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Gary/Chicago International Airport Celebrates Completion of Air Cargo Expansion Project and Launches New Infrastructure Improvements

Airport Leaders, Elected Officials and Project Partners Mark Completion of \$24 Million Cargo Campus and Launch Added Airport-Wide Enhancements

(GARY, IN – September 8, 2026) - This afternoon, the [Gary/Chicago International Airport](#), joined by federal, state and local leaders, celebrated the completion of the [airport's new 55-acre air cargo campus, a \\$24 million investment](#) designed to support continued growth in air cargo operations and further bolster economic development throughout Northwest Indiana. The ceremony also included a groundbreaking event recognizing the start of a new airport-wide sanitary and stormwater infrastructure project.

Construction on the initial phase of the air cargo campus began in late 2024 and concluded earlier this summer. The project significantly expands GCIAG's cargo infrastructure and provides accommodations for up to eight wide-body cargo aircraft operating simultaneously, further enhancing the airport's ability to serve the growing freight and logistics market.

"Today's ribbon cutting marks a transformative moment for the Gary / Chicago International Airport and the continued evolution of our air cargo operations. We are grateful for the strong support of our federal, state and local partners who helped make this investment feasible," **said GCIAG Executive Director Dan Vicari**. "The completion of this new 55-acre cargo campus positions the airport extremely well for continued growth, creating new opportunities for current and future airport users while reinforcing our role as a vital economic engine for Northwest Indiana."

The \$24 million project represents the latest milestone in [GCIAG's long-term strategy to expand airport operations](#) and strengthens its position as a [critical transportation and logistics asset](#) for Northwest Indiana, the Chicagoland region and the State of Indiana.

Funding was assembled through a combination of federal, state and local sources, including Community Project Funding secured by Congressman Frank J. Mrvan, Federal Aviation Administration funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and support from the State of Indiana.

"This project represents years of planning, collaboration and investment in the future of Gary/Chicago International Airport," **said Tom Collins Jr., Chairman of the Gary/Chicago International Airport Authority**. "The GCIAG Authority is committed to ensuring GCIAG continues to provide value to the region

through strategic infrastructure investments that support business growth, attract private investment and create opportunities for future generations."

"Today's milestone is a testament to what we can achieve through strong federal, state, and local partnerships," **said City of Gary Mayor Eddie Melton.** "The completion of this state-of-the-art cargo campus elevates Gary's role as a premier logistics hub in the Midwest. We are building the critical infrastructure necessary to attract world-class operations and drive sustained momentum for the City of Gary."

"Today, we are celebrating a signature investment at the Gary/Chicago International Airport and another important step forward for Gary and all Northwest Indiana. The long-term vision and determination of GCIA's leadership, combined with action at the local, state, and federal levels, is creating real economic development, good-paying jobs, and new opportunities for our communities," **said Congressman Frank J. Mrvan (IN-1).** "I thank the GCIA leadership, Mayor Melton, and our city officials for their tireless commitment to seeing this airport reach its full potential. Let's continue building on this success and show what is possible when local, state, and federal partners clearly communicate, collaborate, and act on behalf of the workers, families, and communities of Northwest Indiana."

"Indiana's transportation network depends on strategic investments that strengthen connectivity, improve efficiency and support economic growth," **said Michael Bruening, Chief Airport Engineer of Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).** "The completion of this cargo infrastructure project enhances one of Indiana's most important aviation assets and helps position the airport for future growth in freight, logistics and business development throughout the region."

In conjunction with the ribbon cutting, airport leaders and project partners also participated in a ceremonial groundbreaking for a new airport-wide sanitary and stormwater infrastructure project that will further modernize airport facilities and prepare the airport for future development opportunities.

"On behalf of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, we are thrilled to take part in this celebration for the recent cargo expansion at Gary/Chicago International Airport," **said Matt Saltanovitz, Vice President of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC).** "This project is a huge win for Indiana commerce and for Hoosiers. Its completion highlights our state's commitment to cooperating across organizations and industries to make Indiana a better place to live, work, and do business."

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is here to deliver, and our focus is on the resources that provide the highest-priority projects serving our nation's interest," **said Lt. Col. David Dawes of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.** "By completing these sewer upgrades and launching the next phase of storm rehabilitation, we are ensuring the people of Gary, and the Gary/Chicago International Airport, have the physical foundation to expand the cargo footprint and drive regional growth. Together, with our local partners, we are building infrastructure that is truly built to last."

The project represents another significant milestone in GCIA's continued growth and infrastructure modernization efforts, which have transformed the airport into one of the nation's fastest-growing aviation assets over the past decade.

A Decade of Growth and Investment

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](#), who signed a long-term lease agreement. Cargo service operations have quickly scaled, and GCIA now ranks 3rd in the State of Indiana for its freight volume, with further growth anticipated in coming years.

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.

In 2024, the airport reached several additional milestones, including [unveiling its new website](#), breaking ground on a new [\\$12 million, 47,000 square foot aviation hangar](#) as well as breaking ground on [this current air cargo campus expansion that was completed in the summer of 2026](#).

In 2025, the airport continued advancing its long-term infrastructure strategy, with the [announcement of the acquisition of a 4.7-acre parcel of land](#) that will ultimately be utilized to support additional cargo services expansion as well as the awarding of a [\\$15 million contract to construct the airport's new cargo and general aviation ramp](#).

In 2026 the airport received a [\\$10 million federal grant via the FAA Federal Contract Tower \(FCT\) program](#) as well as an [\\$8.3 million federal grant via the U.S. Department of Transportation](#). These combined grants of \$18.3 million will allow the airport to construct its new, state-of-the-art Air Traffic Control Tower, which anticipates coming online by late 2027.

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