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Ford International Airport FLITE Program Awards \$220K in Grant Funds to Emerging Aviation Technologies

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., October 1, 2024 – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority, in collaboration with [Avflight Grand Rapids Corporation](#), the [Michigan Economic Development Corporation \(MEDC\)](#), [Seamless Ventures](#), [Southwest Airlines®](#) and the [West Michigan Aviation Academy](#), announced the sixth cohort of companies set to receive more than \$220,000 in total grant funding through the Ford Launchpad for Innovative Technologies and Entrepreneurship, or FLITE.

"FLITE continues to serve as a leading platform for new technologies in the aviation industry, and we are proud to welcome seven new companies to the program to test their innovative solutions," said Tory Richardson, president and CEO of the Ford International Airport Authority. "We are grateful to our partners and participating companies for their dedication to identifying solutions that elevate the guest experience and further enhance airport operations."

A first-of-its-kind program in the aviation industry, FLITE focuses on propelling the transformation of aviation by providing grant funding and pilot testing opportunities to companies focused on bringing emerging air travel technologies and solutions to market. The seven companies participating in this round include:

- **[Airtrek Robotics](#)**: Enhances air travel safety through autonomous robots that detect debris on airport ramp space and more.
- **[Antrum](#)**: Specializes in demand-controlled ventilation to promote safety and sustainability in commercial buildings.
- **[Enspired Solutions](#)**: Implements technology to remove per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from water.
- **[Flox](#)**: Develops and deploys autonomous solutions designed to mitigate bird and wildlife strikes, enhancing aircraft safety.
- **[Hangar Safe](#)**: Applies innovative technology to support aircraft safety.
- **[IonDynamics Energy](#)**: Utilizes hardware and AI-powered software solutions to deliver efficient and sustainable energy ecosystems.
- **[Tiami Networks](#)**: Advances wireless communication through Integrated Sensing and Communications (ISAC), generative AI and resilient communication systems.

"For us, FLITE represents an exciting opportunity to bring our cutting-edge wildlife management technology to the U.S. market," said Kristoffer Ohlsson, chief commercial officer at Flox. "Partnering with the Ford International Airport through this program allows us to showcase the effectiveness of our solutions in enhancing airport safety."

"We're thrilled to contribute to Michigan's innovation ecosystem and look forward to growing our presence here."

As Michigan's lead advocate for business development, job awareness, and community growth with a focus on expanding the local economy, the MEDC has played a pivotal role in fostering innovation. Through the Office of Future Mobility and Electrification (OFME), the MEDC provides grant funding to support the companies participating in FLITE. Their efforts further FLITE's mission and drive advancements in Michigan's vibrant mobility and technology sector.

The companies will pilot test their technologies at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport this fall and winter.

- **Airtrek Robotics** will test an autonomous robot that patrols the airport's ramp space, detecting debris and reporting updates to airport partners.
- **Antrum** will gather air quality data using an antrumX panel to support airport sustainability goals.
- **Enspired Solutions** will test its surface water treatment technology to inform the scale of treatment systems needed for sites to improve water quality.
- **Flox** aims to enhance aircraft safety by reducing bird and wildlife hazards while ensuring compliance with FAA regulations.
- **Hangar Safe** will test aircraft-to-aircraft solutions to monitor operational safety and detect potential risks.
- **IonDynamics Energy** will introduce the level four autonomous driving energy storage and charging robot, FlashBot, to demonstrate charging capabilities in real-world environments.
- **Tiami Networks** will implement a polyedge multifunction sensor to utilize cellular signals and Wi-Fi for occupancy tracking.

To date, FLITE has provided support to more than 25 companies, awarding more than \$950,000 in total grant funds across six rounds. The core focus areas for new technology advancements through FLITE include:

- **Automation & Analytics:** Improving operational efficiency and optimization of workforce and other resources through automation and analysis of data.
- **Electrification & Sustainability:** Switching fossil fuel vehicles and infrastructure to electrics and other decarbonization projects.
- **Safety & Security:** Strengthening passenger and worker safety and security throughout the airport campus.
- **Door-to-Door & Terminal Guest Experience:** Improving the efficiency of getting to and from the airport and improving the pre-boarding **experience**.
- **Advancing Aviation:** Exploring the enabling infrastructure and implications of emerging commercial aviation use cases.

Applications for the seventh round of FLITE are being accepted now through October 31, 2024, at michiganbusiness.org/mobility-funding.

About the Gerald R. Ford International Airport

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is the second busiest airport in Michigan, serving business and leisure travelers with nonstop and connecting flights on seven airlines. The Ford International Airport

is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. For more information, visit www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram @FlyGRFord.

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