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## Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority Is Ready to Fly



**Grand Rapids, Mich.** – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority (GFIAA) is officially operating. The Authority transition was approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today, with support from Kent County Commissioners and government officials.

For 60 years, Kent County owned and operated the Airport, through its Department of Aeronautics, with major policy matters decided by the Kent County Board of Commissioners through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board. The transition to an Airport Authority will transfer governance to a regional Airport Authority Board, appointed by the County Board of Commissioners.

“This is a historical day for our region, our County, and our Airport,” said Roger Morgan, GFIAA Board Chairman and Kent County Commissioner. “The transfer to an Authority has been a goal of our Board’s for several years, and to see the teamwork, the collaboration of organizations, and the FAA’s support has been truly remarkable. We had a smooth process along the way, and we are grateful to each and every person who assisted us in this transition.”



The transfer to an Authority creates an independent governing enterprise whose sole purpose is the future development of the Airport, greater levels of economic development and proactive commercial revenue development, a stronger regional focus to respond to air service needs, and a more entrepreneurial, business, and hospitality management focus - driven by customer service.

The Authority Legislation was signed by Governor Rick Snyder on June 30, 2015, the Kent County Board of Commissioners formed the Regional Authority and adopted the Articles of Incorporation on August 27, 2015, and Kent County and the Authority signed final operating and lease agreements on December 17, 2015. The final approval of the Authority came from the FAA, which granted and signed the Authority's operating certificate today.

The transition came about with full support from the Kent County Board of Commissioners.

"Kent County prides itself on making decisions that are best for the entire community," said Jim Saalfeld, Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. "The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is a regional asset for all of West Michigan. In that regard, the County knows the best long-term move for the Airport is to be operated by a regional authority that includes representation from outside of the County. This is another great example of collaboration by Kent County at many levels."

"Kent County Commissioner Dan Koorndyk was instrumental in this transition, and we sincerely appreciate all of his support, along with County Board Chair Jim Saafeld and the entire commission," said Morgan. "We also would not have completed this changeover without our amazing employees. Each and every one of them keeps our Airport operating day in and day out, and we have far exceeded expectations in air service, customer service, construction, and safety because of their efforts."

For more information or interviews, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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## About GFIA

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GRR) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The airport served over 2.5 million passengers in 2015 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GRR each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 23 major market destinations with more than 120 daily nonstop flights. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. The Airport generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan and employs over 1,500 people. For more information on GRR visit: [www.flyford.org](http://www.flyford.org) or follow the airport on Twitter: @FlyGRFord.