



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact:  
Adam Gypalo  
O: 312-768-4730  
M: 847-975-8966

**Gary / Chicago International Airport Celebrates Historic Flight Milestone**  
*100<sup>th</sup> International Flight Marks Key Achievement for First-Class Aviation Facility*

**(Gary, IN – December 27, 2019)** – At approximately 5:00 pm on Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup> the Gary / Chicago International Airport (GYI) celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> international flight at their General Aviation and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Facility. The CBP facility is the region’s newest such facility and allows air travelers to visit the airport without first needing to clear customs at other locations.

"We are very pleased to celebrate this historic achievement today, as it continues to prove our airport is the premier mid-sized airport in the region and fills a vital niche in our regional air network," said **Duane Hayden, Executive Director of GYI**. "As the airport is located roughly 25 minutes away from Downtown Chicago, the Customs Facility provides international corporate air travelers quick, convenient and easy access to and from their intended regional destination, making us the airport of choice among corporate executives."

The milestone is notable for the speed in which it occurred, as the CBP facility opened in the fall of 2018. Despite severe inclement weather that occurred at several points last winter that limited flight plans and improvements to the main runway this past spring that necessitated the closing of the airport’s main runway, the facility has seen a consistent pace in international flights since its opening and GYI is averaging roughly eight (8) international flights per month.

"The Customs Facility is a great amenity to both the airport and the Northwest Indiana region, as it provides a convenient option for corporate executive air travelers as they visit the Chicago Metropolitan Area," added **GYI Board Authority Chairman Timothy Fesko**. "The facility adds another tool to the airport’s ever-growing toolbox, providing us with a distinct competitive advantage and further solidifies our role as Chicagoland’s 3<sup>rd</sup> regional airport."

"Since the General Aviation U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility opened last year, there has been a steady increase in international travelers taking advantage of this new amenity," added **Chief CBP Officer Joseph Chavez**. "U.S. Customs and Border Protection congratulates the Gary / Chicago International Airport for this achievement and looks forward to additional milestones in the future."

The 100<sup>th</sup> flight landmark is a testament to the ongoing investments that have continued to bear fruit at GYI over the past several years. 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. Earlier this year, they opened a brand-new, nearly 20,000 square foot corporate hangar, the first of potentially several such new facilities anticipated in the coming years.



“Gary/Chicago International Airport is an important economic driver for Northwestern Indiana, and it continues to complement our efforts in growing Gary’s economy, boost public and private investment and improve our transportation and infrastructure system,” **said City of Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson.** “We have focused our efforts on utilizing this valuable resource to spark growth and increase our economic viability. The addition of the Customs and Border Protection facility at the airport has strengthened our efforts, and its success in the region and ability to provide a direct connection to any global location is having an impact.”

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, with plans on future expansions anticipated in coming years.

“The customs facility helps solidify our position in an always competitive industry by providing this tremendous amenity to our corporate air travelers,” **said Lynn Eplawy, President of the Gary Jet Center.** “The new customs facility has opened up international markets for our company and greatly augmented our marketing efforts. We cannot be more pleased to see its continued success.”

“Having an on-site CBP facility is a tremendous advantage to our corporate clients, who appreciate the ease in which they can land and quickly be on the way to their Chicagoland destination,” **said B. Coleman Aviation President John Girzadas.** “This facility was a large factor in our decision to increase our investment and expand our footprint at the airport.”

### **CBP Instructions for Airport Users**

The facility is an on-call General Aviation CBP facility. Pilots or flight departments are required to notify U.S. CBP officials at least 72 hours prior to arrival at GYY and an estimated time of arrival is required. Facility officials can be reached at 773-948-6330. All pilots and passengers must clear U.S. Customs and Immigration inspection upon entering the United States from a foreign country. The maximum number of crew and passengers per aircraft that will be allowed to clear customs is 20 individuals total. All user instructions and fees can be found at [www.flygyy.com/us-customs-facility](http://www.flygyy.com/us-customs-facility).

### ***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](http://FlyGYY.com).*

###