



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Greater Lansing CVB Reports Successful Year and Honors 2014 Community Champions

**LANSING, Mich.** – The Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau (GLCVB) held its annual meeting on March 3, 2015, and announced both good news for the local economy and recognized numerous individuals for helping to foster meetings and events within the Capital Region.

The GLCVB announced Mid-Michigan saw continued growth in 2014 with a 1.39% increase in area lodging occupancy, posting a rate of 58.4%, up from 57.9% in 2014, according to Smith Travel Research (STR) data. The increase in 2014 occupancy is particularly noteworthy because in 2014, Greater Lansing experienced a 5.42% increase in Average Daily Rate (ADR) for hotel rooms throughout the region, marking significant growth in local ADR for the second consecutive year.

Additionally, Jack Schripsema, President and CEO of the GLCVB announced the 2014 class of Greater Lansing Community Champions. The Community Champion program is intended to appeal to the civic pride of local residents by providing well-deserved recognition to the individual and their organization for attracting and hosting events in the region.

Those recognized as 2014 Community Champions are; Kylie Doebler and Hannah Feig with Instagrammers Lansing, Brian Bennett with Flipped Learning Network, Shelly Bugg and Sue Selke with the U.S. Tennis Association, Bruce Haskell with the National Association of College and University Food Services, Barbara Roberts Mason with Sister Cities International, Mark McElwee with USA Curling, Barb Doyal with the Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church, Desmond Ferguson for Moneyball, Renee Freeman for the Shop Michigan Expo and Al Slamer with the Michigan High School Football Association.

The Greater Lansing Sports Authority also had an awards presentation at the event, recognizing Julie and Kevin Mullin with Hope Sports Complex as Sports Partner of the Year and Laurel Winkel as Sports Volunteer of the Year.

“Our hope for this program is that it will shed light onto the significant efforts being made by community stakeholders to keep their hometown of Greater Lansing in the forefront as a host-city for key meetings and events throughout the year,” said Jack Schripsema, President and CEO of the GLCVB.

For more information about the Greater Lansing Community Champions program, visit [www.lansing.org](http://www.lansing.org) or call 517-487-0077. Find additional details regarding the Community Champion award winners below.

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More details on the award winners are included below:

**Kylie Doebler and Hannah Feig**  
**Instagramers Lansing**

The Social Media Community Champion Award publicly acknowledges local individuals who utilize new media to promote the Greater Lansing region in a positive light. The local Instagram group, igersLansing, was created by authentic fans of the region and they actively promote the hashtag #igersLansing to curate visual tales about our community. IgersLansing's quarterly meet ups encourage residents to showcase Greater Lansing through unique photography and their Instameet Roundups have been held anywhere from our State Capitol building to Fitzgerald Park in Grand Ledge. IgersLansing also hosts weekly challenges where other Instagram users must capture a given theme for the week. Weekly themes have included street art, architecture and festivals like Silver Bells in the City. The GLCVB appreciates that through their work on Instagram with igersLansing these individuals are not only helping to build our region's brand identity, but they are also driving authentic social conversations about our community and are increasing our area's presence on social media.

**Brian Bennett**  
**Flipped Learning Network**

Coming to the Lansing region in July for the first time is FlipCon 2015. FlipCon is part of the Flipped Learning Network, a teaching approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space resulting in a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Over 500 educators will meet this summer to network and learn best practices following last year's successful event in Pennsylvania. **Brian Bennett** is a Board Member for the Flipped Learning Network and worked with his colleagues to bring the event to MSU.

**Shelly Bugg & Sue Selke**  
**U.S. Tennis Association**

Each year thousands of tennis players and their families travel to the mid-Michigan region to compete in numerous championship level US Tennis Association events. These events are made possible due to the hard work of **Sue Selke, Shelly Bugg** and the entire team at Court One Athletics. In 2014, the Court One team hosted five significant USTA Midwest and regional level championship events. These events ranged from three to six days long and attracted more than 1,200 athletes. As these are youth events, many of these athletes traveled with families and used the time in Lansing as a sport-cation for their families. Sue, Shelley and the Court One team made a significant economic impact on the region in 2014 and also helped showcase our region as a family-friendly destination.

**Barb Doyal, CMP, CTA**  
**Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church**

The United Methodist has traditionally held two large conferences within Michigan to serve the west and east sides separately. It was determined that the two conferences could be combined to one large conference in 2016. **Barb Doyal** is a passionate local resident and she spoke with leadership in the Methodist Church and presented the option of Lansing as an ideal location for the statewide conference. Barb worked with the GLCVB sales team over many months to help bring the organization's leaders in to visit and to ultimately select East Lansing as their meeting location. The event will bring over 3,000 people to town over six days in June of 2016. If it were not for Barb's passion and love of Lansing, the event just might have selected another location. Thanks to Barb for being an ambassador Lansing for this event and as well as every day in her role as a Visitor Information Specialist at the CVB's Visitor Center in East Lansing.

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**Desmond Ferguson**  
**Moneyball**

Basketball events are nothing new to Moneyball founder **Desmond Ferguson**. In 2014, Desmond decided it was time to try something new and started the Lansing region's only stand-alone 3 v. 3 outdoor basketball tournament. Using the grounds surrounding the Lansing Mall, Desmond partnered with Delta Township to create this very unique event. The response the inaugural year was extremely strong, attracting more than 50 teams. While there was a mix of local teams, many of the teams traveled from across the state of Michigan for this two day event.

**Renee Freeman, CTA**  
**Shop Michigan Expo**

The Greater Lansing Area Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs partnered with several organizations to highlight small and diverse businesses throughout Michigan by creating the "Shop Michigan Expo". The inaugural Expo was held this past September and **Renee Freeman** worked with the GLCVB to host the Michigan based event in Michigan's Capital City. The event also featured educational workshops and celebrated the diversity of Michigan businesses to consumers.

**Bruce Haskell**  
**The National Association of College & University Food Services**

As the Associate Director, Culinary Services at Michigan State University, **Bruce Haskell** has been involved with the National Association for College & University Food Services for a number of years. Recently, he decided that Michigan State should be showcased to his national peers for its award winning culinary services, renovated dining halls and unique campus venues. So, Bruce worked to bring the event to MSU and served as the conference chair for the Midwest Regional Conference this past March. NACUFS was actually founded on the campus of Michigan State but the event was last hosted on campus in 1990. Following the great success of this event, Bruce retired at the end of 2014 after serving 42 years on the campus of Michigan State in the food services division.

**Barbara Roberts Mason**  
**Sister Cities International**

**Barbara Roberts Mason** is the President of the Lansing Regional Sister Cities Commission (LRSCC.) In September, the LRSCC hosted the prestigious "Celebration of Global Diversity" in Lansing featuring attendees from around the world. Some highlights of the event included the keynote presentation by the President and CEO of Sister Cities International, a global diplomatic roundtable and an evening event celebrating global diversity through artistic performances. Barbara is recognized for bringing this prestigious event to the region and for her efforts in keeping the Lansing region connected through the global diversity activities of the Sister Cities.

**Mark McElwee**  
**USA Curling**

In 2014 **Mark McElwee**, then President of the Lansing Curling Club, was instrumental in securing and hosting the USA Curling 2014 Arena Nationals. This first time event for the Lansing region attracted 50 curling teams from across the United States. Teams spent nearly a week in the region as they competed in this national championship event. Being only the second year this event has existed under USA Curling, many ideas and practices used by the Lansing Curling Club during the event have been adopted and brought in as part of the standard operating procedure for future Arena National events.

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**Al Slamer**  
**Michigan High School Football Coaches Association**

The Michigan High School Football Coaches Association is made up of over 2,000 active high school and middle school football coaches representing over 600 school districts throughout the state. For years, their Annual Clinic was held in Battle Creek and then it moved to Kalamazoo. **Al Slamer**, the Clinic Chairman and Holt High School Football Coach, started talking with the CVB sales team about hosting the event in Lansing to allow the opportunity for further growth for the event. The Clinic moved to Lansing in 2014 and then significantly grew attendance when the event was just held again this past January.

**GLSA Awards**

**Julie & Kevin Mullin**  
**Hope Sports Complex – Sports Partner of the Year**

2014 was the first full year the Chill Soccer Club and owners Julie and Kevin Mullin programmed and managed Hope Sports Complex. In that time the Mullin's invested substantially into the complex building the regions first and only lighted, outdoor, multi-event turf field, and full lighting for three additional fields at the complex. The Mullins have embraced all sport event opportunities at what has become one of the most flexible facilities in the state. During the year they hosted several brand new events for the area, attracting thousands of new visitors to the region and enhancing the region's image as a sports destination.

**Laurel Winkel**  
**Capital City Dragon Boat Race – Sports Volunteer of the Year**

Laurel Winkel is the visionary behind the popular Capital City Dragon Boat Race. This unique event takes place on the Grand River in downtown Lansing at Adado Riverfront Park. Her journey began in 2009 recruiting community-minded volunteers and targeted 2011 for the first Dragon Boat Race in Greater Lansing. Laurel has spent countless hours in meetings and soliciting volunteers on evenings and weekends. The event has doubled in participation since its inception and is now a solid and successful annual event in the area.

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*The mission of the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau is to positively impact the area's economy by marketing the region as a travel destination.*