



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Operations at Gary/Chicago International Airport up following opening of extended runway**

GARY (August 10, 2015) – A little over a month after the opening of an extended main runway, operations at Gary/Chicago International Airport are up 33 percent compared to last year.

The airport's newly extended 8,900 foot runway opened on June 25, following a decade-long expansion project. The increased length means the airport can accommodate larger aircraft and serve more destinations.

"We've already seen a tremendous increase in air traffic since the runway opened last month," said airport executive director Dan Vicari. "It's a good indicator that more travelers are taking advantage of Gary/Chicago International Airport's proximity to Chicago. With the expanded runway, we're able to offer more services than ever before."

July revenue from landing, fuel, and parking increased 9 percent from June. Air traffic increased from 1,868 takeoffs and landings in June to 2,974 in July.

Starting August 18, the runway will be shut down for 36 hours while Rieth-Riley Construction and Midwestern Electric complete the last small projects to ensure the runway is in full compliance with Federal Aviation Administration safety area standards. Contractors will complete airfield road paving and make it safer for airport personnel to access the airfield.

The Airport Authority also discussed continued upkeep of a rail berm constructed last fall.

In October 2014, CN relocated on to 4.6 miles of new railroad track constructed by GCIAA contractors to make room for the expanded runway. The embankment that the tracks run on requires warranty maintenance to address minor settlement under the weight of the new train traffic.

"As with any major infrastructure project, we anticipated that the railroad relocation project may need warranty maintenance," said John Lukas, project manager with AECOM. "When you have hundreds of tons of rail cars passing through as many as 78 times a day, there is naturally going to be some settlement of the infrastructure, and it's important to mitigate that before it affects the operation of the train traffic."

Gary/Chicago International Airport will serve as the staging area for Chicago's Air and Water Show this weekend, as it has for at least the past decade. Planes will start arriving Wednesday and the practice day is Friday.

Additionally, the airport is partnering with South Shore Clean Cities to promote environmental stewardship by reducing carbon emissions. The airport will host a “Green Fleet” event on Wednesday, August 19 from 9 am to 3 pm to highlight best practices in improving the environmental performance of business and government vehicle fleets. The event is part of a larger effort by the airport to increase the efficiency of its fleet and foster sustainable practices.

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