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Gary / Chicago International Airport Hosts Critical Infrastructure Groundbreaking Ceremony

\$24 million Infrastructure Investment Represents Initial Phase to Expand Cargo Logistics Sector

(Gary, IN) – On Tuesday, October 8th the [Gary / Chicago International Airport](#) held a ceremonial groundbreaking to commemorate the initial phase of a long-term expansion of the airport’s increasingly critical air cargo sector, which has quickly expanded since beginning operations in late 2020. The groundbreaking announced roughly \$24 million of multiple infrastructure enhancements to the airport, including the installation of a Jet-A fuel pipeline, installation of a new sanitary sewer system serving cargo facilities and a deicing facility and a new cargo logistics apron. When complete, these enhancements will provide GCIA added capacity to service its air cargo operations.

“This is a pivotal step to securing the future of our increasingly important air cargo offering, with these infrastructure investments made possible by the past several years’ of increasing cargo sector growth,” **said Dan Vicari, Executive Director of the Gary / Chicago International Airport.** “We are immensely grateful for the partnership of Congressman Mrvan, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the State of Indiana for their continued support for our airport and its ability to fuel the local economy.”

Funding for these enhancements came from a variety of sources at the state and federal levels and total roughly \$24 million, pulled together over a period of years. Indiana Congressman Frank J. Mrvan (1st) secured slightly over \$10 million in Community Project Funding (CPF) from Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will provide slightly over \$4 million in funds via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), with the State of Indiana awarding approximately \$9.8 million in grant funding for the enhancements.

“Thank you to all of the leaders with the Gary/Chicago International Airport, the State of Indiana, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for taking these tangible actions to invest in the long-term economic success of the City of Gary and Northwest Indiana,” **said Congressman Frank J. Mrvan (IN-1st).** “This is the model of how we can collaborate at all levels of government and with private industry and our workforce to continue to create more good-paying job opportunities and business development throughout our region.”

“We congratulate the airport on this important milestone,” **said Jeff Simonic, UPS Transportation President – Central Zone.** “We are excited about the new cargo ramp space and look forward to seeing it enhance the airport’s ability to accommodate future growth.”

This Phase 1 project will also create and upgrade roughly \$2 million in enhancements to the airport’s sanitary sewer system, which will be constructed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). Phase 1 will also create a new cargo logistics apron that will ultimately be utilized to accommodate an additional eight (8) air cargo planes to operate out of the airport concurrently.



“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is proud to participate in the Gary Airport Expansion project. This initiative not only strengthens vital infrastructure but also fosters environmental sustainability and economic growth in the region,” **said Col. Kenneth P. Rockwell, Chicago District Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.** “Together with our partners, we are committed to ensuring that the community is equipped with the resources it needs to thrive for years to come.”

The Jet-A fuel pipeline project will install a direct pipeline to large-capacity storage tanks at GCIAG. The line will be installed in an existing right-of-way, providing on-demand transfer capabilities and eliminating the need to move fuel with traditional semi-tanker trucks. The project will reduce the carbon footprint while lowering costs to the users.

"This expansion project will allow for safer, more efficient transport of cargo, further enhancing our logistics network in Indiana," **said Mike Smith, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).** "INDOT looks forward to additional development opportunities and partnerships in the future."

“Northwest Indiana has seen explosive growth and investment the past few years which is leading to greater opportunities for Hoosiers in the surrounding communities,” **said Matt Saltanovitz, Vice President of Domestic Business Expansion at the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.** “Our state’s airports, large and small, international and regional, are vital assets for our state. Companies expanding and relocating to Indiana are continuously citing our top-ranked infrastructure as a deciding factor in choosing Indiana.”

This infrastructure ceremony is the latest in a series of substantial investments GCIAG has made over the prior decade, starting with the expansion of the airport’s main runway in 2015. GCIAG’s runway now extends nearly 9,000 feet – 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 on 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.

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About Gary/Chicago International Airport (GCIAG)

Located minutes from the shores of Lake Michigan and just 25 miles from downtown Chicago, Gary/Chicago International Airport 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 website at [FlyGYY.com](https://www.flyggy.com).