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EXPERIENCE GRAND RAPIDS ACHIEVES DESTINATION MARKETING ACCREDITATION

(Grand Rapids, MI, July 18, 2011)- Experience Grand Rapids, the greater Grand Rapids area convention and visitors bureau, today announced it has been awarded accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP). DMAP is an international accreditation program developed by the Washington, DC-based Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI).

"Earning the DMAP accreditation is a tremendous honor and is exemplary of the outstanding service and value we provide to our community, stakeholders and visitors," said Experience Grand Rapids President Doug Small, who will receive the accreditation at DMAI's Annual Convention July 20-22, 2011, in New Orleans. "We have always strived to achieve the highest possible standards in our industry. Such a designation validates our efforts and speaks volumes about our commitment to elevating our brand in the marketplace."

The DMAP program includes nearly 100 mandatory and voluntary standards developed by industry experts. To become accredited, industry applicants must provide evidence of compliance with a wide variety of topics, including governance, finance, management, human resources, technology, visitor services, group services, sales, communications, membership, brand management, destination development, research/market intelligence, innovation, and stakeholder relationships.

"Throughout the past decade, Grand Rapids has emerged as one of most dynamic cities in the Midwest as a result of substantial revitalization and an enhanced quality of life for our residents and visitors," said Ed Wilson, chair of the 25-member Experience Grand Rapids Board of Directors, which represents a diverse cross section of the local community. "This accreditation is a significant step forward in our mission to both market Michigan's West Coast as a premiere convention and visitor destination and positively impact the region's economy."

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Grand Rapids joins a growing list of more than 100 destination marketing organizations to become accredited by the DMAP.

“By achieving DMAP accreditation, destination marketing organizations, like Experience Grand Rapids, positively convey to their constituents that they have attained a significant measure of excellence,” said DMAP Board Chair James T. Wood, FCDME. “Experience Grand Rapids’ successful application illustrates the organization’s dedication to quality programs and services.”

DMAP is an independent international accreditation body and a leader in defining quality and performance issues in destination marketing. For additional information on DMAP visit www.destinationmarketing.org.

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