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Contact: Tara Hernandez, Marketing and Communications Director
O: (616) 233-6053 | thernandez@grr.org



Gerald R. Ford International Airport Announces New President & CEO

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority Board announced today that James “Jim” Gill has been hired as its new President & CEO.

Gill, who comes to Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) from Allegheny County Airport Authority in Pittsburgh, was selected as the finalist for the position by a search committee.

The Airport Authority Board voted unanimously to hire Gill at today’s board meeting.

“We are thrilled to welcome Jim to West Michigan, and we know he will thrive as the next CEO of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport,” said GFIA Board Chairman Roger Morgan. “Jim has a track record of strong leadership, community partnerships, and he is well known and well respected among his peers in the aviation industry. Jim will continue to spark our growth as we invest in



customer service, technology and construction projects, and serve as a catalyst for West Michigan's economic progress.”

Gill is an industry veteran with more than two decades of senior airport management experience. With deep roots in the Pittsburgh area, he has served 13 years of that time at the Allegheny County Airport Authority, whose two airports serve more than 8 million passengers per year. There he has been CFO since 2007, and added the COO position to his duties in 2015. He has also previously served as Interim Executive Director. Gill also spent six years at Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority as Deputy Airport Director & CFO.

Gill is an Accredited Airport Executive with the American Association of Airport Executives and an International Airport Professional through Airports Council International, one of a very select group of airport professionals to hold both credentials.

Gill has many successes in his career including personally overseeing the operation of Pittsburgh International Airport transfer from county control to a new independent airport authority, which was a multi-year, complex process requiring significant operational knowledge and dynamic collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including the FAA which must ultimately approve the transfer. Moreover, while serving in the capacity as Interim Executive Director at Pittsburgh, Gill facilitated an agreement to have Allegiant Air begin point-to-point service there as the airline's first medium hub, a successful operation which has grown from five destinations in 2014 to eleven destinations today.

“I am delighted to be joining the talented team at GFIA and I look forward to moving forward together,” said Gill. “An airport is so often the first and last impression that travelers have of the community and region, and so one must be committed to delivering outstanding operational performance while exceeding customer service expectations. I know we will continue to have an outstanding record of success in West Michigan, and I am excited to help lead the airport into a new, expansive era while working closely with the Authority Board, airport management, staff, and our community and business partners.”

Among the Airport's future plans is a current Gateway Transformation Project, which is set to complete Phase One in summer 2017. Additionally, the Airport Viewing Park is set to open in the spring, and GFIA is on pace to break another passenger record for 2016. Airport leadership is also underway in updating the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Master Plan.

“One of the things that attracted me to this job is the excitement surrounding the growth of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport,” said Gill. “I am really looking forward to seeing all of these projects come to fruition, and to be the leader that helps drive even more growth and development in the future.”



The search committee was headed by GFIA Board Member Floyd Wilson, and Board Chairman Roger Morgan. Steven Baldwin & Associates – an Airport Management Consulting firm based out of Albany, New York – assisted in the recruiting process

“Jim has significant business and economic development experience,” said Wilson. “That is a perfect fit for the direction the board has envisioned for the new Authority.”

GFIA, which was named the top airport of its size in the region in 2015 by Airports Council International (ACI), welcomed a record 2.5 million passengers last year.

Gill will officially start work at the airport on January 9, 2017. He replaces Brian Ryks, who resigned in March to accept a position as CEO of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

For more information or interviews, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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About GFIA

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The airport served over 2.5 million passengers in 2015 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GFIA 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. GFIA generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan and employs over 1,500 people. For more information on GFIA visit: www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Twitter: @FlyGRFord