



Gerald R. Ford Airport in Grand Rapids needs 252 new windows after already replacing 240 in 2007

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PressA man running to catch his flight is seen through windows in the front ticketing hall of Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids. Those windows will be replaced because of deterioration.GRAND RAPIDS -- Floor-to-ceiling windows in the terminal lobby at the **Gerald R. Ford International Airport** are to be replaced early next year because of a problem that has left some dirty and murky looking.

Airport board members will consider the multimillion-dollar replacement plan this week to change out 252 windows in the front ticket hall and back offices. The \$5 million project began in 2007, just six years after a \$50 million terminal renovation.

The move follows the replacement of 240 windows in 2007 because of the faulty thermal coating that makes the double-paned glass look dirty.

The replacement cost is covered by warranty and is being picked up by the Canadian manufacturer, **Visionwall Corp.**, of Edmonton, Alberta.

To ensure the work is done before the warranty expires, the airport will have to pay about \$176,000 in labor and installation fees, on top of \$198,000 for similar costs in 2007.

Airport spokesman Bruce Schedlbauer said airport officials still may try to recover those funds, even if that means going to court.

"We have not made a final decision," Schedlbauer said. "We're paying it (for now), but whether or not reimbursement will be pursued has yet to be decided."

The problem was discovered in 2006 after thermal coating between the glass panes broke down and obscured the view for the nearly 2 million passengers who walk through the terminal each year.

Visionwall President Greg Clarahan could not be reached for comment.

He told The Press in 2006 the problem developed because Visionwall's suppliers provided thermal coating that "proved to have issues."

On Monday, Schedlbauer said the subcontractor used by Visionwall is no longer providing coating. The new windows will be treated with coating from a new supplier and -- as required by warranty -- installed by Visionwall's Michigan representative, Architectural Glass & Metal of Byron Center.

Airport officials have also agreed to spend up to \$11,500 on consulting services from Grand Rapids-based design firm Century A&E to evaluate all of the terminals' 1,100 windows and recommend which ones need to be replaced.

Schedlbauer said it is unclear whether airport officials also would pursue reimbursement for that cost.

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