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Gary / Chicago International Airport Salutes Aashod Rodgers

Rodgers Recently Passed Through Indiana Plan Apprenticeship Readiness Program and Now Accepted for IBEW 697 Apprenticeship

(Gary, IN – June 18th, 2025) – The [Gary / Chicago International Airport \(GCIAG\)](#) recognizes former airport employee Aashod Rodgers for recently being accepted into the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers \(IBEW\) Local 697](#). Mr. Rodgers worked as an [Indiana Plan](#) electrician at the airport for most of 2024 via [Midwestern Electric](#), a long-time local vendor for the airport. IN Plan is the only pre-apprenticeship program endorsed by the [Indiana State Building Trades](#), and provides comprehensive training, mentoring and support to applicants pursuing a career in the skilled labor trades workforce. GCIAG has been a willing incubator for skilled labor workers and has made a concerted effort to advance the careers of local youth who seek to gain experience in the skilled trades.

"I have really enjoyed the opportunity to increase my knowledge as an electrician and am very grateful to my IN Plan instructors and Midwestern Electric for introducing me to the skilled trades and helping me to pursue my interest," **said Mr. Aashod Rodgers**. "I have a passion for problem solving and working with equipment, and I am grateful for my experience at the Gary/Chicago International Airport in leading me to a career in the skilled trades."

Mr. Rodgers has been a life-long resident of Northwest Indiana, having been born in Munster and spending much of his life in Gary, where he attended Lighthouse College Prep Academy. He joined IN Plan in May of 2024 after having been exposed to the potential for a career in the skilled trades in high school. Shortly after joining IN Plan, he was provided with an opportunity to work with Midwestern Electric, where he spent a majority of 2024 and was tasked with assisting operations and Midwestern Electric at GCIAG.

"It is critical to build a workforce that is local, highly trained and ready to meet the growing demands of the construction industry, and we are committed to ensuring new talent is given the opportunity to join the skilled trades and contribute to the ongoing growth and development of the Northwest Indiana region," **said Phil Hernandez, Business Manager of IBEW 697**. "We are proud to continue to work with entities like the Gary / Chicago International Airport that have been strong advocates to advance the careers of local youth seeking a career in the skilled trades."

"The Gary / Chicago International Airport has been a key economic engine for Northwest Indiana, and we are proud to be able to play a role in continuing to develop the next generation of skilled tradespeople," **said GCIAG Executive Director Dan Vicari**. "We are very happy to have helped provide an opportunity to Aashod and contribute to his ongoing career development while helping to further the progress of the skilled trades in Northwest Indiana."



GCIA has seen extensive growth since 2015, starting with the expansion of the airport's main runway to nearly 9,000 feet, making it the second longest runway in the region after O'Hare International Airport. This expansion has allowed the airport to service larger, heavier aircraft. [GCIA opened its U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\) facility in 2018](#), allowing air travelers from any international destination to frequent the airport without needing to clear customs elsewhere.

In 2020, [GCIA began cargo service operations via UPS](#), and in [late 2024 GCIA announced an additional extension to their long-term lease agreement](#) with the cargo services giant. GCIA now ranks 3rd in the State of Indiana for its freight volume and has recently begun [the initial phase of a long-term expansion of their cargo service offerings](#).

In 2022, [GCIA received formal Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\) approvals for its Master Plan](#), a long-term planning document that will guide the next several decades of airport aviation and growth. In late 2023, [GCIA announced its acquisition of the Griffith-Merrillville Airport](#), making GCIA one of only three aviation "systems" in the State of Indiana.

2024 saw multiple milestones reached, including [unveiling its new website](#) and breaking ground on a new [\\$12 million, 47,000 square foot aviation hangar](#). The year also saw the airport awarded a [\\$1.7 million Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\) grant](#) to design and engineer a new, state-of-the-art airport traffic control tower.

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