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## Gerald R. Ford International Airport Breaks Passenger Record for Fifth Straight Year



*(Above): These two young travelers were a part of the record-breaking year as they headed to Disney with their parents for Spring Break in April 2017.*

**Grand Rapids, Mich.** – The Gerald R. Ford International (GFIA) Airport has set a new all-time milestone, marking the fifth straight year that the Airport has seen record-setting growth and recording the best year in airport history.

In 2017, 2,811,622 passengers flew in and out of GFIA, an increase of 5.95-percent from 2016. December growth helped cap the record-setting year with an increase of 8.19-percent year-over-year. December 2016 saw 216,017 total passengers, but 2017 surpassed that with 233,702 total enplaned and deplaned passengers – also marking the best December ever. The Airport had growth in 11 of 12 months in 2017, and has had 53 months of growth over a 60-month period. The increases in that five-year period range from months of 1.22-percent growth to 14.95-percent.

The progression over the last five years started in 2013 with a passenger total of 2,237,979. In 2014, that number jumped to 2,335,105. In 2015, GFIA broke its own record once again with a passenger total record of 2,550,193 – a 9.21% year-over-year increase, and in 2016 the Airport served 2,653,630 passengers. The Airport has recorded the strongest growth in its 54-year history,



servicing over 12.5 million passengers from 2013-2017. Since opening its doors at its current location on 44<sup>th</sup> street, GFIA has served over 73-million passengers.

“This is an incredible milestone to accomplish, and we could not have done this without our tremendous staff, our loyal passengers, and all of our airline partners and airport tenants,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill.

“We take pride in being a catalyst to the growing West Michigan community, and the investment our airline partners have made at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport has helped fuel this success. The airlines would not be investing here if they did not see an opportunity, and we continue to be successful because they are successful.”

March 2017 was the single busiest month in Airport history with 256,880 total passengers traveling through GFIA, breaking an all-time monthly record from July 2016.

Additionally, the airport has processed almost 2.5 billion pounds of cargo since 1967. Cargo totals for 2017 hit 88.2 million pounds – a 2.56-percent increase over 2016.

GFIA has invested in new facilities to accommodate the growing traffic by recently completing Phase One of the Gateway Transformation Project – an upgrade in space, retail, food and beverage, restrooms, finishes, amenities, and customer service offerings. The project’s main feature is the consolidated passenger security checkpoint which centralized and combined security screening to one main checkpoint in the Airport. Construction also included new terrazzo flooring, lighting fixtures, pre and post security business centers, a military welcome center, kids play areas, and much more.

Phase Two of the Gateway Transformation Project is slated to begin in Fall 2018 with construction taking place at the airline ticket counters, baggage claim area, and ‘front of house’ area.

“As we continue to grow in traffic it is imperative that our facilities keep up with our passenger demand,” said Gill. “Our passengers keep coming back because we listen to their wants and needs, and as they do we will continue to do our part to improve our amenities, technology, customer service and infrastructure. We are excited to see what the future holds, and we hope to add more growth in the years to come. Our 2020 Vision is to hit the three million passenger mark.”

The Airport will be celebrating this historic passenger record with daily surprises and giveaways by ‘paying it forward’ to passengers throughout the next week. GFIA Facebook ([www.facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport](http://www.facebook.com/GeraldRFordInternationalAirport)) and Twitter (@FlyGRFord) will have updates on these promotions.

Monthly passenger statistics are available on our website: <http://www.grr.org/History.php>

For more information or interviews, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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