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JEFF LOBDELL RECEIVES AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE FROM THE MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

LANSING, MI – The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is pleased to announce that Jeff Lobdell of Grand Rapids has received the MRA Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor given by the Association. He was bestowed the honor at the MRA's annual Chairman's Dinner, held this year in Bay Harbor on January 24.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals who have provided exceptional and continuing leadership, vision, and commitment to Michigan's foodservice industry. Previous Distinguished Service Award winners select a new winner each year from submitted nominations.

Lobdell is the owner of the Beltline Bar Famous Mexican Cafe in Grand Rapids, a local institution that is celebrating 63 years in business. Lobdell is one of only four people to hold the secret recipes used at Beltline Bar and hand-mixes the proprietary spice blends every week. In 2015, the Beltline Bar served their 5,000,000th wet burrito. In addition to Beltline Bar, Lobdell's Restaurant Partners, Inc., owns and operates Grand Coney, Sundance Grill, The Omelette Shoppes, Bagel Beanery, Flap Jack Shack, and Boone's Prime Time Pub.

"This Distinguished Service Award was a total surprise to me," said Lobdell. "It is a tremendous honor to be recognized by the Michigan Restaurant Association, an organization that is very near and dear to my heart."

Lobdell was first selected to the Board of Directors in 2002 and served as treasurer, vice chairman, and chairman of the board (in 2007). He also currently serves as a board member of the National Restaurant Association and Michigan Restaurant and Lodging Fund.

"Through a lifetime commitment to the restaurant industry, Jeff Lobdell exudes everything the Distinguished Service Award stands for," said Justin Winslow, MRA president and CEO. "He is a respected leader in his community, a respected former chairman of this Association, and now also a respected member of the National Restaurant Association Board of Directors. His passion and commitment to the success and importance of our industry are unparalleled, which made the decision so easy for all those involved."

Lobdell's restaurants host and contribute to more than 100 fundraisers every year – benefiting charities in both Grand Rapids and Traverse City. Lobdell has also been very active in the Grand Rapids Amateur Hockey Association where he has been a volunteer coach for 12 years. He and his wife, Audrey, reside in Grand Rapids, and have four sons, Deacon, Dayne, Mason, and Maxim.

PHOTO: Jeff Lobdell

Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents nearly 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 415,000 people and creating nearly \$14 billion in annual sales.

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