



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 29, 2016

Contact: Adriane De Ceuninck
Michigan Restaurant Association
(517) 482-5244

MICHIGAN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY POISED FOR GROWTH IN 2016

LANSING, MI – Michigan’s restaurant industry is expected to post sales growth of 4.8 percent in 2016 to reach \$15.4 billion, according to the National Restaurant Association’s (NRA) 2016 Restaurant Industry Forecast. Nationwide, the industry expects sales of \$782.7 billion.

On the employment side, the restaurant industry continues to be a leader in job creation. The number of Michigan residents employed in restaurants will exceed 421,000 people in 2016, accounting for 11 percent of all employment in the state (up 1 percent from 2015). Over the next 10 years, the number of Michigan residents employed by restaurants will grow by more than 43,000, an increase of 10.3 percent. Nationally, the industry employs 14.4 million people in more than 1 million location, and it remains the nation’s second-largest private sector employer, providing career opportunities for one in 10 working Americans.

“The restaurant industry continues to be an undeniable catalyst for job-growth in Michigan, fueling the state’s economic recovery and providing many their first opportunity in the workforce,” said Justin Winslow, president and CEO of the Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA).

2016 will mark the seventh consecutive year of restaurant industry sales growth nationally despite a continued challenging economic landscape. 2016 will also mark the 17th straight year in which restaurant industry employment growth will outpace overall employment growth.

“While restaurateurs will face some real challenges in 2016, most notably a scarcity of qualified labor and thin profit margins, there are many reasons to be excited about the future of the industry in Michigan,” added Winslow. “From a booming restaurant scene in the city of Detroit and its many new intriguing chef-driven concepts, to maturing restaurant communities in Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Birmingham and more, there is a national focus on Michigan right now as a culinary destination and the MRA is excited to help share that story.”

Trends and challenges for the industry in 2016 include:

- **A shallow labor pool.** Recruitment and retention of employees re-emerges as a top challenge for restaurant operators. Workforce demographics are shifting to include a greater proportion of older workers while the younger labor pool is shrinking.
- **Growing number of minority- and women-owned restaurants.** Many of those owners started their restaurant careers at in an entry level position. The restaurant industry has been and continues to be one where people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to achieve the American dream of owning one’s own business.
- **Technology growing pains.** In the race to be tech-forward, new systems are popping up in more places as guests say they want to use them. However, two in five consumers say that technology makes restaurant visits and ordering more complicated, indicating that perhaps not all these new systems are as user-friendly as they could be. Restaurants will be focusing on closing that divide in the year ahead.

For more information about the NRA's 2016 Restaurant Industry Forecast, visit restaurant.org/forecast.

ATTACHED: Michigan Restaurant Industry at a Glance 2016

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 421,000 people and creating \$15.4 billion in annual sales.

###