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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Shaping the Future of the Michigan Wine Industry

Lansing, MI – August 1st, 2016 – The Michigan Wine Collaborative (MWC), a newly created not-for-profit organization, announces its official formation after substantial work, gathering input from the wine and wine grape industry. The mission of the MWC is *to enhance the sustainability and profitability of the Michigan wine industry by supporting wineries, growers and other businesses and individuals connected to the industry – today and for future generations.*

An Advisory Board with representation around the state was formed to guide the development of the MWC. Several public meetings were held, including at the Michigan Grape & Wine Conference in Kalamazoo, February 2016.

Based on feedback from those meetings, the MWC proceeded to build an active board of directors and membership. Elections were held, and the following initial board was formed.

Executive Board: David Miller – White Pine Winery (President), Matthew Moersch – Round Barn Winery (Vice President), Brian Lesperance – Fenn Valley Vineyards (Secretary), Lee Lutes – Blackstar Farms (Treasurer). **Board:** Robert Brengman – Brengman Brothers, Tom Petzold – Bowers Harbor Vineyards, Liz Berger – Chateau Chantal, Jon Treloar – J. Trees Cellars, Dave Anthony - Northern Sun Winery, and Shannon Casey – Michigan By The Bottle. There are five remaining open board positions.

“We created a geographically and functionally diverse board and open membership structure to represent Michigan’s wine industry today and in the future “said Miller. “Our goal is to support the interests of our industry from vineyard to bottle and onto the consumers’ table. The Michigan wine industry is growing rapidly and is at a point where an organization of industry representatives is required to guide and support research, education, marketing and legislative action. Our peers in states with large wine industries have taken these steps with tremendous positive impacts. The next phase of growth for our industry will require both private and public funds and the efforts of many to set the stage for what is to come. This is a very exciting time for the Michigan wine industry!”

The MWC will focus on several initiatives, including research, marketing and sustainability. The organization has already been working in partnership with established organizations such as the statewide *Grape and Wine Industry Council* and more regional *Parallel 45 Vines & Wines*. Moersch says, “We are going to direct efforts toward research and marketing specifically needed by membership. As a privately funded organization we will have the autonomy to support projects with direct impact on Michigan growers and wine producers.”



The website, www.michiganwinecollaborative.com will also serve as a central source of information for relevant viticulture and enology information. “There is so much information out there; half the challenge is figuring out what is current, accurate and relevant. We will provide a central repository of high quality resources for members to save them time and money as they embark on new projects,” says Lesperance.

“At this stage of the game, we really want to broaden our membership and get our committees staffed,” says Lutes. “There is so much talent in our industry if we can get more growers and wineries actively involved there is every reason to believe we can aid in the continual development of a profitable and sustainable industry for the long haul.”

Interested organizations should visit www.michiganwinecollaborative.com to learn more and join. Membership dues range based on organization size and role.

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