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MICHIGAN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY EXPECTED TO POST GROWTH IN 2014 DESPITE SUSTAINED CHALLENGES

LANSING, MI – The restaurant industry in Michigan is expected to post 3.1 percent sales growth in 2014 to reach \$13,471,777,000, according to the National Restaurant Association's (NRA) 2014 Restaurant Industry Forecast. Michigan restaurants will employ 399,300 next year, and create an additional 23,000 jobs in the next decade.

"Restaurant owners in Michigan are proud that their industry plays such an important role in the recovery of the state," said Brian DeBano, president and CEO of the Michigan Restaurant Association. "And as unique niches of business continue to develop, such as culinary tourism, we look forward to continued growth and additional fuel for the economy."

2014 will mark the fifth consecutive year of restaurant industry sales growth nationally despite a continued challenging economic landscape. Overall, industry sales are projected to exceed \$683 billion in 2014, up 3.6 percent from 2013's sales volume of \$659 billion.

2014 will also mark the 15th straight year in which restaurant industry employment growth will outpace overall employment growth. The industry will continue to be the nation's second largest private employer with 990,000 restaurants employing 13.5 million individuals or 10 percent of the total workforce. The NRA expects restaurants to add 1.3 million new positions in the next decade, pushing industry employment to 14.8 million by 2024.

"As our nation continues its road to recovery, the restaurant industry will remain a key driver of economic growth and a leading jobs creator," said Dawn Sweeney, president and CEO of the National Restaurant Association. "Restaurants touch every community across the U.S., and 2014 will be a year of growth and innovation as the industry focuses on inspired new ways to meet consumer demand while providing valuable careers to millions of Americans."

"Despite facing a range of challenges, America's restaurants are showing continued resiliency and innovation," said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president, Research & Knowledge for the National Restaurant Association. "As the industry enters its fifth straight year of real sales growth, operators are feeding consumer appetites with new technology, customer loyalty efforts, and evolving menu options. Consumers currently have a historically high pent-up demand for restaurant services, which is likely to translate into a business boost as the economy continues to improve – and our nation's foodservice operators are rising to the challenge."

While the restaurant industry is expected to grow in 2014, operators will continue to face a range of challenges. The top challenges cited by restaurateurs vary slightly by industry segment, and include food costs, labor costs, and the economy.

For more information about the NRA's 2014 Restaurant Industry Forecast, visit Restaurant.org/Forecast.

The 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 almost 400,000 people and creating more than \$13.4 billion in annual sales.

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