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### **GARY CONTINUES PLANNING FOR RETURN OF THE GARY AIRSHOW CITY TO HOST PRE-AIR SHOW EVENTS IN 2019**

**Gary, Indiana**-City officials announced today that the city will present pre-air show events this year as planning continues for the return of the nation's military jet teams to the shores of Lake Michigan in 2021 at Gary's beautiful Marquette Park. Pre-air show events this year will serve as fundraising opportunities leading up to the 2020 and 2021 air shows.

The much anticipated Gary Air Show which has been free to the public was cancelled in 2018 when the city was not able to secure timely sponsorship dollars necessary to present the largest event in Gary and Northwest Indiana, at no cost to the city. In past years, the city has been able to maximize sponsorship dollars to support the airshow, but still has been forced to expend city resources. Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson has continually said, this is not an option. Additionally, the city fell out of rotation with the cancellation of the 2018 show forcing Gary to look to 2021 to again feature the U.S. Thunderbirds, Blue Angels or Golden Knights. The city will use 2019 and 2020 to fundraise and better position itself for 2021.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said, "In the midst of a financial recovery plan we started developing in 2018, we have made the decision to not host the larger event this year but to keep working and take steps toward securing strong sponsors and supporters of the city's signature event in 2019, 2020 and 2021. With this approach we feel confident that we will bring back one of the U.S. Military squadrons in 2021. We look forward to the pre air show events we are planning at the Gary/Chicago airport for this year."

The 2019 pre-events will include hosting a family event at the Gary/Chicago International Airport where airshow enthusiasts will still enjoy an airshow, displays, good food, music and fun. Planning is in the works for the third weekend in August 2019. The 2020 air show will feature well-known air show performers and teams from various organizations at Marquette Park.

In early 2018, the mayor expressed intentions to “get the city’s finances right.” Specifically, the mayor talked about actively working to cultivate opportunities to increase our assessed valuation while looking at every dollar. “This continues to be the primary focus of our work this year, said Mayor Freeman-Wilson.” “While we are developing our long term financial recovery plan, we have frozen spending and hiring and reduced spending while embracing opportunities to attract new businesses to the table. This has required focus, discipline and sacrifice. We know that the short-term difficulty will be rewarded with long-term benefits.”

The Mayor concluded, “The air show is a costly event. Like in 2018, expenditures for a 2019 show are not consistent with our efforts toward a sustainable financial plan.” “We are actively engaged in discussions with potential sponsors who will sponsor the Gary Air Show as we move forward.” The Air Show committee formed last year continues to bring ideas to the table. “I commend their efforts and thank them for their unwavering service to this major undertaking.”