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Gary / Chicago International Airport Announces Acquisition of Griffith-Merrillville Airport

Acquisition Bolsters GCIA Offerings, Made Possible Due to Increasing Investment and Aviation Growth

(Gary, IN – December 13th, 2023) – Today the [Gary / Chicago International Airport \(GCIA\)](#) formally announced the acquisition of nearby [Griffith-Merrillville Airport](#), located in Lake County, Indiana. The \$1.8 million airport acquisition was funded via local airport generated revenue sources previously budgeted. The purchase was made feasible via the significant growth and investment GCIA has experienced over the past decade. The acquisition provides long-term public benefits and operational flexibility to meet GCIA’s anticipated future local aviation needs. The purchase also provides benefits to Griffith-Merrillville Airport as it provides avenues for future infrastructure enhancements to take place.

“We are excited to acquire this local airport and bolster our short- and long-term aviation offerings,” said **GCIA Authority Chairman Pete Visclosky**. “The past decade of strong planning, investments and growth of our airport has put us in a position where we can acquire this new asset, helping sustain our local aviation offerings while building for the future as well.”

The acquisition process began in late 2022. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) were instrumental in assisting GCIA’s acquisition of the airport and making it eligible for federal and state funding improvement to Griffith-Merrillville Airport. Given the regional impact of this acquisition, there was substantial coordination between the City of Gary and the Town of Griffith as well as the two airports.

“It’s been a privilege to work with GCIA and Griffith/Merrillville throughout this process,” said **INDOT State Aviation Director Marty Blake**. “Griffith/Merrillville is a key Reliever Airport in the Indiana Aviation System. GCIA’s acquisition will allow for continued partnership with our office to improve facilities at Griffith/Merrillville and will reinforce the \$21 million regional annual economic impact this airport provides.”

GCIA has seen significant growth over the past decade, including the 2015 expansion of the airport’s main runway to nearly 9,000 feet, making it the region’s second longest after O’Hare International Airport (ORD). The runway expansion allows GCIA to service larger and heavier aircraft, up to and including a 777, one of the largest planes operating globally. GCIA also opened its premier U.S. Customs and Border Protection Facility in late 2018, allowing international travelers to frequent GCIA without first needing to clear customs elsewhere.



“We congratulate the Gary / Chicago International Airport on this acquisition and look forward to the promise of future economic growth fueled by this purchase in the coming years,” **said City of Gary Mayor Jerome Prince**. “The partnership between the City of Gary and our local airport has been a substantial boon to the local Northwest Indiana economy, and this is a further example of strong planning leading to growth opportunities.”

Griffith-Merrillville Airport was completely rebuilt in 2001 and is designed for smaller aircraft that have a single wheel load of 38,000 pounds or a dual wheel load of 50,000 pounds. The airport consists of paved and grooved 4900 foot by 75 foot runways, with full pilot controlled lighting including rotating beacons, REIL and PAPI lights and VOR / DME / GPS instrument approaches. It also possesses over 175,000 square feet of ramp area, as well as a modern and well-equipped 38,000 square foot terminal building.

“We are pleased to see the Griffith-Merrillville Airport acquired by the Gary-Chicago International Airport, and are excited to see future regional growth occur, as this is a tremendous opportunity for Northwest Indiana,” **said Town of Griffith Council President Rick Ryfa**. “GCIAG has made some fantastic improvements in recent years, and with GCIAG’s experienced management and existing resources, the Griffith-Merrillville Airport infrastructure will offer a strong complement to GCIAG’s long-term planning.”

“The purchase of Griffith Airport by the Gary-Chicago International Airport is another great example of consolidation of our aviation offerings,” **said Lake County Commissioner Michael Repay (3rd)**. “In turn, this will bolster the economic development of Northwest Indiana.”

In 2020, GCIAG began cargo service operations via the UPS, who signed a long-term lease agreement. Cargo service operations have quickly scaled, and GCIAG now ranks 3rd in the State of Indiana on its freight volume, with further growth anticipated in coming years. Earlier this year, GCIAG received formal FAA approvals for its Master Plan, a document that will guide the next several decades of airport development and growth.

“We look forward to the substantial operations benefits to GCIAG as well as the significant economic benefits to Northwest Indiana that will result from this acquisition,” **said Craig Anderson of the Griffith-Merrillville Airport**. “This will provide GCIAG with the needed operational flexibility to growing its offerings, while offering smaller operators to function out of the Griffith facility and ensuring the long-term viability of the Griffith-Merrillville Airport.”

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About Gary/Chicago International Airport

Located minutes from the shores of Lake Michigan and just 25 miles from downtown Chicago, Gary/Chicago International Airport (GCIAG) is a full-service airport and a premiere destination for corporate and weekend flyers in the Chicago metropolitan region and Northwest Indiana. To learn more, visit the airport’s new website at FlyGYY.com.