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Contacts:

David Goldenberg

Email: [david.goldenberg@resoluteconsulting.com](mailto:david.goldenberg@resoluteconsulting.com)

Sofia Valdivia

Email: [sofia.valdivia@resoluteconsulting.com](mailto:sofia.valdivia@resoluteconsulting.com)

## ***Gary/Chicago International Airport Hosted Live, Full-Scale Training Exercise Responding to an Aircraft Accident***

**(Gary, Indiana - June 22, 2018)** — On Thursday, the Gary/Chicago International Airport (GYI) held a joint, full-scale training exercise responding to an aircraft situation in partnership with the City of Gary Fire Department and Indiana Army National Guard. More than 125 individuals, including dozens of first responders and emergency personnel from across the region, participated in the simulation of a mass casualty incident involving a Blackhawk helicopter colliding into a Bombardier CRJ-200 passenger aircraft carrier during a mock emergency landing.

“The Gary/Chicago International Airport plays a critical role in the region and state of Indiana in staging how we respond to disasters. I am proud of the airport’s ability to handle situations like the one we simulated today at the airport and any disaster situation that may occur in the region,” said GYI Chairman Timothy Fesko.

The training exercise involved six soldiers and passengers aboard the Blackhawk helicopter being extricated and treated as well as several injured ground personnel being treated. Fire officials also simulated applying a protective application of foam to prevent a fire and sent a team to contain and stop a mock jet fuel spill.

In addition to testing the airport’s capabilities when faced in an emergency situation, the exercise also satisfies FAA requirements for the airport to conduct a full scale exercise on a triennial basis.

“Today’s event demonstrates the airport’s readiness and the readiness of the region’s first responders if faced with a real emergency situation. I want to thank all involved for their contribution to the success of this important event,” said Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson.

With immediate access to four major interstates, GYI is a leading host of the region’s disaster response centers including FEMA, which stages natural disaster responses out of the airport, as well as the Indiana Army National Guard. Additionally, earlier this month the Lake County Board of Commissioners announced that the airport is a leading contender for locating a backup E-911 communications center. “Since 2008, GYI has served as home base for the Indiana Army National Guard providing us with all-weather capabilities, such as refueling and maintenance facilities, in order for us to meet any crisis at any time. Today’s event further highlights the airports abilities and level of preparedness in any given



situation, as well as the effectiveness of our teams to successfully communicate with one another in an emergency situation and create and foster expanding partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies,” said MAJ Robert Jenzio, AASF Gary - Operations Officer.

GYI continues to be a critical piece of the region’s infrastructure, which is underscored by the airport’s new general aviation U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility scheduled to open before the end of July. The new customs facility will allow airport users to fly into GYI from any destination in the world without having to stop elsewhere to clear customs.

“Today’s simulation was a huge success and was critical in helping us enhance our interagency coordination to learn what we are doing well and where we need to hone in on our training,” said GYI Executive Director Duane Hayden.

Recognized as Chicago’s third airport, GYI represents the highest degree of safety and operational efficiency with the capacity and room to grow into the future.

“I am proud of the outcome of today’s simulation and the hard work and dedication seen by all of our first responders, emergency personal, airport staff and volunteers. It is successes like today that showcase the City of Gary’s capability to effectively handle dire situations,” said Deputy Mark Jones, chief of operations for the Gary Fire Department.

***About Gary/Chicago International Airport***

Located minutes from the shores of Lake Michigan and just 25 miles from downtown Chicago, Gary/Chicago International Airport (GYI) is a full-service airport and a premiere destination for corporate and weekend flyers in the Chicago metropolitan region and Northwest Indiana.

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