

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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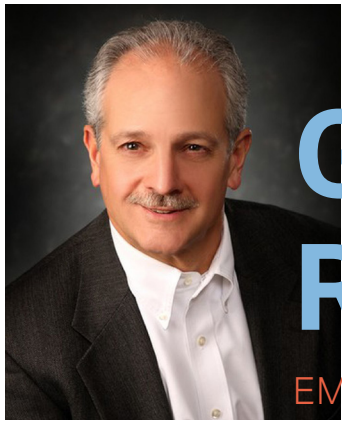


WEST MICHIGAN  
REGIONAL AIRPORT

# 2020

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# GREG ROBINSON

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

For many familiar with the West Michigan Regional Airport and our history, Greg Robinson has been a pillar of our incredible growth over the last several decades. In light of his recent retirement as the Airport Authority Manager, we would like to recognize and thank him for his years of service to the community, to our staff and to the airport.

## What We All Agree On

Through his many years of service to the City of Holland and the West Michigan Regional Airport, Greg displayed many excellent qualities. We spoke with some of the people who have had the great pleasure of working with Greg throughout the years. Everyone had similar things to say about Greg's incredible character and professionalism.

## A RELATIONAL BRIDGE-BUILDER

In his years of service, Greg has gone above and beyond his position requirements. His relationships and deep knowledge of the airport's projects and goals allowed him to lead effectively, establishing credibility with local, state and federal stakeholders.

Greg used his relational skills to earn the trust of these key stakeholders. He established such rapport that over time, everyone knew that a project backed by Greg Robinson was a project worth supporting and worthy of their attention. Much of the airport's growth in the last 25 years was due to Greg's immeasurable dedication.

*"Greg's one of those individuals who every time you're with them, they just brighten your day."*

Jim Storey,  
Ex-Officio Member Of  
WMRA Authority

## EXPERIENCED & KNOWLEDGEABLE

Throughout his years in public service, Greg consistently displayed great leadership and commitment to the growth and development of economic activity in West Michigan. At the airport, he oversaw and led countless efforts to bring additional economic interest to the region. These efforts included the building of the South Washington Avenue tunnel, which remains the largest non-utility City of Holland capital project.

*It goes without saying that Greg shepherded the airport authority to where it is today. We wouldn't have had the same success without him."*

Aaron Thelenwood,  
Director of WMRA

Even before his time at the airport, Greg had an impressive resume with experience as the Assistant City Manager of Holland, the former Acting City Manager, the leader of the City of Holland's economic development team, the first Downtown Manager for the city, the leader of the Mainstreet Program and a consultant for the National Mainstreet Center in Washington, D.C.

## A COMMUNICATOR & EDUCATOR

For all of his knowledge, Greg has never been one to immediately shoot down an idea. His coworkers and teams could always count on him to listen to their ideas, take the time to think about it, then return with a well-reasoned decision. When approached for advice on a problem, people could count on Greg to help them see the problem from different perspectives to determine the best solution.

***"Greg was one of the best communicators I've ever worked with, and I've been around for awhile."***

Russ Sylte, WMRAA Board Chair

This penchant for critically thinking, carefully considering and effectively communicating helped the airport through the building of the new terminal. During the project, Greg truly showed the strength of his quiet leadership, ensuring that the staff and board understood any goings-on, keeping them up-to-date on important project developments.



***"Greg is a quiet presence in a room. You know he's there, he doesn't dominate the room, and as a result you listen to him when he speaks. I've found him to be very thoughtful, honest and well-spoken."***

Skip Keeter, Park Township Clerk

## A HUMBLE LEADER OF INTEGRITY

Between his time with the City of Holland to his eventual retirement as WMRA's general manager, Greg's fingerprints are on nearly every foundational project that led to community-wide improvements and growth. But just like fingerprints, much of Greg's impact on the community is predominantly unseen. He prefers to stay out of the limelight, keeping his impact on the community quiet.

***"Greg has proven leadership abilities and an unwavering commitment to integrity, creativity, and working with others to accomplish community and organizational objectives."***

Sinka Babinec, City of Holland Executive Assistant

***"He was a great guy to work with, he was down to earth. He never talked down to anyone even if he knew more about something."***

Kevin Klynstra, Mayor of Zeeland and WMRAA







# Announcing WMRA's New Website



- The new homepage provides access to flight information, amenities, current weather conditions and runway status.
- New mobile friendly design to visit from all of your devices.
- A local guide page offers helpful information to plan your trip to West Michigan with ease.
- New tools add convenience for quoting and booking flights or conference rooms.

We are excited to announce that our new and updated website launched in April 2021. This website features a new interface that mirrors the airport's contemporary design with all the helpful information you need to charter a flight, find information about our terminal and amenities or ground transportation.

We are proud to provide a convenient and user-friendly location for you to access the latest information and updates on health and safety guidelines, flying lessons, business and cargo transportation information and much more.

Airport users know us for our pristine runways, beautiful facility, helpful staff, state of the art navigation and commitment to safety. Check out our new website to see WMRA for yourself.







# “TULIP CITY AIR” CHANGES NAME TO “FLYBY AIR”

WMRA [fixed-based operator](#) Tulip City Air has changed their name to FlyBy Air. FlyBy Air continues to support WMRA with services such as maintenance, in-flight catering, fueling and aircraft storage. FlyBy Air also services Muskegon County Airport and will soon service Traverse City’s Cherry Capital Airport.

[Learn more about FlyBy Air here.](#)



# Wings of Mercy at WMRA



Founded in 1991, Wings of Mercy is a nonprofit organization that provides transportation to distant medical facilities for patients who cannot afford to fly. They enable life-saving services and transport patients to medical appointments anywhere east of the Rocky Mountains, oftentimes to larger hospitals that can specialize in serious or rare conditions. Over 60 pilots and planes volunteer for an average of 200 flights per year through the West Michigan chapter of Wings of Mercy to support patients from their closest airport, often a regional airport such as WMRA.

Over the years, Wings of Mercy has organized over 5,600 flights from the West Michigan area, with approximately 1,120 flights for patients living in Ottawa and Allegan County. Wings of Mercy makes an effort to partner with regional airports in particular, in part to minimize travel for patients and to introduce the community to their closest airport.

Wings of Mercy also utilizes WMRA's modern business center for pilot meetings, and hosts their fundraising breakfasts and 5ks at WMRA. "They're great hosts," said Grace Spelde, Wings of Mercy Managing Director about WMRA. "We enjoy raising awareness for potential patients and introducing others to this beautiful airport through our events."

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Wings of Mercy West Michigan Flights in 2020

140\*

### Average number of yearly flights from West Michigan

200

### Average number of yearly flights from WMRA each year

10-12

(All numbers are approximate)

\*reduction in numbers for 2020 mainly due to hospital restrictions in areas hard-hit by the pandemic.



## NEW PRIVATE HANGAR CONSTRUCTION AT WMRA

The West Michigan Regional Airport recently finalized a land lease for a new private hangar on airport property. This is the first new hangar built on-site in nearly two decades and adds much-needed capacity to our facility. This latest expansion project shows a strong continued interest in development at the airport and in the surrounding areas.

The new private hangar measures 14,400 square feet and accommodates aircraft of all different sizes. Serving as a multi-functional space, the hangar also includes additional office space. Revenue from the land lease will potentially bring in over \$8,000 annually for the airport, not including fuel flowage fees and landing fees for incoming planes stored on-site.

This new hangar represents the continued positive economic impact of the West Michigan Regional Airport on the surrounding area, both bringing additional jobs to Holland but also building capacity for additional engagement with the community. This capacity expansion will create more avenues for additional incoming jets and planes to visit West Michigan, and may support additional economic activity in the area. The land lease was finalized in March 2021 and we anticipate breaking ground on the project in the spring of 2021.

## WMRA RUNWAY REHABILITATION PROJECT

The West Michigan Regional Airport Authority is excited to announce our runway renovation project, slated to begin Spring 2021. The project's scope includes completely resurfacing all of our runways and other paved surfaces, as well as updating all of our light fixtures and signage.

We last repaved the airport's runways over a decade ago, and despite diligent maintenance there are still significant repair needs. The runway itself will be completely shut down for up to 14 days during the removal, repaving and repainting process. We'll have all hands on deck to return our facilities to full functionality as soon as possible.

This project also provides us the opportunity to install new lighting and signage on-site, switching all light fixtures from incandescent to low-energy LED. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, LED bulbs use about 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last about 25% longer. This will improve our facility's energy efficiency and reduce maintenance costs while still providing a safe, well-lit environment for our visitors.

Though the runway will only be shut down for a maximum of two weeks, the entire project will take approximately 28 days to complete all incidental work. This is a critical component of adequately maintaining the airport's core infrastructure and supporting the general transportation infrastructure in West Michigan, and we look forward to providing WMRA visitors and staff with an improved experience at our facility.





# AIRPORT GROWTH: NORTHERN TAXILANE PROJECT

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We’ve seen significant growth in both facilities and capabilities at West Michigan Regional Airport over the last two decades, and we’re looking forward to continuing that growth into the decades to come. With that future growth in mind, we are beginning preliminary work on the Northern Taxilane project as an upcoming priority for airport construction.

While the airport is blessed to be surrounded by vacant land in the direct vicinity, there are environmental limitations to what we can build in certain locations. We’ve determined that the area north of the Airport Business Center offers the most development space with minimal environmental barriers. As such, we’ve begun drafting proposals for a hangar park north of our current facilities.

The first step for this long-term project is connecting this new park to the airport’s main runway via a new taxilane. Based on our current plan, this taxilane will run adjacent to the east side of the Business Center, then north to the prospective hangar park. The West Michigan Regional Airport Authority has already begun working with MDOT to include this project as part of the Airport’s five-year capital improvement plan.

As we head into FY22, we plan to begin comprehensively identifying the environmental and structural feasibility of the taxilane. Based on our current timeline, we hope to begin concrete, in-depth project planning and evaluations heading into FY23. In total, we anticipate that the hangar park project will take approximately three years to complete.

By expanding our facilities to include this northern property, we hope to continue acting as a gateway to West Michigan, attracting additional businesses, organizations and other partners to the area.

# NEXUS LEASE APPROVAL AT WMRA

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Nexus, an aircraft climate control system manufacturer and installer based out of Benton Harbor, is officially expanding their operations into one of the hangars at West Michigan Regional Airport. They’re subleasing the space through a large local manufacturer.

The team at Nexus was seeking a large, well-cared for space with a reliable track record. They ultimately decided to move a significant portion of their system manufacturing and installation operations to WMRA.

As the first manufacturing company to come on-site in the airport’s history, the WMRA team is excited to have this critical asset on-site and for Nexus to continue developing their business in Holland. We see this as an incredible step toward diversifying the operational footprint of the airport and continuing to bring new and exciting companies and opportunities to the area.





## WMRA'S PLACE IN THE U.S. AVIATION STRUCTURE

As we develop plans for the West Michigan Regional Airport's continued growth, we must keep in mind the important role that the airport fills in our community, in our state, and in our country. The official classification of the airport helps to define who we are and what services we provide to the community, but it also impacts the funding we're eligible to receive. To make sense of this, we've outlined how the government classifies our airport. As of 2020, the U.S. Department of Transportation reported the presence of 19,636 operational airports in the United States.

Within this amount, only 3,304 airports are "considered significant to national air transportation" to land themselves on the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) list. Updated every two years, the airports on this list, including WMRA, are the only airports in the United State that are eligible for federal funding.

Looking specifically at Michigan, of the 226 public-use airports in the state, only 96 are NPIAS airports. Once on the list, airports are categorized even further by their capabilities and how they serve their communities.

Overall, there are two categories of NPIAS airports: commercial, where individuals can book flights with major airlines, and general aviation, which encompasses a wide variety of other non-military aviation needs. Within these two larger categories, there are four additional classifications: national, regional, local and basic.

The United States' aviation structure classifies the West Michigan Regional Airport as a regional airport in the general aviation category. This means that our airport is responsible for supporting regional economies by connecting our communities to statewide and interstate markets, offering both charter plane services and business services to airport visitors.

While a classification may not seem important on the surface, it greatly came into play at the onset of the COVID-related precautionary measures put in place in the early months of 2020. Our classification as a regional general aviation airport determined the monetary support we could receive through the CARES Act. As business and travel slowed to a crawl, these additional monetary funds supplemented the costs to maintain our facilities and keep them operational through the slowest months of last year.

Our NPIAS classification as a regional general aviation airport has allowed us to continue bringing new economic opportunities to the area through our necessary non-commercial aviation services. Through emergency air services through Wings of Mercy, flight classes through Fly By Air, or any of the other capabilities available through the airport, West Michigan Regional continues to act as a gateway to West Michigan communities.

# FBO REPORT DATA

## AVERAGE MONTHLY SALES

AV Gas Sales

**\$4,526**

Jet Fuel Sales

**\$37,334**

## AVERAGE MONTHLY GALLONS DELIVERED

**48,688** | Total Gallons Delivered

## YEARLY TOTAL FLIGHTS

Transplant Flights

**1**

Wings of Mercy Flights

**6**

Freight Flights

**73**

## TOTAL FREIGHT WEIGHT

**81,152LBS**

