

The Flight-Line NEWS **OTSEGO COUNTY GAYLORD REGIONAL AIRPORT**



Four Minutes over Gaylord: I have seen tragedies like this on TV and even served in war zones in the military but have never seen this kind of destruction in a place I call home! The devastation caused by a tornado hitting our Otsego County, Michigan City of Gaylord on 20 May 2022 was hard to imagine. In addition to wide spread destruction of the city and residential neighborhoods the tornado tragically took the lives of 2 people and injured over 40 others. The loss of property and psychological damage to so many effected will not be instantly known but be evident in the weeks and months to come. In the middle of all this the spirit and determination of first responders was seen all over the community. Ordinary citizens shoulder to shoulder with emergency personnel immediately started the herculean task of rescue and recovery. Since this is an airport newsletter and primarily goes out to friends and aviation affiliations, this may be the best way to answer so many of you that texted and emailed concern and support for our airport and crew. Although the tornado missed the airport and our crew's homes and families were free from harm it did not mean this was not our fight. In fact just the opposite! With the catastrophic mass power outage, all gas stations in the area were out of power and not functioning. The airport keeps fuel tanks for all our airport trucks and equipment but is also without power so within minutes the crew had fashioned a hand pump and started fueling all the police, ambulance and other emergency vehicles at the airport well into the night. Within minutes of asking, the Lowes's GM personally delivered a generator to help get hangar doors open and after a long day and late evening, I had to order the crew who would not leave to go home and rest for the day to follow. With so much tragedy in the world the outpouring of support by so many during this crisis does have a way of reaffirming ones faith in the resilience and kindness of people. By Monday, power was restored to most of the city and our airport is back to full operations. I want to thank our airports incredible crew that worked so hard in so many ways to keep us operating but I also want to give a special thanks to James at Lowes, Neil at Northern Pump, Mike Kormos at Avfuel, Kevin Klein CEO at Traverse City Cherry Capital Airport and also Steve Smigelski Manager, Alpena Airport who offered to bring us anything we need. THANK YOU ALL

