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Gary / Chicago International Airport Celebrates 500th International Arrival

Chicago's 3rd Official Airport Demonstrates Continued International Reach with Latest Milestone

(Gary, IN – May 31st, 2024) – The Gary / Chicago International Airport (GCI A) celebrated a key milestone in May by welcoming its 500th international arrival. Since opening its premier Customs and Border Protection (CBP) facility in Q4 2018, GCI A has steadily increased its international operations, and has welcomed 63 flights in 2024 alone, averaging nearly 13 arrivals per month since January. For comparison, GCI A welcomed 58 international arrivals during the same period in 2023, and despite an industry wide interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 – 2021, its international arrivals have been steadily increasing on a year-to-year basis.

"This milestone demonstrates the continued appeal of our airport to a host of air travelers, including those coming from overseas markets in Asia, the Middle East and Europe," **said Dan Vicari, Executive Director of GCI A.** "This recent arrival is further proof of the substantial role GCI A plays in Chicago's air transportation system, which is one of the busiest aviation networks globally."

The availability of an on-site, permanent state-of-the-art Customs facility provides GCI A with a significant competitive advantage, given the airport's proximity to Chicago's Central Business District, or Loop. The convenient location of the airport, located just 25 miles and typically around a 30-minute drive to downtown Chicago, has been a key driver in attracting international air travelers, as they are able to fly into the airport from any global destination without needing to stop elsewhere to clear customs.

The airport counts two (2) first-class Fixed Base Operators (FBO's) in B. Coleman Aviation and the Gary Jet Center. Both have made substantial private capital investments in the airport in recent years, with Gary Jet Center opening a \$5 million LEED-certified hangar and \$3 million terminal and B. Coleman Aviation opening a \$9 million terminal and a \$5 million hangar - both with plans on expansions anticipated in coming years.

"The on-site facility is a tremendous asset to our business-oriented clients, who frequently determine their aviation choices based on time and convenience to their final destination," **said John Girzadas, President of B. Coleman Aviation.** "The on-site customs facility has been very helpful for B. Coleman Aviation, as it has helped to open international markets and attract overseas travelers for our company."

"Having a Customs facility provides us with a substantial advantage in an always competitive sector, allowing Gary Jet Center to offer their customers enhanced travel options as they make their plans," **said Lynn Eplawy, President of the Gary Jet Center.** "Having easy access to international markets was a contributor to our decision to expand our footprint at GCI A over the past several years, and certainly helps with our marketability to non-U.S. based air travelers."



The 500th arrival landmark is a testament to the ongoing investments that have continued to bear fruit at GCIAG over the past decade.

In 2015 the airport extended its main runway to nearly 9,000 feet, and it is now the second longest runway in the region after O’Hare International Airport and is capable of servicing larger and heavier aircraft, up to and including a 777, one of the largest planes operating globally. 2020 saw GCIAG began cargo service operations via UPS, and cargo operations have quickly scaled, now ranking 3rd overall in the State of Indiana in terms of its freight volume, with further growth anticipated in future years.

In 2022, GCIAG received formal FAA approvals for its Master Plan, a planning document that will guide the next several decades of airport development and growth. In late 2023, the airport announced the acquisition of the Griffith – Merrillville Airport, making GCIAG one of only three (3) aviation systems in the State of Indiana.

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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 (GYY) 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](https://www.flygyy.com).