



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Gary / Chicago International Airport Receives Prestigious Balchen / Post Award

*Awarded for Excellence in the Performance of Airport Snow and Ice Control for 2<sup>nd</sup> Time in 7 Years*

**(Gary, IN – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026)** – On Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> the [Gary / Chicago International Airport \(GCIAG\)](#) was awarded the prestigious [Balchen / Post Award](#) for excellence in the performance of airport snow and ice control for the 2025 – 2026 winter season. The annual award is bestowed by the [Northeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives \(AAAE\)](#), and the airport received this award at the 2026 International Aviation Snow Symposium held in Buffalo, New York. GCIAG has now won this award twice in the past seven years, [having previously won it in 2019](#).

“We are extremely pleased to be recognized for our commitment to operations excellence, particularly given the extreme weather our airport and our hard-working snow crews experienced this past winter,” **said Dan Vicari, Executive Director of the Gary / Chicago International Airport.** “Our snow crews train continuously to ensure they are prepared for any adverse weather condition, and this dedication to excellence is a key metric for the commercial, business, general aviation and cargo sectors to continue to see our first-class, modern snow and ice removal program.”

The purpose of the Balchen / Post Award is to promote excellence in snow and ice control and to recognize those individuals responsible for outstanding performance. It is presented annually at the International Aviation Snow Symposium (IASS), honoring airports in the commercial, general aviation and military categories. The award was first presented in 1977, having initially been named solely for Col. Bernt Balchen and a pioneer in aviation who was the first person to pilot an aircraft over both poles and among other recognitions earned a Distinguished Flying Cross. The award was renamed to its current title in 1997 to additionally honor Wiley Post, Jr., the 35-year manager of the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton (ABE) Airport and a founding member of the IASS, having served as Chairman of the first Snow Symposium in 1967.

The award is even more notable given the substantial growth and development that GCIAG has experienced 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. [GCIAG 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, [GCIAG began cargo service operations via UPS](#), who signed a long-term lease agreement. Cargo service operations have quickly scaled, and GCIAG now ranks 3rd in the State of Indiana for its freight volume, with further growth anticipated in coming years. In 2022, [GCIAG 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, [GCIAG announced its acquisition of the Griffith-Merrillville Airport](#), making GCIAG one of only three aviation "systems" in the State of Indiana.



2024 saw multiple milestones reached, including [unveiling its new website](#), breaking ground on a new [\\$12 million, 47,000 square foot aviation hangar](#) as well as breaking ground on [“Phase 1” of a planned \\$67 million cargo services infrastructure investment](#) that will boost its growing cargo sector. This effort coincided with the [airport agreeing to a long-term extension with UPS](#), further enlarging the airports cargo capacity. 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.

GCIA furthered its cargo services sector growth considerably in 2025, having [awarded a \\$15 million contract for its new Cargo and General Aviation Ramp](#). This was the largest contract awarded since the 2015 expansion of the main runway. The year also saw a [\\$9.8 million grant awarded to fuel their Phase 1 cargo services expansion](#), accelerating the construction timeline of the overall project considerably.

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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 (GYG) 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 [FlyGYG.com](http://FlyGYG.com).*