



MICHIGAN'S PREMIER MOTORCOACH CONNECTION  
BETWEEN EAST LANSING, ANN ARBOR  
& DETROIT METRO AIRPORT



# e-news

MARCH 2019



## Travel Alerts

### During the Ann Arbor Marathon, Some of Our Runs Bypass BTC

Due to street closures downtown for the [ProBility Ann Arbor Marathon](#) on Sunday, March 24, some Michigan Flyer-AirRide runs will bypass the Blake Transit Center (BTC) and stop instead at the Kensington Hotel. However, we will operate all scheduled runs for that day. Please use the "Book a Trip" feature on our website to see which runs stop at the BTC and which stop at Kensington that day.



The marathon starts at 7:30 a.m. and includes a full marathon, half-marathon, 10K, and 5K. Participants run through downtown Ann Arbor, city parks, the University of Michigan campus, and along the Huron River. Indian Trails and Michigan Flyer are both sponsors of the event.

### Book Seats Early for "Family Spring Break"

Recently, we transported thousands of college students safely to and from Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) for their spring break. (Thank you for choosing to ride with us!) Now it's time for flocks of parents with students in K-12 schools throughout mid-Michigan to head off on family spring break. This means March 29 through April 8 will

be another peak travel period for Michigan Flyer-AirRide. So, if you plan to travel with us around this time, it would be wise to reserve your seats early.



### **During the Ann Arbor Hash Bash, Some Runs Bypass BTC**

During Ann Arbor's 48th annual [Hash Bash](#) on the weekend of April 5-7, some Michigan Flyer-AirRide runs will bypass Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center and proceed to the Kensington Hotel instead. That's because portions of the event will disrupt downtown traffic on Saturday due to its popularity. The Hash Bash bills itself as "the largest pro-cannabis festival east of the Mississippi."

As usual, you can use the "Book a Trip" feature on our website to see the time and place of each stop on our route. Travelers planning to stay overnight in Ann Arbor during the weekend may find vacancies scarce at the Wyndham Garden Hotel and Hampton Inn, where a cannabis trade show called the "Hash Bash Cup" will be held.



### **Meet Driver Scott Dillon**

In 2015, after years of working in an 8-to-5 office career, Scott Dillon decided it was time for a change. So he traded in his desk chair for a seat behind the steering wheel of a 56-passenger motorcoach as a driver for our parent company, Indian Trails. He moved over to Michigan Flyer in 2016.

"I didn't want to sit at a desk for the rest of my life, and I really liked to drive," Scott recalls, adding that he heard about the position from Michigan Flyer driver Jennifer

King.

Like every new driver who comes to us, Scott first had to attend Indian Trails' intensive, five-week training program where he learned all the ins and outs of maneuvering a bus. "Having 45 feet of bus behind you when you're at the wheel takes some getting used to at first," he says. "It's crucial training, and you just keep getting better at it."

As a side benefit of that instruction, he's now an even safer driver when he's in his own car. "Through training you really learn to pay even more attention to your surroundings," he says. "You need to be constantly aware of what's happening around you while you're on the road. And at both Indian Trails and Michigan Flyer, the No. 1 thing you learn is that safety is always the top priority."

Right up there with safety is delivering great customer service, which is also part of the training. And Scott discovered right away that interacting with his passengers is just as satisfying for him as being out on the open road.

"When I was working in an office, I mostly dealt with customers by phone, which is limiting," he says. "In this job, I really enjoy the face-to-face interaction with my passengers. Most are either coming from, or going to, Detroit Metro Airport. They're typically friendly and fun to talk with, so I've heard some pretty interesting stories."

One of the challenges of his job, Scott adds, is communicating with passengers from foreign countries who speak little or no English. In an effort to help them, he relies on body language, the "Google Translate"

smartphone app, and sometimes other passengers who volunteer to translate. “I try to coax out what they need. It usually works out.”

Scott also appreciates the opportunity to get acquainted with passengers who frequently travel with him between East Lansing and Ann Arbor. “I’ve gotten to know some of them on a first-name basis and that’s nice.”

Even though his regular shift starts at around 3 a.m., Scott loves working with the Michigan Flyer staff, then carving out time after hours to spend with his family and keep up with MSU Spartan football and basketball.

And while it was an adjustment to go to bed every evening at around 6 p.m. in order to be bright and fresh for his route the next day, it still beats working in an office.

“When you’re a driver, you don’t have a supervisor standing over your shoulder micro-managing you,” he says. “Here, you’re in charge of your bus and responsible both for it and the safety and satisfaction of your passengers.”

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## Airfare Watch

### Cheap Flights to Disney World for “Family Spring Break”

How much would it cost to fly from DTW to Orlando, Fla. (MCO) and back during the K-12 spring break period? To find out, we checked fares for [Spirit Airlines](#)—the lowest-priced carrier on the route—for nonstop flights departing on Friday, March 29, and returning on Sunday, April 7. Roundtrips for those exact dates were going for about \$332. However, flexibility on travel days can produce real savings. For instance, you could knock \$50 off the total by leaving one day earlier (March 28) and another \$45 by returning two days earlier (on April 5.)



### Spirit Airlines Flies Dumbo the Elephant

Even if you’re not going to Orlando, there’s a chance you could encounter Disney on Spirit Airlines. That’s because the airline has wrapped an Airbus A321 with a giant image of “Dumbo,” the big-eared baby elephant, which will be flying around the country for the next two months. Calling itself “Florida’s Hometown Airline,” Spirit teamed up with Disney to promote the March 29 release of a [new “Dumbo” movie](#) starring Danny

DeVito, Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton and Eva Green. The job of wrapping the plane with the Disney/Dumbo decals was done earlier this month at DTW. Check out this [time-lapse video](#) of the process, which is similar to how Indian Trails wraps its [Pure Michigan buses](#).

### Southwest Airlines Begins Flights to Hawaii

On March 17, Southwest began [selling tickets to Hawaii](#) (Honolulu, Maui and Kona) from Oakland and San Jose, Calif., with more service to start from Sacramento and San Diego in coming months. The airline’s first FAA-approved long over-water flights may eventually mean lower prices on flights from Detroit Metro Airport to the 50th state via California connections. But that’s not yet the case. Introductory \$49 one-way tickets between Oakland and Honolulu sold out fast, and summer flights on that route run around \$200 (or \$400 roundtrip).

For now, your best bet from DTW to Hawaii appears to be Delta Airlines. Spot-checking flights departing DTW on May 20 and returning on May 30, for example, we found Delta roundtrips as low as \$723. These include short layovers in Los Angeles (LAX) on both the outgoing and return trips. You can keep an eye on Southwest’s deals by checking its [low fare calendar](#) periodically.



Virginia Rogers

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## More Great Connections: An Eco-Friendly Ride was Just the Ticket

“My Michigan Flyer-AirRide trip dovetailed perfectly with my recent visit to Washington, D.C.! In June I traveled there to participate in the Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) national conference and lobby day. I was one of over 1,200 volunteers from across the country who arrived on Capitol Hill on June 12 to meet with all 535 of our members of Congress to ask for fair and effective legislation to address climate change. As a member of CCL, I believe that citizens can and must work to build support on both sides of the aisle in order

to have a lasting solution to climate change.

“Because climate change is such a serious threat to our children's future, I'm passionate about actively working on a solution, and I devote a large amount of my time to this cause. I also believe that it's important to reduce my own personal carbon footprint as much as possible. I commute to work by bicycle, seldom eat red meat, have switched to LED lightbulbs, and have made many energy efficiency improvements to my home. This is why I'm so happy to have the option to use AirRide. Not only is AirRide convenient, relaxing and inexpensive, it's a much more environmentally friendly way to get to/from the airport than driving alone in a car!

“(And for the record, I purchased renewable energy certificates to offset the carbon footprint of my flight!)”

—Virginia Rogers, Ann Arbor

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## Michigan Flyer Drivers Honored for Safety

Every year, our parent company—Indian Trails—honors those who've piloted its buses for the entire year without a preventable accident. Thirty-eight motorcoach drivers—six of whom transport Michigan Flyer-AirRide passengers—received the Cora V. Taylor Safe Driving Award for 2018.

Their achievement is remarkable considering the thousands of miles driven, the severe weather conditions encountered, and the many poorly skilled drivers they avoided on the road.

The award is named after Indian Trails' co-founder, a similarly dedicated and remarkable woman who was the first female licensed chauffeur in the U.S., and served 16 years as the company's president.

We're proud to have such dedicated professionals on our team. Their names have been added to permanent plaques on display at each Indian Trails location, and all have received a gift card in appreciation for their accomplishments.



## Customer Comments

Michigan Flyer-AirRide recently received a [Certificate of Excellence](#) from TripAdvisor for consistently earning great reviews from travelers. Here's an example:

"My family has used Michigan Flyer since its inception. Especially valuable with two students traveling between East Lansing and the University of Michigan. The service is 100% reliable, drivers and office staff courteous, and perks on the bus such as water, free

WiFi and cleanliness are always expected and appreciated. Also, a fantastic and stress-free way to travel to Detroit Metro airport. Often less expensive than driving our car and parking at the airport."

—Christine N., East Lansing, Mich.

## Top Coming Events—We Can Get You There

### East Lansing

**MSU Science Festival**, April 5-20, with more than [200 FREE activities](#) on campus and statewide. Presenters aim to dazzle, delight, educate, and inform by showing how science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics shape our lives and future. The festival kicks off with a talk by pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha on



✍️ “Unraveling the Mysteries of the Flint Water Crisis” at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 5, at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, 219 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing.

✍️ **Wharton Center Presents: The Summit**, in which two iconic groups with 20 Grammy Awards between them—jazz greats Manhattan Transfer and gospel’s Take 6—join forces for an unforgettable performance. It’s at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 10, at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Lane, on the MSU campus. Tickets start at \$40.

✍️ **Capital City Film Festival**, this 9th annual multimedia showcase of independent films and live touring bands takes place April 11-21 at various venues and times around Lansing. Individual film events are \$5, concerts \$5-\$15. A **\$50 all-access pass** gets you into all film screenings, concerts, and parties, including the Red Carpet Premiere.

Find more local coming events with the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar: <http://www.lansing.org/events>

## Ann Arbor

✍️ **Ann Arbor Film Festival**, now in its 57th year, is the oldest avant-garde and experimental film festival in North America. Between March 26 and March 31, the **festival schedule** offers 40 programs with more than 180 films of all lengths and genres, including experimental, animation, documentary, fiction, and performance-based works. Times and venues vary, as do **ticket prices** for individual screenings and passes for the weekend or full festival.



Photo Credit: Joel Iverson

✍️ **Army vs. Navy Wheelchair Basketball Game**, 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 30, at the University of Michigan’s Crisler Center, 333 E. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor. This 14th annual Army vs. Navy Wheelchair Basketball Game is a spirited and exciting event whose players typically include U.S. Paralympians and military veterans. Free and open to the public.

✍️ **National Geographic: Symphony for Our World**. This unprecedented event pairs the magazine’s stunning natural history footage with an original symphony performed live by a full orchestra and choir.

The imagery rises from the depths of the sea, up the coastline, over mountains, and soars into the sky as each movement forms a powerful tribute to the beauty and wonders of our world. It’s Thursday, April 4, at Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. **Tickets \$20-\$75**.

✍️ **Leo Kottke**, legendary master of the acoustic guitar, appears at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, at The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. His innovative, hard-to-categorize music reflects influences from all over the world, and guitar players inside and outside the folk world closely follow his work. Reserve early; his Ark shows consistently sell out. Tickets \$40.

Check the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar for more local events: <https://www.visitannarbor.org/splash/events>



## Four Tips for Smarter Travel

 [Know How to Find us at DTW's McNamara Terminal.](#)

 [Download Our Free Smartphone App to Track Your Bus in Real Time.](#)

 [Change Your Own Reservations Online, Sometimes.](#)

 [Buy an Affordable Travel Insurance Policy.](#)

## Help Others by Reviewing Us Online

Please use the review sites below to let others know about your Michigan Flyer-AirRide experience and help them to understand how our service might improve their travels.



*Happy  
Passover  
& Easter!*



Why Drive?

Booking is easy, [click here](#) to view schedules on



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