



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Invitation for Public Comment on Airport Governance

Traverse City, MI (Dec. 4, 2019) – Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County—the owners of the Cherry Capital Airport (“Airport” or “TVC”)—and the Northwestern Regional Airport Commission (“NRAC”)—the governing body operating TVC—invites the public to provide comments on transitioning to a regional airport authority governance model. Three public input sessions will be held as follows:

SESSION 1:

DATE: December 10th, 2019
TIME: 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
LOCATION:
NRAC Administrative Office
727 Fly Don’t Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686

SESSION 2:

DATE: December 10th, 2019
TIME: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
LOCATION:
NRAC Administrative Office
727 Fly Don’t Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686

SESSION 3:

DATE: December 11th, 2019
TIME: 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM
LOCATION:
Grand Traverse County Governmental Center
400 Boardman Avenue Suite 305
Traverse City, MI 49684

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Background

The Northwestern Regional Airport Commission (“NRAC”) established the Airport Governance Advisory Committee (“AGAC”) on March 19, 2019 with representatives from Grand Traverse County, Leelanau County, and the NRAC to review the current governance model of the Cherry Capital Airport and investigate other options, including the feasibility of transitioning to a regional Airport Authority.

Under the current governance model agreement set to expire in 2040, the Cherry Capital Airport is owned by Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County and managed by NRAC. Recognized as a regional asset for the entire region in 1971 by Traverse City, the NRAC was originally formed to include broader regional representation and make needed improvements to the Airport. Since that time, the NRAC has continued to manage the Airport through agreements with the two Counties following the City leaving in 1990. Appointments to the NRAC Board are made by Grand Traverse County, with five appointments, and Leelanau County, with two appointments. The NRAC board oversees the daily management of the Airport, as well as the independent airport enterprise fund, on behalf of the two Counties. The AGAC is part of strategic planning efforts to look at how the Airport can be positioned for continued success, develop approaches to attract new air service, and grow non-aeronautical revenue; airport governance is an important piece of that strategic planning.

Over six months, the AGAC held monthly, open meetings where the Committee and community heard from industry professionals, airport administration officials, legal counsel, and community stakeholders on the topic of airport governance. At its September meeting, the AGAC invited members of the public and state and local officials to attend to provide feedback on the Airport’s governance model. The AGAC’s final report includes the culmination of research, stakeholder engagement, public feedback, and a final recommendation from the Committee members on the operation of the Cherry Capital Airport to move to an Authority governance model under the Michigan Regional Airport Authority Act.

On November 19, the NRAC adopted and approved the recommendation to move to a regional airport authority model by unanimous resolution. The NRAC subsequently submitted a copy of the report and resolution to Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County for consideration of supporting and approving the transition of TVC to a regional airport authority.

On November 20, Grand Traverse County motioned to direct staff to explore articles of incorporation with Leelanau and report to the board with what they feel would be mutually acceptable, incorporating in the process a public input session to be held at a December Board of Commissioner meeting.