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GFIA Mourns The Loss of President Gerald R. Ford

His Legacy

- Born July 14, 1913
- Moved to Grand Rapids, MI 1914
- Grand Rapids South High School, Class of 1931
- University of Michigan, Class of 1935
- Yale University Law School, Class of 1941
- United States Navy, active duty, 1942-1946, Reserve, 1946-1963
- Married Elizabeth Bloomer Warren, October 15, 1948
- Served Grand Rapids and Kent County in U.S. House of Representatives, 1948-1973
- House Minority Leader, 1965-1973
- Confirmed Vice President of United States, December 6, 1973
- Sworn in as 38th President of United States, August 9, 1974
- Left office January 20, 1977 following general election loss
- In August 1999, received the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, in recognition of his role in guiding the nation through the turbulent times of Watergate, the resignation of President Nixon, and the end of the Vietnam War
- In October 1999, President and Mrs. Ford were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for "dedicated public service and outstanding humanitarian contributions"



Gerald R. Ford
July 14, 1913 to December 26, 2006

President Gerald R. Ford passed away at his home in Rancho Mirage, CA, in the late evening hours of December 26, 2006. He was 93 years old. President Ford is survived by his beloved wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Ford, his children Michael Gerald Ford, John "Jack" Gardner Ford, Steven Meigs Ford, Susan Elizabeth Ford Bales, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and other family members.

Arguably the most famous and influential person to hail from Grand Rapids, President Ford has maintained strong ties with the community, lending his name to the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the portion of Interstate 196 that passes through Grand Rapids, the Gerald R. Ford Federal Building, the Ford Fieldhouse at Grand Rapids Community College, the Gerald R. Ford Job Corps Center, and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

The Aeronautics Board wishes to extend their deepest condolences to the Ford family during this time.

Saying Farewell To The President

On December 26, we learned that President Ford had passed away. It was the beginning of nine intense days for many of



Presidential 747 arrives with President Ford's casket, accompanied by Mrs. Betty Ford, President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter, and other dignitaries.

the employees of the Kent County Department of Aeronautics.

The plans had been in place for nearly two decades. The manuals were written, the roles were defined, and annual table-top exercises had been conducted.

It was as if the director of a well-rehearsed play called for "Places, everyone!"

The Secret Service arrived, accompanied by members of every branch of the United States military. Airport security protocols were

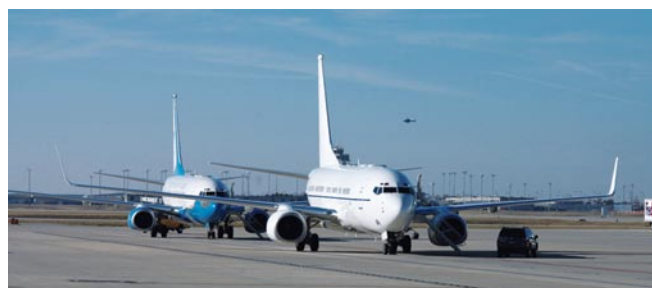


C17 sits on the cargo ramp after delivering equipment and supplies.

reviewed, meetings were arranged, tenants were notified, and myriad rehearsals began. There was much to be done.

Tenants of the air cargo facility (FedEx, Evergreen, UPS, and DHL) quickly adapted their operations to accommodate the needs of the event planners and staff. Aircraft ramp space was made available, and hangars were loaned for use by the Secret Service, the military, the University of Michigan marching band, the Ford family, and dignitaries who would be in attendance.

During the next week, the airport would accommodate the presidential 747 on two occasions, two 737s for the Air Force



The Air Force Two detail, comprising two 737s, arrives at the airport for President Ford's funeral.

Two detail, a 737 chartered by the University of Michigan for their band, and two C130s, five C17s, and two C5s carrying support equipment and vehicles.

farewell
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Tenant Profile: Rapid Air

Since 1988, Rapid Air has been a Fixed Base Operator at GFIA, providing air charter services, aircraft maintenance, fuel, ground handling services, and hangar rental. In October 2006, KEM Aviation, LLC, purchased Rapid Air from its founding owners, the Vantine family. And new ownership is only one of the exciting changes in store for this airport facility.

KEM Aviation plans to rebuild and refurbish the Rapid Air facilities to include first-class conference centers with wired and wireless Internet access, a deluxe pilot lounge with sleeping quarters, and a weather room. On the outside, they will be doubling their vehicle parking lot capacity and reconfiguring driveways for easier accessibility. On the airside, in the summer of 2006, GFIA completed the replacement and upgrade of Rapid Air's aircraft ramp.

Rapid Air has plans to expand charter operations (both passenger and freight) and introduce new lines of business in fractional ownership and aircraft management. They are also currently upgrading their aircraft inventory with the addition of two Piaggio turboprop airplanes. The Piaggio, made in Italy by Ferrari, can travel at 450 mph with a range of up to 1,200 nautical miles and has a cabin size found only in mid-size jets. Additional aircraft, including two VLJs (Very Light Jets), are planned for arrival in 2008. "Rapid Air will be in an outstanding position to offer affordable, hassle-free, private aviation services to organizations and individuals across Western Michigan and beyond," states Terry Boer, vice president of operations.



"The new Rapid Air will become the hub for the hands-on business operator who needs the flexibility of an aircraft to be competitive in today's global market," says Paulus Heule, managing member of KEM Aviation, LLC. He adds that new aviation technology, coupled with post-9/11 security protocols, is making private air travel more affordable and attractive to today's business executives.

For more information on Rapid Air, visit their newly redesigned website at flyrapidair.com.



RAPID AIR

Aeronautics Board Experiences Its Own Departures and Arrivals

On January 1, 2007, the Kent County Aeronautics Board commenced a new year with a new member. Departing from the Board was former Kent County Commissioner Dan Koorndyk, who had served on the Aeronautics Board for four years. At Mr. Koorndyk's final Board meeting, Chairman John Van Laar said, "Dan has been a highly valued member of the Board during his four-year tenure. As a member of the Airport Board and Aeronautics Committee, his business experience and fiscal responsibility have been great assets and have contributed to the success of the operations at Gerald R. Ford International Airport."



Arriving on the Board was Kent County Commissioner Ted Vonk, who will fill the remaining two years of Mr. Koorndyk's term. Mr. Vonk has been a county commissioner for District 1 since 2001. He also serves the county on the Board of Public Works and the Legislative and Human Resources Committee of the Board (past vice chair). Mr. Vonk is also the past chair of the Grand Valley Metro Council.

Commissioner Richard Vander Molen, Commissioner Dean Agee, and citizen members John Van Laar, Tom O'Hare, and Joseph Jones are returning members to the Aeronautics Board for 2007.

Two Destinations Add Flights

As of February 14, United Airlines will be flying nonstop to Denver International Airport (DEN) *two* times each day. The addition of a second flight will allow travelers to the Mile High City to depart GRR at 6:45 a.m. or 3:07 p.m. Flights will arrive from DEN at 2:29 p.m. and 11:23 p.m.

United is also adding a *seventh* nonstop flight from GRR to Chicago O'Hare (ORD) each day.

GRR offers nonstop service to 15 destinations across the United States.



Holiday Music Festival Sets Spirits Soaring

December 4-8, the airport's Grand Hall was filled with many things: the aroma of Starbucks coffee, the greetings and farewells of travelers, and the sights and sounds of the 11th annual Airport Holiday Music Festival.

This year, 17 area middle and high school musical groups came to perform. Airport patrons and employees were treated to a wide range of musical stylings from classical Latin arias to classic carols. Ensembles of as few as nine and as many as 170 entertained passengers, visitors, and employees alike.

The Department of Aeronautics would like to thank the following schools for sharing their talented groups with us: Burton Elementary School, Caledonia High School, Caledonia Middle School, Creston High School, East Grand Rapids High School, Grand Rapids Central High School, Grand Rapids Christian High School, Legacy Christian Middle School, Moline Christian Middle School, Northpoint Christian High School, Ottawa Hills High School, South Christian High School, Wyoming Park High School.



East Grand Rapids Vocal Jazz, directed by Mark Webb.

2007 Parking Rates

Effective January 1, 2007, parking rates at Gerald R. Ford International are as follows:

Short-term Parking:

\$2 first hour
\$1 per additional ½ hour
\$24 daily maximum

Long-term Parking:

\$1 per hour
\$8 daily maximum
\$48 weekly maximum

Express Shuttle Parking:

\$1 per hour
\$7 daily maximum
\$42 weekly maximum

Valet Parking:

\$15 per day
\$10 for five hours or less

For all parking (except Valet) there is an \$8 lost-ticket fee if original parking stub is not presented when exiting the parking facility.

For your convenience, we offer a parking calculator on our website to assist you in estimating your parking fees. Visit flygrandrapids.org for more information.

News In Brief

- » The next three meetings of the Kent County Aeronautics Board will be held on February 28, March 28, and April 25, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. All meetings take place in the International Room in the passenger terminal building.
- » The 2006 Gerald R. Ford International Airport Profile – *Flight Log* – has won a 2006 Adrian Award. In 2006, the competition attracted more than 1,200 entries from 36 countries. The Adrian Awards are presented by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIAI), an international organization of sales and marketing professionals representing all segments of the hospitality, travel, and tourism industries.
- » The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recognized the Department of Aeronautics for its annual financial report by awarding it a 13th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This award is presented to those government agencies whose financial reporting meets the high standards established by the GFOA.

farewell

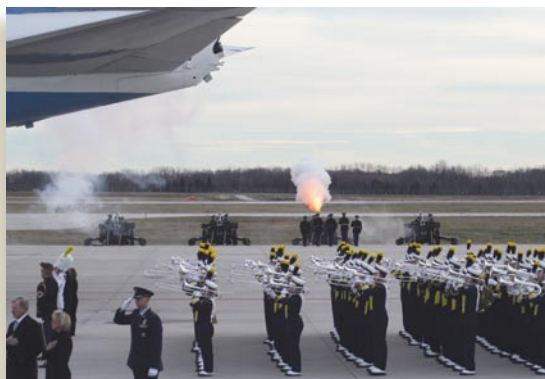
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Upon arrival at the airport on Tuesday, January 2, 2007, the passengers on board the presidential 747 were escorted onto the aircraft ramp for a brief, meticulously scripted ceremony that would include “Hail to the Chief” and “Hail to the Victors,” played by the UM Marching Band, the removal of President Ford’s flag-draped casket from the aircraft and its ceremonial transport to the waiting limousine, and a 21-gun salute using howitzer cannons. Shortly thereafter, the motorcade began its journey into the city of Grand Rapids.



President Ford’s casket is carried off Air Force One.

On Wednesday, two 737s arrived, constituting the Air Force Two detail that would bring Vice President Dick Cheney and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld into town for the services. Overhead, 21 F15s were coordinated by air traffic controllers in a holding pattern while awaiting the time for their “Missing Man” formation flyover at the Presidential Museum.



The University of Michigan Marching Band plays “Hail to the Chief” against the cadence of a 21-gun salute as President Ford’s casket is carried from the 747.

Thursday saw the return of the presidential 747, arriving to pick up Mrs. Ford and other family members and deliver them back to their homes.

The events were vast, the increased workload and activity level were enormous, but the honor of playing a vital role in a historical event such as this was greatest of all.

Farewell, Mr. President.

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

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