

Michigan's premier motorcoach connection between East Lansing, Whitmore Lake, Ann Arbor & Detroit Metro Airport.



Meet Chad Cushman, President of Indian Trails—America's #1 Bus Company

Last June, under the leadership of President Chad Cushman, Indian Trails was named the #1 Bus Company in America by USA Today, which had conducted a nationwide "10Best Readers' Choice Awards" poll in order to make the selection.



Who is this man who guided Indian Trails to such an achievement over giant competitors like Greyhound, Megabus, and FlixBus? For one thing, Chad is the first non-family member to become president of Indian Trails.

In its 115-year-old history, Indian Trails—the parent company of the Michigan Flyer—has had just five presidents: Founder Wayne Taylor, then his co-founder and wife, Cora Taylor, Bill Himburg, Gordon Mackay, and—since 2016—Chad Cushman.

In fact, the company is currently co-owned by Bill Himburg's five daughters: Mary Ferguson, Billie Maier, Linda Mackay, Harriet "Honey" Biondi, and Winalee Zeeb. They represent the third generation of family to lead the company.

How He Got Here

A native of Battle Creek, Mich., Chad attended Kellogg Community College and worked part-time in the bakery of a Felpausch Food Store. Next, he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at Western Michigan University.

His college and retail grocery experiences eventually led him into food service sales with Frito Lay. As a regional sales manager in the 1990s, Chad was



selected as one of the top salespeople in the world for PepsiCo, Frito Lay's parent company, which inducted him into its inaugural President's Ring of Honor in 1999.

"While that was rewarding, there was a lot of travel associated with the position, and my wife, Teresa, was pregnant with our first child," he recalls. "So I started looking for a different position. A help-wanted ad in the local newspaper caught my eye. It was for director of sales for group charters at Indian Trails."

Eight years after landing the job, he was promoted to vice president, and eight years after that he was named president. Since then, he's overseen all day-to-day operations of the company, including Michigan Flyer.

"I've been with the company for 26 years now and I'm never bored," he says.

"Because we provide 24-7 transportation, we're not a regular 9 a.m.-to-5 p.m. company. There's something new every day, and I thrive on it." He also has a proven knack for overcoming adversity.

Pivotal Alliances

Michigan Flyer was first launched in 2006, with eight round trips a day between East Lansing and Detroit Metro Airport. "It was a slow start. We carried just six or seven passengers per bus on the first day," Chad recalls. "We didn't turn a profit for many years."

That began to change in 2012. With the assistance of a federal grant to increase the frequency of service, Chad led efforts to develop the Flyer's first public-private partnership with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (The Ride) to form

AirRide, the daily scheduled service between Ann Arbor and DTW. "That partnership boosted Michigan Flyer's ridership, finally enabling us to break even," he says.

A similar partnership was established in 2019 with the Livingston Essential Transportation Service (LETS) to launch new airport service between Livingston County and DTW, and then again with the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan to launch D2A2, a new commuter service between downtown Ann Arbor and Detroit.

A Critical Roadblock

The biggest challenge Indian Trails has ever encountered was the Covid-19 pandemic. "Two weeks into March 2020, we had to furlough the majority of our workforce and shut down 95% of our operations," Chad recalls.

Once federal relief programs were announced, "We applied for everything and anything our company could qualify for," he says, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the CARES, CRRSAA and ARPA Acts. Those funds enabled Michigan Flyer and Indian Trails to slowly resume operations.

"Looking back, steering our company through Covid and back to full speed today, with an expanded schedule of 14 daily roundtrips for Michigan Flyer, was one of the most satisfying things I've done in my career," Chad says. "Even so, I hope to never go through anything like that again."

From the Top Down

Indian Trails' primary goal has always been to provide its customers with safe, courteous, efficient, and clean transportation. "We want our customers to repeat the experience, and to let others know about us," says Chad.

Great customer service starts with the company's employees, many of whom have said they enjoy the collegial, family-like atmosphere of Indian Trails and Michigan Flyer.

"The tone starts with our company's owners and flows down," notes Chad. "Here, if you want to get something done, you don't have to go through multiple layers of administration. We're a relatively small company. Our employees know that if there's an issue, our doors are open."

One of his favorite events is the Indian Trails annual service awards dinner, a celebration recognizing the achievements of employees. "It's the one time each year we get together at one location to celebrate individual accomplishments," he says.



L-R, daughters Gabby & Paige, Chad & wife Teresa

In the Community and At Home

Chad's work includes volunteer service in the business community. He's served as a board member of the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership, the American Bus Association, and the Shiawassee Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau.

He and his wife, Teresa, have two daughters, Gabby, 26, and Paige, 22. Chad has two brothers, his fraternal twin, Clint, and younger brother, Phillip. "Clint and I look more alike now than we did when we were kids," he notes.

And while he used to dedicate much of his "off time" to running, Chad now enjoys speed-walking with his wife and attending weekend classic car shows with his father, Lionel.

Revealing "Love Connections" Contest Winner #3

Our 2025 essay contest asked folks to tell us a great—and true—story about how Michigan Flyer helped to connect them with a special person, place, or adventure dear to their heart. It features a \$500 gift card Top Prize and five \$100 gift card runner-up prizes. Our judges—Michigan Flyer staff and creative consultants—selected this year's winners based on which essays best fit the contest theme. (Note that each winner is notified in the month their entry is to be published.)



Madison and her Dad in Verona, Italy, at the bronze statue of Shakespeare's Juliet

We're happy to announce that the third of our five runner-up winners is **Madison Creach** of East Lansing, Mich. Madison read about this contest in our E-News earlier this year and decided to submit an entry. "I read it every month," she says. "I love the structure and content, especially the stories from contest winners and information about upcoming events. I might even be the newsletter's number one fan."

Madison was introduced to the Flyer when she applied to Michigan State University's graduate program in Plant Biology. As part of the department's recruitment process, she was among the applicants chosen to be interviewed. In the material she received was a Michigan Flyer reservation from Detroit Metropolitan Airport to East Lansing.

"I don't know what my expectations were, but the Flyer exceeded them," she remembers. "It was easy to find at the airport and so comfortable." Since that first time, Madison, a native of Jefferson City, Mo., has frequently traveled on the Flyer. She hopes to work in an agricultural data science center once she completes her graduate degree.

Madison was delighted to receive our notice that she's a contest winner. And she knows exactly what she'll buy with her \$100 gift certificate: "The Lego Twilight House. I'm a big fan of the book series."

The First Step to Adventure

By Madison Creach

"I'm not from Michigan, all of my friends and family are scattered across the country and the world and to visit them I must travel. It can be difficult to have to constantly travel to see loved ones, but it is a comfort to know that I have easy access to transportation to the airport by the Flyer.

"The Flyer has been my first step on a trip to Italy where I met up with my dad and we toured the northern countryside. It was my first step on a recent trip to Seattle, where I reconnected with my college buddies and got to experience the Pacific Northwest for the first time. And it was my first leg for a trip up the East Coast, couch-hopping between all of my friends. These examples are just a subset of the many adventures in which the Flyer has been an integral part of my journey.

"It has picked me up in the earliest hours of the day to get me on those flights that take off before the sun rises. After long travel days, it's also taken me back to my new home in East Lansing, signifying the end of yet another adventure. Always accommodating when I've had lots of luggage for a long trip abroad and when I've just

had my backpack for a short weekend away. At the oddest hours, day or night, I know I can count on the Flyer to get me where I need to be on time. Being so far from home can be difficult, but it's comforting to know that there is a dedicated service that physically connects me to my loved ones and allows me to always be thinking about my next adventure."



Travel Alerts

Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center Bypassed on U-M Football Saturdays

If you are planning a Saturday trip with Michigan Flyer between Ann Arbor and East Lansing or Detroit Metro Airport this fall, please know that on U-M home football game Saturdays **some** of our runs will bypass the BTC on the way to and from the airport. This will affect certain runs before, during, and after the following home games:

Oct. 4, TBA	Wisconsin
Oct. 18, TBA	Washington
Nov. 1, TBA	Purdue
Nov. 29, Noon	Ohio State

Please note that **other** Michigan Flyer runs will continue to stop at the BTC on these days. It's easy to find out which ones: Just check the "Book a Trip" feature on our [website](#).



Frontier Airlines to Offer New Flights from DTW

In late August, Frontier announced its aim to become the number one low-fare carrier in the top 20 U.S. metro areas, including Detroit. As part of this effort, it also [announced](#) 20 new routes including the following five from DTW, which have starting fares as low as \$49 one way, along with loyalty and product upgrades. These new routes from DTW are available for purchase now:

Cancun (CUN)	Nov. 22, 2025	Weekly	\$89
Fort Lauderdale (FLL)	Nov. 20, 2025	3x/week	\$49
Houston (IAH)	Nov. 21, 2025	3x/week	\$49
Miami (MIA)	Nov. 21, 2025	3x/week	\$49
New Orleans (MSY)	Feb. 12, 2026	2x/week	TBD

"Cancun is a big one," notes Michigan Flyer VP Ody Norkin. "For example, the roundtrip fare for the sample dates of Dec. 6 – 13 is just \$313, compared with Delta at \$610, and they both charge for checked bags."

Frontier CEO Barry Biffle said, "As industry capacity adjusts, we want to ensure consumers in those markets continue to have affordable flight options."

Autonomous Wheelchairs Now Available at DTW

Don't be surprised if an empty, motorized wheelchair rolls past you at Detroit Metro Airport's McNamara Terminal. Earlier this year, the Wayne County Airport Authority partnered with Unifi to introduce WHILL autonomous wheelchairs at the DTW

terminal. A pilot program offers this new mobility option to travelers who have difficulty walking long distances or navigating the airport.



Passengers can request a WHILL autonomous wheelchair at check-in. Then a member of the Unifi team escorts them through security to the devices near McNamara Terminal's iconic Water Fountain. There they transfer to the wheelchairs and learn how to safely operate them. After that, the wheelchairs autonomously navigate to the passengers' departure gates.

The autonomous wheelchairs are designed for people who can stand and transfer independently, providing a mobility experience with pre-mapped routes, collision-avoidance sensors and an emergency stop function. Those needing additional boarding assistance will continue to receive traditional wheelchair services.

Each WHILL chair travels at the same speed as the airport's moving walkway and plays a tune as it rolls along. It stops when met with an obstacle or person in its path. Upon arrival at their gates, passengers transfer to standard seating before boarding their flights. The empty wheelchairs return themselves to their base, ready for use by other travelers. Later this year, autonomous wheelchairs will also be deployed at DTW's Evans Terminal.



Early reviews have been somewhat mixed. Many passengers enjoy the greater independence and self-sufficiency the autonomous chairs provide. However, some have

concerns about their inability to stop at restrooms or shops, and the lack of on-board assistance.

NOTE: If you would like to request traditional wheelchair service at DTW, just contact your airline. After that, you'll need to visit your airline's ticket counter upon arrival at the airport.

Top Coming Events–We Can Get You There!

East Lansing



World Ballet Company: The Great Gatsby Ballet

Experience a sparkling new Broadway-style ballet! This visually stunning production by an all-star creative team features lavish sets and costumes, an original jazz-inspired score, a cast of 40 professional dancers, multimedia effects, acrobatics, and more.

Dress up, sip champagne, and immerse yourself in Gatsby's jazzy world of the Roaring Twenties—an unforgettable evening awaits!

Based on the glitz, glamor, and tragic romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald's timeless novel, this is the must-see show of the season. Catch it at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 2, at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Ln., on the MSU campus in East Lansing. [Tickets \\$45-\\$110 plus fee.](#)

Check out more local coming events with the Choose Lansing calendar: <http://www.lansing.org/events>.

Whitmore Lake



Cultura!

This annual celebration of music, art and food is co-hosted by the Livingston Diversity Council and the Livingston Arts Council in downtown Howell, Mich., at the Howell Opera House. On Saturday, Sept. 27, from noon to 6 p.m., this event—FREE and open to the public—brings culturally significant experiences to the community in the form of visual art, spoken word, music, dance, and food.

Two stages will feature a [many diverse performers](#), while visual art will be displayed in the Historic Opera House, and culinary delights highlighting various spice and flavor palettes will be served by food truck vendors.

NOTE: The Howell Opera House, at 123 W. Grand River Ave., is about a [20-minute drive](#) north on U.S. 23 and west on I-96 from our Michigan Flyer stop at the MDOT Park & Ride in Whitmore Lake (just off Exit 53 of U.S. 23.)

Brighton and other communities of Livingston County offer a multitude of events to delight visitors of all ages. Explore them with the Livingston County Convention & Visitors Bureau events calendar: <https://visitlivingstoncounty.com/events/>.

Ann Arbor

A2 Artoberfest

This celebration of the arts takes place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 11, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 12, in downtown Ann Arbor. The event stretches across Ann St. and North Fourth Ave. from Huron into the

charming Kerrytown area. It features 90 jury-selected artists, live entertainment, food vendors, art activities, and several adult beverage offerings.



Sip, shop, and savor the beautiful fall weather, talented artisans, and wonderful tunes. Get creative with several hands-on art making activities in The Gutman Gallery, with Doodles Academy, the Hands-on Museum and more! Admission: FREE.

For more entertainment in and around A2, see the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events: <https://www.annarbor.org/events/>.

Detroit



The Temptations & The Four Tops

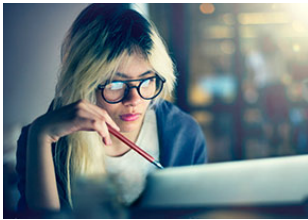
The iconic soul groups The Temptations & Four Tops will perform at the Fox Theatre on Sunday, Oct. 19, at 7 p.m. The Temptations, often referred to as American music royalty, are world-renowned superstars revered for their phenomenal catalog of music, including fan favorites such as "My Girl," "Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)," "Ain't Too Proud to Beg," "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone," and more.

The Four Tops' first Motown hit, "Baby I Need Your Loving" in 1964, made them stars of the sixties. They followed up with "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)," "It's The Same Old Song," "Reach Out I'll Be There," "Standing in the Shadows of

Love,” and “Bernadette.” See both groups perform for virtually the price of one. [Tickets are \\$43-\\$224+.](#)

NOTE: [The D2A2 Express Bus](#) from Ann Arbor’s Blake Transit Center (BTC) to Detroit’s Grand Circus Park can get Ann Arbor-area riders to and from this event. The Fox Theatre is a short walk from D2A2’s stop at 1508 Park Ave., Detroit.

To learn more about what’s happening in Detroit, check out the Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events: <https://visitdetroit.com/events/>.



Tips for Smarter Travel

Know How to Find Us at DTW (click the link for each terminal)

Easily Change Your Own MI Flyer Reservations at this Link

Where's Your Bus? Find Out with Our Real-Time Tracker

Please, Help Others by Reviewing Us Online

Kindly take a moment to help others understand how our service might improve their travels. Just visit one of these websites to write a quick review about your experience with Michigan Flyer. Thank you!

facebook

tripadvisor®

yelp

Customer Comment

“The Michigan Flyer is the only transportation we use when we fly out of the Detroit Metro Airport. We are constantly talking with friends and family about this service. Michigan Flyer is Amazing!”

—LeeAnn A., Okemos, Mich.



Sample Airfares for a Thanksgiving Trip



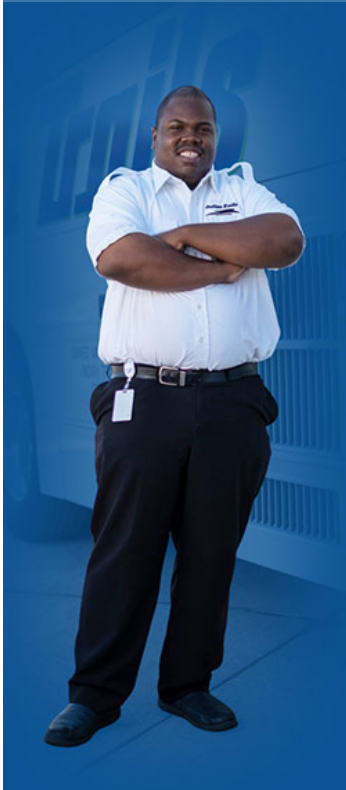
If you're planning to visit family or friends in another state this Thanksgiving (Nov. 27), now is the time to start planning. In order to get below-average fares, it's important to buy your tickets at least three weeks in advance.

Using www.Skyscanner.com, we sampled trips originating at Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) on Saturday, Nov. 22, and returning on Saturday, Nov. 29. Among the criteria used for our spot check: Flights had to nonstop in both directions, and the return flight had to arrive at DTW in time for passengers to catch our last run at 10:45 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. to Ann Arbor, Whitmore Lake, and East Lansing.

NOTE: You may well find different fares for nearly the same roundtrips on [Expedia](http://Expedia.com), [Kayak](http://Kayak.com), or [Orbitz](http://Orbitz.com)—or by buying tickets directly from a carrier like [Delta Air Lines](http://Delta.com). Lower prices than these are likely available for anyone who's flexible about the dates of travel, or willing to change planes once or more enroute to their destination. Our sample economy roundtrip fares include taxes but not necessarily baggage or other "extras."

Baltimore, MD (BWI) Spirit \$165
Boston, MA (BOS) Spirit \$185
Alpena, MI (APN) Delta \$188
Charlotte, NC (CLT) Spirit \$192
Lexington, KY (CVG) Delta \$199
Minneapolis, MN (MSP) Spirit \$215
Chicago, IL (ORD) Southwest \$216
New York, NY (JFK) JetBlue \$227
Durham, NC (RDU) Spirit \$235
Denver, CO (DEN) Frontier \$245
Atlanta, GA (ATL) Spirit \$246
Nashville, TN (BNA) Southwest \$258
Houston, TX (IAH) Spirit \$273
Las Vegas, NV (LAS) Spirit+Frontier \$290
Seattle, WA (SEA) Alaska \$291
Dallas, TX (DFW) Spirit \$297
Miami, FL (MIA) Spirit+Frontier \$301
St. Louis, MO (STL) Southwest \$307
Louisville, KY (SDF) Delta \$319
Norfolk, VA (ORF) Delta \$353
Philadelphia, PA (PHL) American \$358
San Antonio, TX (SAT) Delta \$359

Phoenix, AZ (PHX) Spirit+Frontier \$360
Indianapolis, IN (IND) Delta \$ 379
Orlando, FL (MCO) Frontier \$379
Providence, RI (PVD) Delta \$399
Los Angeles, CA (LAX) Spirit \$408
Richmond, VA (RIC) Delta \$408
Tampa, FL (TPA) Frontier+Spirit \$414
Hartford, CT (BDL) Delta \$419
Austin, TX (AUS) Delta \$428
Traverse City, MI (TVC) Delta \$448
Kansas City, MO (MCI) Delta \$449
Omaha, NB (OMA) Delta \$449
Fort Lauderdale, FL (FLL) Spirit \$463
Myrtle Beach, SC (MYR) Delta \$493
San Diego, CA (SAN) Delta \$519
Portland, ME (PWM) Delta \$533
New Orleans, LA (MSY) Delta \$548
Salt Lake City, UT (SLC) Delta \$559
Portland, OR (PDX) Delta \$589
San Francisco, CA (SFO) Delta \$589
Fort Myers, FL (RSW) Delta \$767
Honolulu, HI (HNL) Delta \$2,124



Bus Drivers Wanted

No experience necessary! Indian Trails, Inc.—which staffs Michigan Flyer with professional drivers—is accepting applications for full-time motorcoach drivers. These positions pay a starting hourly rate of \$23.00, provide a 5-week PAID training program leading to a Commercial Driver's License, and operate Michigan's newest and largest fleet of motorcoaches. Among other benefits, full-time drivers receive:

- Two weeks of paid time off in the first year
- Medical, dental, vision and life insurance
- 401(k) retirement program with employer match
- Annual safety bonus

Worth noting, too, drivers with the highest seniority currently earn \$33.82 an hour. Indian Trails truly appreciates the hard work of its staff members—it's a 115-year-old, family-run company that values fairness, honesty, teamwork, and service excellence. [Click here to learn more and ask to get in touch with our recruiter, Jennifer Freeman.](#)

Happy Columbus Day & Indigenous Peoples Day!



Columbus Day—Oct. 13

The second Monday of October marks Columbus Day in the United States. It honors the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, who launched the ships Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria from the coast of Spain in 1492, intending to sail to China, India, and the Spice Islands of Asia. Instead, after 10 weeks, he landed in the Bahamas on Oct. 12, 1492, becoming the first European to arrive in what is now the U.S. In 1934, Congress declared Columbus Day a federal holiday. It is also a celebration of heritage for Italian Americans.

Indigenous People's Day—Oct. 13

Tribal nations occupied the territory now known as the mainland United States for centuries before the first European explorers and settlers arrived. In fact, these Native Americans had populated the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf of Mexico to northern Canada. After 1968—when Gov. Ronald Reagan signed a California resolution calling for an “American Indian Day” to honor and celebrate their traditions, cultures, and contributions—several states followed suit, though with varying dates. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed proclamations declaring that both Columbus Day and Indigenous People's Day be celebrated on the second Monday in October.

Why Drive?

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





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www.michiganflyer.com

