



For Immediate Release

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Michigan Flyer to offer “near hourly” motorcoach service between East Lansing and Detroit Metro Airport

Michigan Flyer has been awarded a one-time federal grant of \$595,680 to complete the establishment of its new motorcoach route from East Lansing via I-96 and US-23 to Ann Arbor, then to Detroit Metro Airport on I-94 and back.

The grant enables the Michigan Flyer to increase from eight to 12 the number of daily round trips originating in East Lansing.

“This 50 percent increase in frequency will give our passengers in Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, and Washtenaw County what they’ve desired for so long—the convenience of *near-hourly service* between early morning and late evening, seven days a week, in both directions,” said Gordon Mackay, president of Michigan Flyer and its parent company, Indian Trails. “And for our many passengers who either don’t or can’t drive, this is more than a matter of convenience—it’s a critical improvement in public transportation.”

“This also represents an economic boon for both the Greater Lansing and Ann Arbor regions,” noted Chad Cushman, vice president of Indian Trails.

“One-third of Michigan Flyer’s passengers come from out of state to do business, attend conventions, and visit family, friends, and colleges and universities in Mid- and Southeast Michigan,” Cushman explained. “That’s already 30,000 people a year spending millions locally and creating jobs. The increased frequency will attract even more.”

Michigan Flyer began its new route last April, when it formed a public-private partnership with the Ann Arbor Transit Authority (“TheRide”) to make 12 daily round trips between Ann Arbor and Detroit Metro airport. The service is co-branded as Michigan Flyer and “AirRide.”

Meanwhile, East Lansing departures have remained at eight per day because passenger volume was insufficient to support 12 on fare box revenue alone.

“The solution is to increase the frequency of our trips,” said Cushman. “For example, if there is only a one-hour wait between motorcoaches instead of two hours, you are more apt to ride with us than to drive yourself.”

(more)



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That's where the grant from the Transportation Community System Preservation (TCSP) program comes in. It will cover 80 percent of the first-year operating costs to establish the four new round trips between East Lansing, Ann Arbor, and DTW. Michigan Flyer will contribute \$148,920 or 20 percent of first-year operating cost, plus invest \$550,000 to purchase one new motorcoach to add to its existing fleet of five.

TCSP grant guidelines give priority consideration to this type of public-private partnership. Michigan Flyer's application for the TCSP grant was sponsored by the Michigan Department of Transportation, which ranked it third of 18 proposals by Michigan applicants this year.

Michigan Flyer and Indian trails are poised to rapidly implement the new schedule soon after the grant funds are released.

"Let's not forget that this is also a win for the environment," said Mackay. "Michigan Flyer's fleet of 2012 motorcoaches is equipped with technology that reduces exhaust emissions to near zero. Each coach exceeds EPA standards; achieves high fuel economy (184 passenger miles per gallon), and has the capacity to remove 50 cars from our congested roadways."

"We have a lot of people to thank for helping to make this TCSP grant possible," he added. "That includes Gov. Rick Snyder, MDOT, the Michigan Congressional Delegation, many state legislators, community leaders, and local government officials especially in East Lansing and Ann Arbor, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan, and longtime supporters like the Michigan Environmental Council and Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers."

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The Michigan Flyer—whose motto is "Why Drive?"—offers affordable, seamless, luxury motorcoach connections between Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Detroit Metro Airport. Headquartered at the East Lansing Marriott, Michigan Flyer has served 500,000 passengers since its launch in 2006 and has achieved an extraordinary 98 percent rate of on-time arrivals and departures. On the web: www.michiganflyer.com.

Indian Trails, Inc.—which has served as Michigan's premiere, family-owned, inter-city motorcoach carrier for more than 100 years, and is based in Owosso, MI—operates one of the largest and newest fleets of deluxe motorcoaches in Michigan. Its services include charters, tours, shuttles, airport transfers, casino runs and daily scheduled routes throughout Michigan and into Chicago and Milwaukee. On the web at www.indiantrails.com.

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