

ANNUAL REPORT



WEST MICHIGAN
REGIONAL AIRPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

Letter from Director

5

Outgoing Chair:
Russ Sylte

7

WMRAA Welcomes
New Board
Members

9

Development
at the Airport

10

Strategic
Planning
Session

11

Community

12

Food Truck
Fridays Take Off

13

Committed to
Education

15

Destination
Tulip Time
Senator Victory

16

Aviation Day

17

FBO Report Data

BOARD NEWS

Friends of the airport,

Reflecting on the last several years, I am tremendously proud of the place West Michigan Regional Airport has landed in 2022, and am even more excited about where it's headed in 2023. The airport spent the year deepening relationships with educational institutions, engaging the community in new and innovative ways, investing in new development projects, and welcoming four new voices to the authority board.

In 2022, the airport prioritized providing educational opportunities for students and adults interested in careers in aviation. We are happy to expand these opportunities in 2023 by partnering with Hamilton

Public Schools' work based learning program and futurePREP'd Academy. These students will have the opportunity to give input on community engagement opportunities, tour aircrafts and flight school, and test FlightPath's flight simulator. These programs aim to engage students early in order to bring awareness to career opportunities in aviation.

The airport recognizes the importance of fostering the future of aviation in a variety of ways. In addition to engaging local educational groups, we also implemented new airport activities to welcome and engage the community in this valuable resource. We hosted our first "Food Truck Fridays" event this



LETTER FROM DIRECTOR AARON THELENWOOD

past summer and plan to continue hosting food trucks in the summer of 2023. Additionally, we invited the community to the airport to participate in our first Tulip Time Fly-in and Aviation Day events, both of which were immensely successful.

I am also proud of the professional and business development achievements the airport has made over the last year. We welcomed four new authority board members who are committed to an innovative future at the airport. Our successful sale of Parcel K and the formation of the development taskforce were major steps toward achieving the development goals set during our strategic planning session.

Our team and board came together at the end of 2022 to map out the future of the airport. At the end of the session, we came away with a clear set of goals and actionable items for the next several years. 2023 will be another prosperous year spent engaging more of the community in the airport, educating the future of aviation, and bringing on talented business partners to achieve our strategic goals.

Kind regards,

AARON THELENWOOD

Airport Authority Director

**"RUSS' COMPETENT
AND COMPASSIONATE
LEADERSHIP HELPED
MOVE THE AIRPORT
FORWARD OVER THE
LAST EIGHT YEARS,"**

- Airport Authority Director, Aaron Thelenwood



OUTGOING CHAIR: RUSS SYLTE

After eight years of outstanding board service and six years as board chair, Russ Sylte reached authority term limits in February 2023.

Sylte brought excellent private-sector perspectives and business acumen to board meetings from his career at the Metal Flow Corporation. His experience as a frequent business flier throughout the world influenced his desire for West Michigan Regional Airport to be a great place for all passengers to visit.

“Russ’ competent and compassionate leadership helped move the airport forward over the last eight years,” said Airport Authority Director Aaron Thelenwood. “We are incredibly grateful for his partnership, dedication, and service.”

During his tenure Sylte contributed to the runway rehab project, two FBO transfers, business center construction, and hiring the first airport authority director, among other accomplishments.

Of his time, Sylte said, “I enjoyed my time at the airport. It was fun working with great leaders who genuinely love the airport and are looking to make West Michigan a great place to work, live and play.”

With his newly-available free time, Sylte plans to spend more time hunting, fishing, boating and supporting the *Big Red Foundation*.

WMRAA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Chuck Murray

City of Holland

Chuck Murray joined the board this year as a representative of the City of Holland. A retired Navy intelligence officer, Chuck Murray worked in information technology for 20 years before becoming an estate attorney 13 years ago.

Murray's first visit to WMRA was with his West Coast Chamber of Commerce's leadership class. He was interested in the airport and its growth potential, so when he saw the committee and board openings he applied.

Bringing his Navy mindset to WMRA, he hopes to draw from his experience in aviation assets to make the airport less reliant on tax dollars.

In his free time, Murray leads a scout troop—most of whom have earned their aviation merit badges.



Ken Brandsen

Park Township

A lifelong community member, Brandsen is invested in Holland's vitality. He has a long history with the airport, serving five years on the Airport Advisory Committee to the City of Holland before joining the airport authority board's Building and Development Committee for another five years. Ken Brandsen joined the WMRA Authority

Board as Park Township representative in 2022.

During his decade-long tenure on these two committees, Brandsen contributed to the building of the Washington Ave. tunnel and the 6,002 ft runway.

Brandsen also had ties to WMRA from his architecture career working on the development of WMRA's business center.

Brandsen's experience with the airport has made him a valuable addition to the board. He looks forward to contributing to WMRA's long-term plans, especially by fostering future business development.

Brandsen loves living and boating in Park Township and is excited to represent his community on the West Michigan Airport Authority Board.



Elisa Hoekwater

Park Township

Elisa Hoekwater joined the board this year with over a decade of experience working in transportation. She is currently the executive director of MAX Transit, a role she's had since 2018. A committed community member, Hoekwater is a member of Lakeshore Latinas where she serves as their secretary, and is a graduate of both West Coast Leadership and Holland Leadership.

Hoekwater first engaged with the airport while she was working for the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council as transportation manager. She was tasked with creating a long-range transportation plan and recognized the need to include the airport, as it was a largely non-acknowledged community asset in the past.

Hoekwater reengaged with the airport several years later to coordinate efforts to improve the air quality of the region. "As we continue to grow in population and employment, it's important to look into the future and pay attention to air quality standards. Our region works really well together, and we've been successful in collectively improving the quality of the air and the state of the ozone," said Hoekwater.

Currently, Hoekwater is working with several community organizations at the executive level to think of ways to make a more cohesive mobility strategy for the region. They're particularly interested in strategies that give greater mobility with energy efficiency.

Hoekwater is a proven leader and a champion for community transportation. Her service on the WMRAA board is an asset to the community, and we look forward to learning from her expertise.



Doug Barense

City of Zeeland

Doug Barense joined the board this year as a representative of the City of Zeeland. Barense brings over a decade of experience undertaking large scale construction projects as a project manager. He's served as job captain for several major undertakings including the renovation of the DeVos Place Convention Center, Central Wesleyan Church, Christ Memorial Church, Lake Superior State University's Library and more.

Active in his community, Barense serves as chair of the Board of Appeals, commissioner & liaison to the Board of Zoning Appeals and is a board member on the Board of Construction Appeals, all for the City of Zeeland.

His varied expertise has brought a variety of new ideas to the airport.

DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT AT THE AIRPORT



See
Available
Parcels

The airport closed on the sale of Parcel K in early 2023. The parcel was purchased by a local manufacturing and automation company. All dollars from the sale of the property will be used toward additional development at the airport.

The airport has additional land available for lease and development, including space on Parcels B & C, the future home of the North Business Park. The parcels will have runway access by taxi lane. Development on Parcels B & C is open to any aviation related business or business serving the aviation community.

In 2022, the airport authority developed a task force of business and community leaders entrusted to support the development of the North Business Park. The group's goal is to support the growth of the airport.

VALUES

ECONOMIC GROWTH

We drive business forward. We advocate for West Michigan businesses and their growth in the global economy.

STEWARDSHIP

Our community depends on us to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION



See the full
strategic plan
here:

West Michigan Regional Airport Authority held a strategic planning session in December 2022. The board used the half-day session to do an in-depth analysis of the airport's operations and opportunities, select organizational values, establish a ten year vision and set priorities for the upcoming year.

"With the unified vision of the board established, we're looking forward to tackling top priorities that will further support the business development of our region," said Aaron Thelenwood, Airport Director. "Education, safety and the support of local businesses continue to be top priorities of the board."

PARTNERSHIP

We value partnerships within the aviation industry and with community businesses, schools, organizations and residents.

EXCELLENCE

With beautiful facilities, well-maintained runways and an unwavering commitment to safety, pilots and patrons choose us for the best flight experience.

INNOVATION

We are leading innovation in aviation for an airport our size. Other airports look to us to see what's next.

COMMUNITY



FOOD TRUCK FRIDAYS TAKE OFF

WMRA invites community members to Food Truck Fridays

West Michigan Regional Airport invited community members to indulge in Food Truck Fridays this past summer. The airport organized three Food Truck Friday events, each featuring a different food truck throughout the afternoon.

The events were a hit from the start with the first food truck selling out within two hours. Featured food trucks in 2022 included Mezkla's Taqueria & Fruteria, NOM NOM Ninja and BigFoot Burger Co.. WMRA plans to continue hosting food trucks into 2023, adding more food truck options and entertainment to future events.

“Hosting Food Truck events has been a great way to invite community members out to the airport,” said Amanda VanLaar, Sustainability and Operations Specialist. “Many of the visitors enjoyed touring the business center and were able to catch a few planes take off and land while they ate.”

Stay tuned to our website and social media pages for future dates and times.

COMMITTED TO EDUCATION

West Michigan Regional Airport partners with OAISD, Hamilton Schools, and more.

Between the national pilot shortage and dwindling interest in aviation careers in the upcoming workforce, aviation organizations at all levels have prioritized education and career exploration.

West Michigan Regional Airport has continued to partner with nonprofit organizations FlightPath and STEM Flights, but has also added partnerships with the OAISD and Hamilton Schools in 2023.

“The best learning is experiential, hands-on and there are so many amazing careers in aviation. We have opportunities to connect the content and skills kids are learning to real-life experiences, but unfortunately not many middle and high schoolers get a chance to explore all of the options. We’re working to change that by partnering with West Michigan Regional Airport and inviting students to learn more about the aviation field,” said Dave Tebo, OAISD Innovation Director.

WMRA was grateful to host representatives from the OAISD and Hamilton to identify areas for collaboration. This year WMRA will participate in two new educational programs.

HAMILTON'S PROJECT-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM

As part of Hamilton's Project Based Learning Program, West Michigan Regional Airport hosted a class of twenty two 6th-graders once a month, from January to March. Students toured the business center, the flight school training aircrafts and tried out FlightPath's flight simulators.

While at WMRA, students learned about the importance of regional airports, the differences between the Airport Authority and a fixed based operator (FBO), and the types of jobs an airport offers.

But it's not all for fun, the students also need to help the airport by answering “How can West Michigan Regional Airport better engage youth and the general community at the airport?”

Students were eager to present their ideas in front of the airport staff and board members.

FUTUREPREP'D ACADEMY AND ADULT EDUCATION

Students looking for a more in-depth look into the industry will have the opportunity to work at WMRA. In collaboration with futurePREP'd Academy, an after-school program that pairs high schoolers with local businesses, WMRA will work with a handful of students up to the task.

For two weeks in June, students will work to find innovative solutions to an industry challenge. At the end of their time they'll present their conclusions to members of the WMRA team and board.

"We're very excited to welcome these students and give them a full picture of what it's like to work in the aviation industry," said WMRA Sustainability and Operations Specialist Amanda VanLaar. "WMRA wants all ages to have access to learning about aviation careers."

In addition to hosting a team of highschoolers, WMRA will be providing the same experience through a similar structure Hamilton has established for its younger students. For one week of overlap with the older futurePREP'd program, a small group of middle school students will join the team at the airport to learn about aviation and gain hands-on experience.

While continuing to foster the future aviation workforce, WMRA also plans to create opportunities for adults ready for employment. They plan to partner with OAISD's adult learning program to build awareness around available aviation careers.

"West Michigan Regional Airport recognizes the importance of investing in the future of aviation, and that includes investing in the workforce," said Amanda VanLaar. "We want to create a pathway for anyone who is interested in pursuing a career in aviation regardless of age or background."



DESTINATION TULIP TIME

WMRA hosted its first Tulip Time Fly-In in May 2022. The airport welcomed pilots and members of the community throughout the afternoon for a complimentary pancake breakfast courtesy of Wings of Mercy, the opportunity to view Tulip City Airforce's fleet of RC planes, and to test out Flight Path's flight simulators. Guests enjoyed the social event before heading over to the Tulip Time festivities through transportation provided by Allegan County.

Thank you to all who joined us. WMRA plans to host the event again for Tulip Time 2023.

SENATOR VICTORY



On August 12th, 2022, we welcomed our state senator, Roger Victory, to the airfield. Victory chairs the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee and serves as assistant majority whip. He also chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government.

During his visit, Senator Victory toured our terminal, enjoyed a presentation on the airport, and met with several of our on-site businesses. He also met with Flight Path, one of the two nonprofit organizations operating at WMRA. Flight Path educates middle and high school students about careers in aviation.

Thank you for joining us for a tour, Senator Victory!

Through these initiatives, WMRA is not only supporting the development of a skilled aviation workforce, but also contributing to the local community. The airport looks forward to continuing to help inspire and equip the next generation of aviation professionals, while also fostering a more diverse and inclusive industry.

AVIATION DAY

Celebrating a successful, flight-filled weekend!

At our first Aviation Day, hundreds in the Holland community assembled at West Michigan Regional Airport on Saturday, August 20th, to enjoy a flight-filled event for the whole family. We welcomed pilots, food trucks, and aviation enthusiasts to the airfield.

As the Hooligans Flight Team soared above their heads, attendees enjoyed a morning filled with food, fun, and of course, flying! Eighty-three participants ran a 5k across the airfield and enjoyed a delicious pancake breakfast from Wings of Mercy, an organization that provides life-saving flights to patients all over the country.

Though the weather didn't cooperate for the free airplane rides from the Young Eagles, Flight Path's Redbird Simulator gave pilots of all ages and experience levels the opportunity to take flight. The Vintage Car Club of Holland even drove up to the airport in their classic cars, sharing their love of vintage vehicles with our airplane buffs.

All in all, the weekend was filled with lots of aerial twists and turns. We can't wait to see you take flight with us at next year's National Aviation Day!



FBO REPORT DATA

AVERAGE MONTHLY SALES

Gas Sales

2,849 GALLONS

Jet Fuel Sales

51,120 GALLONS

AVERAGE MONTHLY GALLONS DELIVERED

53,969

YEAR TOTAL FLIGHTS

3

Transplant Flights

23

Wings of Mercy Flights

TOTAL FREIGHT WEIGHT

54,504



OPERATIONAL REVENUE

LOCAL SUPPORT - \$284,457

FEDERAL SUPPORT - \$302,020

STATE SUPPORT - \$90,894

USER FEES - \$137,280

RENTALS - \$144,097

INTEREST INCOME - (\$5,671)

TOTAL REVENUE - \$953,077

90% FEDERAL
5% STATE
5% LOCAL

FINANCING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Airport capital improvements are funded by a combination of federal, state and local dollars. Federal grants will cover 90% of the cost of approved improvements but the grants require a 5% state & local match. The 5% state match comes from MDOT. The 5% local match comes from our community milages and other airport revenue sources.

REVENUE

\$953,077

EXPENSES

\$893,046

FUND BALANCE

\$1,238,947

WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL AIRPORT ROI

For every dollar of taxpayer support

\$1 = \$150

West Michigan Region Airport
returns \$150 to the community
in economic impact.



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