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CONTACT: Stephanie Kotschevar, Experience Grand Rapids
616-233-3577, skotschevar@experiencegr.com

Experience Grand Rapids Leader Elected to U.S. Travel Board of Directors

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Doug Small, President and CEO of Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR), the area's official destination marketing organization, was elected to the Board of Directors of US Travel Association. Doug a native of Napoleon, Ohio has worked in travel and tourism his entire career in places as varied as Dayton, Syracuse, Palm Springs, Denver and locally for over ten years. He will attend his first board meeting in April.

The U.S. Travel Association is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the travel industry that generates \$2.4 trillion in economic output and supports 15.6 million American jobs. As the united voice of the industry, U.S. Travel prioritizes high-impact issues that matter most to our collective membership. The Association not only identifies the industry's biggest opportunities and challenges, but also develop the messages and actions to create growth.

"I am looking forward to serving the travel industry as a member of the U.S. Travel Association Board of Directors", said Doug Small. "I plan to apply my 30 plus years of experience in the hospitality and travel industry, network with other travel and tourism leaders and bring back to our destination ideas and innovations to propel Kent County area tourism for the future."

Locally the economic impact of visitor travel has grown substantially under Doug's leadership. In February, Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR) announced that 2018 was another record-breaking year for Kent County hotels. From 2017 to 2018 hotel room revenue increased 2.1% (\$216 million) and was the highest ever recorded for Kent County. This record year is affected by a variety of factors including leisure travel, convention and sports group attendance, a healthy local business economy and the ongoing efforts of the Experience Grand Rapids sales and marketing teams.

"For the ninth consecutive year Kent County hotel room revenue has grown over the prior year," said Doug Small, President and CEO of Experience Grand Rapids. "Grand Rapids is now being recognized by the meetings, convention and youth sports markets as a destination that competes with cities twice its size. Thanks to the energized craft beer and food scenes, impressive arts and culture offerings, best-in-class facilities and a growing knowledge of the outdoor recreation options available in Kent County, the Grand Rapids brand is fast becoming known throughout the nation as not just a place for events, but for leisure visitors to experience."

About Experience Grand Rapids

Established in 1927, Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR), the areas' official destination marketing organization, strengthens the region's economic vitality and quality of life by marketing Grand Rapids/Kent County as a preferred visitor destination.

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