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Gary/Chicago International Airport welcomes state's aviation community *Airport Authority Board hears updates on Master Plan Update, airport growth*

GARY, Ind. (April 25, 2016) – The Gary/Chicago International Airport hosted more than 50 members of the Indiana's aviation community for the Aviation Association of Indiana's (AAI) quarterly meeting on April 21. The Gary/Chicago International Airport Authority Board heard a report on the AAI meeting and other updates at Monday's board meeting.

The Aviation Association of Indiana has been an advocate for aviation interests since 1983 and represents all regions of the state, providing a network for general aviation, support industries, aerospace educators, airports, fixed base operators, aircraft owners and operators and pilots at all ratings levels. 54 attendees from the state of Indiana participated in the in the event, which included airport managers, engineers, and Federal Aviation Administration, Transportation Security Administration, fixed-based operators, and Indiana Department of Transportation representatives.

“The Gary/Chicago International Airport is first and foremost an economic engine for Gary and the region,” said Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, who opened the AAI meeting and welcomed attendees to Gary. “We're so excited to welcome Indiana's aviation community to Gary and to show off all the hard work that's been going on at the airport.”

Executive director Dan Vicari briefed the association on the airport's growth, highlighting the Runway Expansion Project completed last summer and the recently launched Master Plan Update.

“The runway expansion opens up a lot of new opportunities for growth at the airport, and by extension, in the community,” said Vicari. “The Master Plan Update will chart the course for the next phase of development at the airport.”

The Airport Authority Board also heard a progress report on the Master Plan Update. The airport expects to announce the winning Master Plan team in the coming weeks. In March, the airport hosted a business expo to connect local Gary and northwest Indiana businesses capable of providing certain subcontracting services with the three engineering and design firms who have been shortlisted to update the airport's Master Plan.

“We were extremely pleased with the level of local inclusion on each of the teams resulting from last month's business expo,” said airport chairman Stephen Mays. “It made our decision even more difficult, but we are excited to get to work and to get our local businesses to work.”

In other updates to the board, airport manager Michael Zonsius reported operations are up nearly 6 percent year-to-date from 2015, despite a slower March due to high winds and rain. Zonsius also announced the airport was awarded the 2015 Excellence in Concrete Pavement Award from the Indiana Chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association. The award was for the Runway 12/30 Expansion Project and also recognized the project contractor, Rieth-riley Construction Co., Inc. and design engineer, NGC Corporation.

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