



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
September 14, 2016

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## **DOUG SMALL WINS TOP HONOR FROM MICHIGAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES**

*Experience Grand Rapids President/CEO inducted into Michigan Association Hall of Fame*

*Grand Rapids, Mich.* – The Michigan Society of Association Executives inducted Experience Grand Rapids President and CEO, Doug Small, into the Michigan Association Hall of Fame at its annual Diamond Awards ceremony in Plymouth last night. Small was one of three association executives to receive top honors at the 2016 statewide ceremony.

The award honors individuals who exemplify the best in association management and those who have excelled in the profession. According to the MSAE, Michigan Association Hall of Fame inductees inspire individuals and students to consider careers in the association management profession and bring honor and recognition to the industry.

“Doug has established himself as a prominent voice in our industry,” said Rick Winn, President of AHC+Hospitality and chair of the EXGR Board, in a letter of support for Small’s nomination. “He has excelled in leading the EXGR team as they have created a dynamic tourism and meeting destination in Grand Rapids and Kent County. In fact, the county statistics now lead all Michigan competitive markets as well as the eight national cities identified as our competitive set.”

Since Small joined EXGR in September 2008, Kent County hotel occupancy rates and hotel room revenue have grown at record levels. Occupancy rates, which stood at 48 percent in 2008, are now 67.5 percent and outpace the national average. Room revenue has nearly doubled in that period, growing from \$97 million in 2008 to \$180 million in 2015.

“The Hall of Fame award recognizes individuals who have excelled in the association management profession and, more importantly, who inspire individuals and students to consider careers in association management. I can tell you with the utmost confidence that Doug Small exemplifies these characteristics,” said Mike Guswiler, President of the West Michigan Sports Commission, in a letter of endorsement. “Doug represents well the need to continually support all that those in association management do, both in his own position and by serving on boards of many other associations.”

Small, a 35-year industry veteran, is also actively engaged in the community, serving on the boards of the Economic Club of Grand Rapids, the Downtown Market, the Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association, the West Michigan Sports Commission and Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.

“I am extremely honored to have been nominated by my peers in the Grand Rapids community and to be selected by my association peers statewide,” Small said. “I am so proud of the EXGR team and all our community partners for their exemplary work in making Grand Rapids and Kent County a top tourism destination. They truly share in this honor.”

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## **About Experience Grand Rapids**

Established in 1927, EXGR leads the marketing of Grand Rapids and Kent County as a premier convention and visitor destination, providing a significant positive impact to the West Michigan economy. Previously named the Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau, EXGR represents the second largest city in Michigan with over one million residents.