates on airport development projects.

For more information or to request a speaker for your next meeting, please call the Marketing and Communications Department at 616.233.6053.



News In Brief

- » Department of Aeronautics Airfield Maintenance Supervisor Eric Vander Stel and Maintenance Equipment Operator Ralph Bowden submitted an award-winning idea for modifying sprayer nozzles on the Oshkosh P Series vehicles at the International Snow Symposium in Buffalo, NY. Congratulations, gentlemen!
- » The GFIA Airfield Maintenance unit is hosting its fourth annual Airfield Maintenance Workshop and open house on Thursday, August 10. For more information or to register to attend, please contact Eric Vander Stel, Airfield Maintenance Supervisor, at 616.233.6080 or via email at EVanderstel@grr.org.
- » The next three meetings of the Kent County Aeronautics Board will be held on August 23, September 20, and October 25 at 8:30 am. All meetings take place in the International Room in the passenger terminal building and are open to the public.
- » GFIA will be partnering with Michigan Community Blood Centers to host a community blood drive on September 29, 2006, in the International Room in the passenger terminal building. Walk-ins are welcome, or contact Donna Thomas, Office Administrator, at 616.233.6046 to reserve a time.

Remember: You can manage your electronic subscription to *Airport Connections* on our website at www.flygrandrapids.org

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Airport Dispatch can best be described as the communications hub of the airport. The Dispatch office is filled with computers, closed-circuit TV video monitors, telephones, and radios. The dispatchers answer phones, page visitors, dispatch police and fire personnel when needed, issue NOTAMs (Notices to Airmen) when conditions warrant, and they monitor the airport's security access control system.

Airport Operations and Dispatch are the eyes and ears of the airport, keeping watch over the systems, procedures, and people who make traveling through GFIA safe and secure. And, while they're "behind the scenes" from the public's perspective, without them our service to the public couldn't possibly be the same.

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processes ensure the RBSM designation continues to stand for excellence in the building services industry.

Grand Rapids Building Services is entering its 15th year as the cleaning contractor at Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Diane has been with GRBS for eight years and has been at the airport for the past two. Diane and her 18-person crew are responsible for cleaning the passenger terminal building, parking exit plaza, and airfield maintenance facility – just under 225,000 square feet total. GRBS is a 90-plus-year-old, locally owned and operated building services company in Grand Rapids.

Congratulations to Diane on this outstanding achievement!



It's all about communication in the Airport Dispatch Center.

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:

Phone: 616.233.6000

Fax: 616.233.6025

Web: www.flygrandrapids.org

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